

Grant Program Will Help Ethnically Diverse Micro-Businesses

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
Saturday, 09 May 2020 07:40 -



Small businesses in our minority communities often don't have established relationships to financial institutions, but are an important pathway for entrepreneurs.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced Friday that one thousand ethnically diverse micro-businesses that have suffered losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible to receive grants of \$2,000 each under a new state program.

The \$2 million initiative is focused on supporting ethnically diverse micro-businesses that have not received SBA Paycheck Protection Program or state disaster relief.



“Small businesses in our minority communities face special challenges,” Gov. Evers said. “Many have not received federal or state assistance yet because they are unbanked or don’t have the relationships to financial institutions that other businesses do. Yet these micro-businesses are often the heart and soul of their communities and an important pathway for minority entrepreneurs.”

Businesses may apply if they:

- Are for-profit, Wisconsin-based and at least 51% minority-owned;
- Started operating prior to Jan. 1, and were operating as of Feb. 29 this year;
- Have no more than five (5) full-time equivalent employees, including the owner. Sole proprietorships are also eligible;
- Operate in the retail, service or hospitality industries; and

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- Have not received any federal assistance through the Paycheck Protection Program, or state aid through the Small Business 20/20 program.

The Ethnic Minority Emergency Grants will be marketed and administered in collaboration with Wisconsin's 19 ethnic and diverse chambers of commerce, regional economic development organizations and other partners across the state.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) will provide funding for the initiative.

"WEDC is committed to assisting all businesses – of every size and type -- throughout Wisconsin," said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes. "Our work with minority chambers of commerce and businesses is an opportunity to reach a critical sector of our business community."

"The support from WEDC is a huge win for ethnic businesses in the State of Wisconsin," said Marjorie Rucker, Executive Director of The Business Council, Inc. "Formulating partnerships with entities such as WEDC to provide grants to small ethnic businesses in the service, hospitality and retail industry during this crisis shows a real understanding and true leadership of our partners and our state leaders."

More information about the program is available from the organizations listed in the FAQ, available [here](#).