

Grants Provide Nearly \$240 Million Total to Wisconsin Small Businesses

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Program targeting sectors hit hardest by COVID-19 largest direct-aid program for small businesses in WEDC history.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) announced almost 55,000 state small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic received approximately \$240 million last year through the We're All In grants program – the largest direct-aid program for small businesses in WEDC history.



“Wisconsin’s small businesses have exemplified remarkable resilience throughout this pandemic, finding new, innovative ways to keep the doors open and the lights on. But it wasn’t easy, and I am glad we were able to provide this critically needed support,” said Gov. Evers. “We aren’t out of the woods just yet, and it is vital that we continue to support our local businesses and their employees to help them get through these tough times.”

Funded by the federal CARES Act, the We're All In grants were awarded to Wisconsin small

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businesses in three phases throughout first year of the pandemic. Starting in the summer, [Phase 1](#) distributed \$65 million to more than 26,000 businesses around the state. The grants were administered by WEDC, with each receiving a \$2,500 grant. About half of WEDC's staff shifted from normal operations to processing the grants to get the funds out to businesses.

In the fall, [Phase 2](#) provided \$130 million to more than 26,000 businesses. The program was created by WEDC but received technical and customer service assistance from the DOR. Due to greater demand and limited resources, Phase 2 grants were targeted toward industries hit hardest by the pandemic, as well as diverse businesses and businesses that had not received Phase 1 grants. Businesses received \$5,000 awards. Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants were aimed at businesses with less than \$1 million in annual revenue, regardless of industry.

In the late fall, [Phase 3](#), We're All in For Restaurants, was specifically targeted at food, beverage, and amusement businesses with annual revenues between \$1 million and \$7 million, with each qualified business receiving \$20,000. More than 2,000 received these grants, which were also administered by DOR in collaboration with WEDC.

"The intent for all of the We're All In grants was to get help to as many small businesses as we could, as quickly as we could," said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes. "I'm pleased WEDC was able to work with DOR to help us identify many of the businesses that were struggling the most."

"We have seen economic impacts from COVID-19 that are very uneven," said DOR Secretary Peter Barca. "Some businesses are suffering a great deal while others have seen less impact."

The DOR and the WEDC have posted a [searchable online database](#) of recipients and the amounts they received. Additionally, there is an [online interactive data visualization map](#) of the state of Wisconsin which highlights where businesses are located, and what industries received the grants.