



DOING BUSINESS IN
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Small Business Relief Grant for Restaurants and Food Businesses

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2022 @ 12:00 pm EST

The City of Lowell has established a Round 3 of the COVID-19 Small Business Relief Fund to exclusively support qualified and eligible Lowell Restaurants and food businesses that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. **Grant applications are available from February 28, 2022 until March, 31, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. EST.** There is no guarantee that you will secure a grant nor receive the maximum amount of funds. Grant funds will be awarded first come, first serve basis.

The City of Lowell has partnered with the Entrepreneurship Center @ CTI and the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell (CMAA) to provide technical assistance and language support to our non-English speaking business community. For more questions about HUD-eligibility, grant criteria, and/or the application, please contact: DoBizInLowell@LowellMa.Gov or 978-674-1435.

Overview

Grants of up to \$10,000 each available exclusively to restaurants/ food businesses to reimburse for working capital expenses, including but not limited to rent or mortgage payments, payroll expenses, utility expenses, or business related fees (excluding municipal taxes, permits and licenses)

Eligibility Requirements

- Independently – owned restaurant/ food businesses
- The restaurant must have been operating in Lowell prior to March 1, 2020*
- Lowell-Based business
- Demonstrate a 25% loss in revenue for calendar-year 2021 (as compared with 2019)
- Retain at least one (1) full-time or full-time equivalent employee on payroll (excluding owner). A full time employee is considered one that works at least 40 hours per week.

*For businesses that have opened after March 2020, you will be required to document a loss of income over the past 20 months



- Business has at least one (1) year remaining on business lease or proof of commercial real estate ownership

HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Requirements:

- Applicants must comply with the requirements of the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program.
- Applicants that received funding from Round #1 and/ or Round #2 of the program, must be in compliance (have submitted monitoring documentation) in order to be eligible for Round # 3.
- Applicants must meet a HUD National Objective, either as a qualified microenterprise or as low/moderate income job creation/retention project:

Microenterprise

- Business must have five (5) or fewer full-time equivalent employees, AND
- Business owner must meet the household average median income requirements. Total household income for the business owner must be at or below 80% of the average median income to qualify for funding.

Job Creation or Retention

- Applicants must commit to creating or retaining at least one full-time (or full time equivalent) (1) job. The job must be filled by an individual who meets the household average median income requirement. Total household income for the individual must be at or below 80% of the average median income to qualify.
- Rehiring at least one position recently laid off due to COVID-19 related impacts or retaining a furloughed employee who meets income eligibility standards likely would allow an applicant to meet this requirement.

Note: If your business has 5 or fewer full-time equivalent employees AND you do not meet the household income requirement, or you are not in a position to hire or retain an employee who meets the HUD income eligibility criteria within 6 months of receiving funding, you will not be eligible for the program.

General Assistance to Impacted Lowell Restaurants and food businesses

The City will make awards of up to \$10,000 by selecting eligible and qualified restaurants. Awards will be made to reimburse for qualified expenses and be in the form of a reimbursable grant. The grant will be issued once the City is able to confirm that the applicant has met all of the HUD CDBG-CV requirements and submitted eligible expenditures.



Businesses Not Eligible

- Non-Restaurant/ food businesses
- Businesses operating outside of Lowell
- Do not meet the aforementioned income guidelines
- Do not meet the aforementioned job creation/retention or microenterprise requirements
- Bars/ Pubs with very limited menu or no food service
- Non-profit or faith-based organizations
- Restaurants/ food businesses with past-due tax liabilities, tax lien that existed prior to COVID-19 or who have filed for bankruptcy
- Does not have a valid/current business registration with the City/State, expired food license or existing health code violations.

Eligible Use of Funds

- Funds can be used for working capital expenses, including but not limited to rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and business-related fees.

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- Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed to confirm program eligibility

Additional Considerations

- Minority-owned restaurants will be given preference as well as restaurants that haven't applied or secured supportive funding through local, state, and federal programs.
- Applicants that have received funding from Round #1 and/ or Round #2 of the program, must be in compliance, meaning that they have submitted monitoring documentation, such as income verification (Appendix C) and payroll records in order to be eligible for Round # 3.
- Please note, that even if a business meets the aforementioned criteria it is not guaranteed to receive a grant due to funding constraints of this program. The City Reserves the right to discontinue or modify requirements and funding as necessary.

Notification

- Successful applicants will receive a notice of award from the City of Lowell by email along with instructions on the next steps.
- Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified by email.



Disbursement of Funds

- While the default grant award amount is \$10,000, the award amount is subject to proof of verifiable need. For example, if an applicant can only document one monthly commercial rent payment, then the award will equal the size of the commercial rent payment. The City of Lowell will require additional financial information to prevent duplication of services. Additional information may include, but is not limited to DUNS#, and documentation of financial supports received from local, state, and federal entities.

For questions about this program please contact DoBizInLowell@lowellma.gov

Or contact Maria Dickinson, Economic Development Specialist at 978.674.1435

<https://www.lowellma.gov/1407/COVID-19-Business-Resources>