

SANDUSKY COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF PROGRAM

The Small Business Relief Program will provide Sandusky County small businesses and non-profit organizations with some monetary relief from business interruption costs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible small businesses can apply for up to \$5,000 in Grant Funds to be used for the reimbursement of certain Eligible Expenses, as defined below. Sandusky County will be utilizing \$150,000 of its CARES Act allotment for the first round of assistance.

For questions regarding the program, please email garcia_theresa@co.sandusky.oh.us or go to www.sanduskycountyoh.gov and click the link for small business relief program.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible to apply for Grant Funds under the Sandusky County Small Business Relief Program, a business must meet the following criteria

1. Must be a for-profit or non-profit small business/organization with a location in Sandusky County.
2. Have a Federal Taxpayer Identification Number or Social Security Number.
3. Have been operational since January of 2019. This can be evidenced, at a minimum, by: a) filing(s) with the Ohio Secretary of State, such as articles of incorporation or other registration documents along with an Ohio Secretary of State Certificate of Good Standing; b) an Ohio vendor's license; c) Federal Schedule C – Profit or Loss from Business (Sole Proprietorship); or any other documents that demonstrate that the business/organization has been in operation since January 2019.
4. Have less than \$1 million in gross revenue/receipts on an annual basis. This can be evidenced by records such as the business' 2018 and 2019 federal income tax return or financial statements.
5. Must have experienced a decrease in gross revenue/receipts (as compared to the preceding fiscal year) due to COVID-19 with such decrease in revenue/receipts occurring between March 1, 2020 and the date of application, or must have incurred unique costs for materials/services/labor/equipment specifically related to COVID-19 during this same time period. The amount of the grant requested cannot exceed the amount of decreased revenue/receipts and/or unique costs incurred. This can be evidenced by financial information/records, including, at a minimum, bank statements.
6. Have 30 or fewer employees or 1099 workers as of March 22, 2020. This can be demonstrated by forms such as 2019 Form W-3 (Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statement) or 2019 Form 1096 (Annual Summary and Transmittal of U.S. Information Returns) and payroll reports or checks that evidence number of workers as of March 22, 2020 or statement attesting/certifying that your business has no employees or 1099 workers.
7. An entity receiving or have been approved for other federal assistance for lost revenue or expenses arising from the pandemic, including Paycheck Protection Program, Emergency Disaster Loan must disclose that federal assistance and show that COVID-19 losses (an income gap) still exists.
8. An entity approved for business interruption insurance claim as a result of COVID-19 must disclose the insurance income and show that COVID losses (an income gap) still exists.
9. Business/organization location in Sandusky County, Ohio and the grant funding will be used for expenses for that business. This can be evidenced by records such as a mortgage statement, utility bill, insurance premium statement and property tax bills.
10. Must be able to attest that it is in compliance with federal, state, or county and local requirements applicable to its type of business.
11. Must be able to attest that it is current with all federal, state, county and local taxes and fees.
12. Must be able to attest that it is in good standing with all applicable government regulations related to building code or property maintenance issues.

13. Must be able to attest that it is not a nuisance property for police/fire/EMS calls.
14. Must be able to attest that it is not currently in bankruptcy.

INELIGIBLE SMALL BUSINESSES

A business is not eligible to apply for Grant Funds under the Sandusky County Small Business Relief Program if it primarily operates as one of the following:

1. Adult entertainment establishment
2. Bank, savings and loan or credit union
3. E-commerce only company
4. Liquor / wine store
5. Vaping store
6. Tobacco store
7. Cannabis dispensary
8. Franchised business not locally owned and independently operated

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Grant Funds provided by Sandusky County's Small Business Relief Program can only be used to pay the expenses of the business: a) related to the costs of business interruption caused by required closures; or b) that the business faces due to its uncertainty as to its ability to pay due to the pandemic. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Mortgage costs. Mortgage costs for businesses that are located in or operated out of a personal residence are not an eligible expense.
2. Rent or lease costs. Rent or lease costs for businesses that are located in or operated out of a personal residence are not an eligible expense.
3. Expenses for utilities, such as electric, gas, sewer, water, trash removal. Utility costs for businesses that are located in or operated out of personal residence are not an eligible expense.
4. Salaries, wages or compensation paid to employees or 1099 workers.
5. Materials and supplies related to interruption of the business caused by required closures.
6. Equipment/technology upgrades/changes which were required to allow continued business functionality in relation to COVID-19. These expenses can include the cost of technical support related to the installation/training/operation of such equipment/technology.
7. Personal Protective Equipment, sanitation/cleaning supplies, or other COVID-19 related costs such as expenses related to compliance with Responsible RestartOhio.
8. Interior or exterior construction or renovation to the extent that such construction/renovation is related to addressing COVID-19 concerns or compliance.
9. Sole proprietors can use grant funding as income replacement by providing documentation on lost revenue from March 1, 2020 through April 30, 2020 due to COVID-19 so long as no unemployment benefits are being received or are expected to be received by the applicant. If not already submitted, submit the most recent filed Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Sole Proprietorship).

If awarded, grant funds can be used to reimburse eligible expenses incurred from March 23, 2020 through December 1, 2020. At the end of the grant term, the business shall submit an itemized list of all expenditures along with all supporting documentation. Documentation shall be in the form of paid invoices and canceled checks, bank statements, or similar documentation showing payment of Eligible Expenses. If the business cannot properly substantiate its eligible expenses, the business will be required to repay the undocumented grant funds.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

1. Cost of vehicle or equipment leased or purchased after March 23, 2020, except if the purchase of equipment is to comply with Responsible RestartOhio.
2. Personal, non-business expenses of the business or its owner(s).
3. Construction costs.
4. Any tax, license or fee obligations payable to any governmental entity.

PROCESS

1. Application

A business that is interested in participating in the program must fill out the application to determine if it meets all of the eligibility criteria set forth above. A business can choose to apply for up to a \$5,000 grant. If awarded, all Grant funding distributed as a part of this program must be spent within 60 calendar days of receipt. Grant funds can be used to reimburse Eligible Expenses incurred from March 23, 2020 and ends 60 calendar days from receipt of grant funds. Applications must be submitted **no later than October 14, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.**

Applications can be submitted via email or dropped off at the Sandusky County Chamber of Commerce at the Information Desk during regular office hours. Due to the short application period, we do not recommend mailing the application.

- Email to Rachel Wynkoop – Executive Director of the Chamber, director@scchamber.org, or Laurie Young, Director of SCCF, director@sanduskyccf.org
- Drop off: Sandusky County Chamber of Commerce, 215 Croghan Street, Fremont, Ohio, M-F 8 am to 4:00 pm.

2. Use of Lottery to Allocate Funding

If applications exceed the amount of funding available for this program, all business that have met all of the eligibility criteria through the application will be entered into a lottery to determine which eligible businesses will receive funding.

3. Documentation Submission

A business selected as a part of the lottery will be invited to the next stage which will require the business to submit information and documents demonstrating that it meets the eligibility requirements and confirming how the Grant funds will be spent. The business shall submit all required documentation within 7 calendar days of notification of lottery.

A team will review and verify the documents. If the submitted information and documents do not demonstrate that the business has met the eligibility criteria, the next business chosen in the lottery will be contacted to submit the required documentation.

4. Payment and Signed Agreement

Once approved for a grant, the agreement must be signed within 7 calendar days. The agreement is available on the website at www.sanduskycountyoh.gov and should be downloaded and submitted to the Commissioner's Office. Payment will be via check from the Auditor's office.

5. Close Out Report

Businesses are required to submit a final close out report, which is downloadable from the website. It is expected to include at minimum, jobs retained/created, proof of payment (paid invoices and cancelled checks, bank statements, or other documentation showing proof of payment of Eligible Expenses), and a summary of the impact the funds had on the business and its operations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Sandusky County Small Business Relief Program aims to provide direct relief to local businesses financially impacted by the COVID-19 health crisis. The grant program consists of up to \$5,000 grants meant to help those small businesses that were unable to secure any or an adequate level of federal assistance but still need financial help to retain employees and continue operations.

Q: Why did you choose a lottery system rather than first come first serve? A. Not every small business in Sandusky County has a team of experts who can help them apply for assistance at a moment's notice. We realize that applicants may need more time to locate documents and pull their materials together in order to submit their application. A lottery ensures that all applicants who qualify have equal access to the grant funding.

Q: When can I apply? A. Applications will be accepted through October 14, 2020 at 4:00p.m

Q: I am a sole proprietor with no additional employees. Do I qualify for this fund? A. Yes, provided that you meet the eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria include being a locally-owned and operated for-profit business in Sandusky County, under \$1 million in annual revenue and in business since January of 2019 with 30 or fewer employees or 1099 workers as of March 22, 2020, and a 30% reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 impact.

Q: Who should I contact for questions? A. Please contact garcia_theresa@co.Sandusky.oh.us for questions. Due to the interest in the program, responses may be delayed. Keep in mind the deadline of October 14, 2020 at 4:00 pm. is final.

Q: What is the typical size of grants awarded? A. The grant award is up to \$5,000 and an entity should base their grant size on the amount necessary to replace lost revenues due to COVID-19 and the amount needed to make payroll and maintain the business. The business will list how the grant funds will be spent in the application. If awarded a grant, the small business must show documentation that grant funds were spent on eligible expenses listed on the application at the end of the grant term. Documentation shall be in the form of paid invoices and canceled checks, bank statements, or similar documentation showing payment of Eligible Expenses. If the business cannot properly substantiate its eligible expenses, the business will be required to repay the undocumented grant funds.

Q: When are documents required to be submitted for verification? A. Once a business is selected as a part of the lottery, it will be invited to the next stage which will require the business to submit information and documents demonstrating that it meets the eligibility requirements and confirming how the Grant funds will be spent.

Q: How will the funds be disbursed? A. A check will be mailed or can be picked up. Once approved for a grant, the business must sign and return the Grant Agreement within 7 calendar days.

Q: What if I have businesses in Sandusky County and a neighboring county; can I use the grant funds for both businesses? A. No, the grant funds can only be used to assist with the business in Sandusky County.

Q: Are there any restrictions on the usage of the grant money? A. The following expenses are not eligible:

1. Cost of vehicle or equipment leased or purchased after March 23, 2020, except if the purchase of equipment is to comply with Responsible RestartOhio.
2. Personal, non-business expenses of the business or its owner(s).
3. Construction costs.
4. Any tax, license or fee obligations payable to any governmental entity.

Q: How long do I have to use these funds? A. Grant funding distributed as a part of this program must be spent within 60 calendar days of receipt. Grant funds can be used to reimburse for eligible expenses incurred from March 23, 2020 through 60 calendar days from receipt of grant funds.

Q: What if I don't have employees, only 1099 workers, can I use this to pay them? A. Yes, salaries, wages and compensation to 1099 workers is an eligible expense.

Q: What Documentation is required to be submitted if I'm selected into the lottery? A.

1. Have been operational since January of 2019. This can be evidenced, at a minimum, by: a) filing(s) with the Ohio Secretary of State, such as articles of incorporation or other registration documents along with an Ohio Secretary of State Certificate of Good Standing; b) an Ohio vendor's license; c) Federal Schedule C – Profit or Loss from Business (Sole Proprietorship); or any other documents that demonstrate that the business has been in operation as a for-profit entity since January 2019.
2. Have less than \$1 million in gross revenue/receipts on an annual basis. This can be evidenced by records such as the business' 2018 and 2019 federal income tax return or financial statements.
3. Must have experienced a decrease in gross revenue/receipts of 30% or more due to COVID-19 when comparing March 1 – April 30, 2019 revenue/receipts to revenue/receipts for March 1 - April 30, 2020. This can be evidenced by financial information/records, including, at a minimum, bank statements.
4. Have 30 or fewer employees or 1099 workers as of March 22, 2020. This can be demonstrated by forms such as 2019 Form W-3 (Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statement) or 2019 Form 1096 (Annual Summary and Transmittal of U.S. Information Returns) and payroll reports or checks that evidence the number of workers as of March 22, 2020 or statement attesting/certifying that your business has no employees or 1099 workers.
5. Business location in Sandusky County, Ohio and the grant funding will be used for expenses for that business. This can be evidenced by records such as a mortgage statement, utility bill, insurance premium statement and property tax bills.

Q: Where do I get an Ohio Certificate of Good Standing? A. Businesses must apply online at [https://cogs.ohiosos.gov/\(S\(uf5hkjncht1pk14yk551ifni\)\)/index.aspx](https://cogs.ohiosos.gov/(S(uf5hkjncht1pk14yk551ifni))/index.aspx) the State requires credit card payment of \$5 to process the request. The certificate is sent via email immediately.

Q: Must a small business enter into a Grant Agreement for use of these funds? A. the business must sign and return the Grant Agreement within 7 calendar days of receipt and provide appropriate contact and address.