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Gov. Wolf Calls for Legislative Action to Support Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19

York, PA – As small businesses continue to feel an economic impact of the COVID-19 public health crisis, Governor Tom Wolf today called on the General Assembly to provide additional funding to support these businesses. The governor was joined by the York County Economic Alliance, local elected officials and business advocates.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health crisis, but it is also an economic crisis. In order to help Pennsylvania’s economy recover from the effects of COVID-19, it is vital that we continue to support businesses in Pennsylvania, especially as so many have taken on additional work and costs to keep their employees and customers safe since reopening,” Gov. Wolf said. “Small businesses have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 mitigation efforts and further support is needed to strengthen the economy, so I am calling on the General Assembly to approve additional funds to support our small businesses.”

As part of his [fall legislative agenda](#), Governor Wolf is calling on the General Assembly to provide an additional \$225 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding in the form of forgivable loans and grants to small businesses in Pennsylvania through the COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance Program. In addition, the governor is proposing \$100 million in forgivable loans and grants for the hospitality, leisure and service industries, including restaurants and bars, salons, and barber shops.

The [COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance](#) funding was developed in partnership with state lawmakers and allocated through the state budget, which included \$2.6 billion in federal stimulus funds through the CARES Act, of which \$225 million was earmarked for relief for small businesses, including historically disadvantaged businesses. Thousands of businesses [have qualified](#) for this grant program, which continues to distribute funding.

York County is utilizing a portion of its \$40.5 million in CARES Act funding that was appropriated to counties through the General Assembly and allocated by Governor Wolf to further support small businesses in the county. The county created the YoCo Strong Restart Grant Program, a

competitive grant program developed and managed by the York County Economic Alliance and Community First Fund to provide \$10 million to support small businesses and \$4 million to support nonprofit organizations. Eligible small businesses, including historically disadvantaged businesses and vulnerable industries like restaurants, salons and barber shops, retail and more were awarded grants of up to \$35,000.

“Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures. Our small businesses need the continued support from our commonwealth, and we are encouraged by all that has been done to date. We are optimistic of the legislative proposals set forth, and know these decisions are incredibly vital for our health and continued economic recovery,” said Kevin Schreiber, president and CEO of the York County Economic Alliance.

“The state’s allocation of \$225 million in small business support and driving it out through the CDFI network was novel, and now a model other states are emulating as a best practice,” said Dan Betancourt, president and CEO of the Community First Fund. “This was adapted here in York County to ensure those most vulnerable and in most need receive access to funding in a timely and efficient manner.”

"I am pleased that Gov. Wolf is dedicating millions of dollars to help our small businesses that have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding, in the form of forgivable loans and grants, for the hospitality, leisure, and service industries, including restaurants and bars, salons, and barber shops, would provide working capital for the commonwealth’s small businesses who need it the most," said state Rep. Carol Hill-Evans (D-York). "Now, we as legislators must put aside political differences to quickly pass much needed legislation that will help keep our small businesses afloat."

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