



GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Mia Jankowiak
Grand Rapids Chamber
Director of Marketing & Events
616.771.0339
mia@grandrapids.org

Kent County Launches Small Business Recovery Program

Partnering with the Grand Rapids Chamber to deliver financial support to small businesses in Kent County

(Grand Rapids, Mich. – June 17, 2020) – The Grand Rapids Chamber has entered a partnership with Kent County to deliver short-term, financial support to small businesses in Kent County with the purpose of cultivating a strong, economic recovery. This follows a decision by the Kent County Board of Commissioners to disperse \$25 million in federal CARES Act dollars to small businesses in the form of grants and technical assistance.

[The Kent County Small Business Recovery Program](#) will help businesses that have not been able to access, or have been declined local, state, or federal relief funds gain access to additional support to weather the COVID-19 crisis. The program will focus on businesses that may be dealing with additional barriers including but not limited to language, general business knowledge, and those from underserved communities. Consistent with the limitations of the CARES Act, these businesses also must have been directly impacted and experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has truly been devastating to our community and this recovery program is another tool our small businesses can use to get through the COVID-19 crisis, said Kent County Board of Commissioners Chair Mandy Bolter. “It was critical for our Board to quickly respond to the needs of the business community because these grants will not only help our small businesses, but our entire economy recover.”

Businesses that qualify for this fund will receive a short-term economic relief grant ranging from \$5,000, \$10,000, \$15,000, or \$20,000 depending on size of business, operating costs, and additional scoring metrics. In addition to financial support, the Chamber will provide technical assistance including cost-cutting measures, six-month cashflow projection, analysis with a business consultant, creditor recommendation review, and connections to other critical resources.

“The Grand Rapids Chamber is thrilled to be partnering with Kent County on this crucial work,” said Dante Villarreal, Vice President of Business and Talent Development at the Grand Rapids Chamber. “We know that the need for this additional funding is vast, and our team will be very intentional in ensuring that the entirety of Kent County will have the opportunity to engage, including our underrepresented communities.”

On Monday, June 22 the Grand Rapids Chamber will be opening the first round of applications to those that have not previously received COVID-19 related aid. Additionally, the program eligibility requires applicants to be a private, for-profit business located and registered in Kent County with 0-25 full time equivalent employees, to have been directly impacted and experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19 and have a business start date prior to February 15, 2020.

“The Board of Commissioners identified supporting our small businesses in this time of need as a top priority, said County Administrator Wayman Britt. “We are extremely excited to launch this program which will position Kent County for a strong economic recovery.”

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About Kent County

The County of Kent government serves a diverse population of more than 650,000 residents, making it the fourth largest county in Michigan. The County provides a wide range of essential services in the following areas: law enforcement, correctional facility, three court systems, elections, social services, public health, park system and vital records. Additionally, it has operating agreements for the maintenance of County drains, solid waste and road, mental health services, and with the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and John Ball Zoo. To learn more about Kent County services, visit www.accesskent.com.

About the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce leads the business community in creating a dynamic, top-of-mind West Michigan region. Together with over 2,500 member businesses (80% of which are small businesses with fewer than 50 employees), we work to expand the influence, access, and information required to actively encourage entrepreneurial growth and community leadership. We offer the connections, resources, and insights needed to develop strong leaders, engage a diverse workforce, foster an inclusive and welcoming community, and advance a vibrant business environment that nurtures economic prosperity for all. Learn more at www.grandrapids.org

****MEDIA INQUIRIES****

The Grand Rapids Chamber and Kent County will be hosting a Zoom Media Roundtable from 1:00 PM – 1:30 PM on Wednesday, June 17.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89168372436>

Meeting ID: 891 6837 2436

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,89168372436# US (Germantown)

+13126266799,,89168372436# US (Chicago)

*****For those interested in an in-person interview, Dante Villarreal, Wayman Britt, and Mandy Bolter will be available at Calder Plaza from 1:30 PM – 2:00 PM for further comment. Please contact Mia Jankowiak at mia@grandrapids.org or 616.771.0339 to confirm your attendance.***