http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/business-small-open-s5.jpg



Money will help small businesses get back on their feet and support efforts to keep businesses, consumers, employees and communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MADISON—Gov. Tony Evers announced on Monday $75 million in assistance for small businesses as part of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's *We're All In* initiative, a comprehensive effort to celebrate and help Wisconsin's small businesses get back on their feet and support best practices to keep businesses, consumers, employees and communities safe.

Funded largely by federal dollars received through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, this initiative will provide direct assistance to small businesses most impacted by the duration and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. These $2,500 cash grants will assist with the costs of business interruption or for health and safety improvements, wages and salaries, rent, mortgages, and inventory. Businesses will be able to apply for grant assistance in early June.

Wisconsin small businesses have stepped up during this pandemic to keep people safe and many have pivoted to producing needed items such as hand sanitizer and face coverings. Providing relief to small businesses in Wisconsin that have been impacted by the pandemic is an important part of our response to and recovery from the pandemic.



"Wisconsinites have done an incredible job of banding together throughout this crisis and it's more important than ever for us to continue respecting each other, supporting each other,

holding each other accountable and protecting those who are vulnerable," Gov. Evers said. "We are still encouraging people to stay home as much as possible, practice physical distancing and good hygiene, and take protective measures like wearing a mask in public, but as more businesses continue to reopen around the state, we need to go all in on doing this together."

Grant recipients will become *We're All In* businesses by committing to safety protocols and using them in their shops, cafes and places of work to protect their customers, employees, and communities. This network of Main Street businesses will form the backbone of the *We're All In* initiative, along with support from major Wisconsin businesses, communities and other associations.

"These grants will help businesses in the short term, and we need Wisconsinites to join our long-term economic recovery by supporting those small businesses as patrons and customers," Gov. Evers continued. "We know that folks need to feel safe and confident as employees and consumers for this to work, so that is why we need to be all in together."

The *We're All In* initiative will include:

1. Grants in the amount of $2,500 to small businesses with 20 or fewer FTEs impacted by COVID-19 that have not already received WEDC COVID-19 assistance. Up to thirty thousand businesses may receive grants. More details about the program will be available later this month with businesses able to apply for grant assistance in June.
2. A series of guides for businesses looking to implement best practices to keep employees, customers, and communities safe throughout the COVID-19 crisis. These guides are an essential part of the *We're All In* program and were developed in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Department of Tourism, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Department of Safety and Professional Services, as well as industry leaders and public health experts throughout the state. They are found on WEDC's website at https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines .
3. Ethnic Minority Emergency Grants, which provide $2 million in grants for ethnically diverse Wisconsin micro-businesses who suffered losses due to the pandemic. The grants are aimed at sole proprietorships or businesses with five or fewer employees that have not received assistance under either SB 20/20 program or SBA's Paycheck Protection Program. One thousand grants of $2,000 each will be administered in partnership with Wisconsin's 19 ethnic and minority chambers of commerce. More details are available at https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/minority-business-development/ .

4. An integrated public information campaign promoting *We're All In* businesses and social practices to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and celebrate Wisconsin's diverse and strong economy.

“With its comprehensive approach that looks at businesses’ immediate and long-term needs, *We’re All In* will provide both the ‘starter fluid’ to restart our state’s economic engine and a road map to recovery,” said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes.