

News Release



Office of Public Affairs

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COMMISSIONERS ANNOUNCE SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES

The Franklin County Commissioners today voted to approve two new initiatives aimed at delivering assistance to small businesses and their employees who are suffering under the current public health restrictions. Both efforts are to be delivered by the commissioners' Economic Development and Planning Department using existing partners. The first includes \$500,000 in additional funding for ECDI, the Economic and Community Development Institute, which will be able to leverage that money in order to provide \$2 million in market-rate small business loans that can be used for things like payroll, inventory, or other working capital.

"We know that our residents and small business people are hurting right now," said Board of Commissioners President, John O'Grady. "This crisis is likely to go on for quite some time, and folks are going to need support. We know this is just a first step, but we're glad to be able to get it up and running so quickly."

The second program created by the commissioners with Tuesday morning's vote is aimed at providing direct support to employees who suddenly find themselves out of work due to the ongoing public health restrictions. It is a further \$500,000 investment with the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio, which will use it to provide direct cash support for qualified applicants. Participants will engage in workforces preparedness or credentialing activities such as online workshops and, in return, they will receive \$250 to help with immediate expenses until unemployment or other longer-term support options kick in.

"These are challenging times," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "Yet we are strong enough as a community to get through this as long as we work together. How successfully we recover will depend on how well we support each other during this difficult time."

The newly allocated funding is not new spending, but reallocated from other sources. The programs are expected to be up and running within the next two weeks, and the Workforce Development Board and ECDI will administer the programs directly.

"Small business are the engine of our economy and our residents are its backbone," said Commissioner Kevin L. Boyce. "The best thing that we can do for our whole community is to make sure that those businesses and their teams are still here and ready to go as soon as the public health restrictions are lifted."

To apply to participate in the small business loan program, contact Steve Fireman at sfireman@ecdio.org. To apply to participate in the workforce development program, contact Stephanie Robinson at srobinson@wdbco.org.