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Access to Capital Small Business Recovery program grants more than \$2 million to 195 Charlotte-based small businesses impacted by pandemic
Program will distribute a total of \$30 million in federal CARES Act funding; applications available until July 31

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CHARLOTTE – Through its first rounds of grantmaking, the [Access to Capital Small Business Recovery program](#) has issued \$2.08 million in grants to 195 local small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of Charlotte partnered with Foundation For The Carolinas to launch the program, which will distribute a total of \$30 million in federal CARES Act funding.

Applications for the grants program are available at ffc.org/CLTCityGrant. Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m., July 31. However, the earlier a business applies, the greater the chance that the application will be selected for review.

“Small businesses are the lifeblood of our local economy, and our city recovery task force meets weekly to offer assistance and guidance during this pandemic,” said Mayor Pro Tem Julie Eiselt. “The Access to Capital Small Business Recovery program is one of the best tools available to provide vital resources, and I encourage all small businesses to apply, because you could qualify for the next round of grant payouts.”

Businesses receiving grants have ranged from convenience stores to restaurants, hair salons, florists and more throughout Charlotte neighborhoods. Of the first round of grantees, 181 businesses had 5 or fewer employees and 14 had between 6 and 25 employees.

“In March, when Gov. Cooper issued the shelter in place order for all non-essential businesses, I was forced to close my doors,” said Giovy Buyers, owner of Southern Blossom Florist, which received a \$10,000 grant from the program. “As the pandemic wore on, I saw all of my summer events cancel. I was grateful to be awarded the Access to Capital Small Business Recovery Grant, because I was two months late on rent and going into another month. In addition, I will be able to pay some of our vendors. The application process was very easy.”

The program is part of the City’s Open for Business initiative and is distributing grants of either \$10,000 or \$25,000 (depending on the number of employees) to small businesses headquartered within Charlotte city limits that have been affected by the pandemic. FFTC serves as the City’s grantmaking partner for the effort.

The Access to Capital Small Business Recovery Program aims to provide funding rapidly, accessibly and equitably for Charlotte’s diverse small business community. Applications are selected randomly by a software algorithm from the applicant pool for review and are not reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the likelihood of receiving a grant increases the earlier an application is received because it will be available for selection each day. Businesses only need to apply once.

“Today is a day of celebration for 195 Charlotte business owners and for our entire city,” said City Councilman James Mitchell Jr. “We knew from the start that these grants would be a lifeline for many in our business community to survive and make it possible to thrive for their families and their employees’ families.”

The City and FFTC have conducted robust outreach efforts to inform small businesses in neighborhoods throughout Charlotte of the opportunity and how to apply. Beginning July 20, small business owners can visit various YMCA branches for help submitting their applications. Locations, hours and details will be available July 17 at www.fftc.org/CLTCityGrantFAQ. In addition, a customer service team is currently in place and can be reached at cltcitygrant@fftc.org or 704.998.6499.

“Our team is ready and eager to help local small businesses with the application process,” said Kayla Castilleja, FFTC employee and grant program review team member. “We encourage those who’ve not yet applied to submit their applications, and to contact us or visit a designated YMCA branch (beginning July 20) for assistance.”

To qualify, a small business must:

- Be headquartered within the Charlotte city limits
- Employ 25 or fewer employees (including part-time, if reported on company’s W-3)
- Have been established before Jan. 1, 2020
- Have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Have gross sales for 2019 of at least \$30,000 and less than \$2 million
- Not be currently engaged in bankruptcy proceedings

Full eligibility requirements and a list of required documentation are available at fftc.org/CLTCityGrant. It is anticipated that the number of applicants will exceed the available funding, so grants are not guaranteed.

Priority is given to businesses that have not received federal or state COVID-19 related financial support or funding from the City’s Micro Business Relief Fund.

Applications are available in English, Spanish, Nepali, French, Chinese and Vietnamese, and will be accepted through 5 p.m., July 31. For a complete list of criteria and to apply, visit fftc.org/CLTCityGrant. Contact cltcitygrant@fftc.org or 704.998.6499 for assistance.

About the City of Charlotte

The City of Charlotte provides services to more than 870,000 residents. The city’s priorities are workforce and business development; transportation, planning and the environment; safe communities; and great neighborhoods. For the latest news and updates about city government, visit the citywide newsroom atcharlottenc.gov/newsroom, and follow @CLTgov on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

About Foundation For The Carolinas

Founded in 1958, Foundation For The Carolinas is the sixth-largest nonprofit community foundation in the country, serving donors and a broad range of charitable purposes in North and South Carolina. With assets of \$2.6 billion, FFTC’s mission is to inspire philanthropy and empower individuals to create a better community. Visit www.fftc.org.

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