

SEDCO COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a toll on small businesses in the City of Syracuse. The winter months bring with them additional challenges for small businesses to attract customers, and many businesses may need to make new or additional investments to enhance the utility and safety of outdoor and indoor spaces, and expand online sales/pre-order services or other operations like take-out/curbside pick-up of food or merchandise. The Syracuse Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO) is undertaking a grant program to provide direct assistance to small businesses, or to local neighborhood organizations that represent or serve businesses in the City of Syracuse, to enable businesses to make critical investments needed during the pandemic emergency. Please see information and instructions on how to apply below.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. What is the SEDCO COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program?

The SEDCO COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program is intended to provide direct support for operational expenses for small businesses located in the City of Syracuse, or for neighborhood organizations to purchase supplies or other eligible equipment and services that directly benefit the neighborhood businesses they represent or support during the pandemic. The goals of this program are to enable Syracuse City businesses to operate safely and effectively during the pandemic, to promote local economic recovery, and to encourage consumer confidence and access to local products and services provided by City businesses.

2. Who is eligible?

Small businesses are eligible for grants between \$2,500 – \$10,000, if they are physically located in the City of Syracuse; were operational and financially viable prior to March 7, 2020; do not have more than 50 full-time equivalent or full-time contract employees; and have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Community organizations that work with small businesses are eligible for grants up to \$25,000, and must be registered 501(c) (3) non-profits that provide direct services and support to neighborhood small businesses in the City.

Eligible businesses and community-based organizations must be in compliance with NY Forward guidelines, and have completed an online Affirmation certifying that they are aware of and have adopted the NY Forward safety requirements for their industry.

3. What Type of Purchases Qualify?

Qualifying purchases may include but are not limited to:

- Outdoor equipment, or installation services for such equipment, such as tents, awnings, vestibule or patio enclosures;
- Outdoor space heaters (provided they are in compliance with relevant Syracuse Fire codes);
- Technology systems, applications or vendor support services to establish or upgrade e-commerce or online ordering capabilities, including but not limited to websites and/or mobile applications for customers to order merchandise or food, online reservation management, electronic customer loyalty programs, subscriptions for 3rd party e-commerce services, etc.
- Supplies to expand take-out service or delivery services such as take-out containers, packaging, insulated or other take-out bags, etc.
- Sanitizing supplies, equipment, systems (including UV light systems), or services to sanitize indoor/outdoor spaces;
- HVAC upgrades in alignment with NY Forward guidance;

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- Marketing or advertising costs to promote take-out/pre-order/online services, or to promote safety of in-person services and compliance with NY Forward requirements;
- Indoor equipment or supplies to optimize social distancing such as new tables, plastic partitions, or other items that enable appropriate spacing of staff and customers.

For neighborhood organizations, eligible purchases must be made for use by or for the direct benefit of small businesses within the neighborhood area. For example, a large tent that could be used to create an outdoor “food court” to be serviced by multiple area restaurants or vendors, a collective marketing or ad campaign or signs to attract customers to a commercial corridor, or another collective use that benefits small businesses.

4. How will the grant be disbursed if my business/organization is awarded?

Grants will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. The expectation is that businesses or organizations will itemize expense(s) for reimbursement as a part of the grant application. The Corporation may approve some requested expenses and disapprove others, providing a smaller grant amount than originally requested. Once approved, proof of purchase and receipt of fulfillment/delivery or installation will be required to receive grant funds from the Corporation.

5. How can eligible businesses and organizations apply?

Funds are limited. Applications can be found online at www.syr.gov.net/SEDCO/HOME.aspx Fully completed applications and required supporting documentation can be submitted starting on **Tuesday, November 10, 2020**. Only fully completed applications with all supporting documentation will be considered.

6. Where do I submit the application and supporting documentation?

Applications can be submitted one of the following ways:

- A) Email electronically to business@syr.gov.net (note: this is the preferred option); or
- B) Mail to the following address: Syracuse Economic Development Corporation 201 East Washington Street, Suite 612, Syracuse, NY 13202

7. What Criteria will be used to approve grant requests?

The Corporation will consider the following factors as it reviews individual requests for grant funding:

- A) Applicants proposed use of the grant funds, specifically whether the proposed use(s) will help businesses establish or maintain safer outdoor/indoor operations, enhance or expand their take-out/delivery services (restaurants or retail), attract new or retain existing customers, and promote safe staff and customer practices in compliance with NY Forward requirements.
- B) The applicant has affirmed online that their business or organization has implemented all required safety protocols for their industry as required by the NY State Department of Health. The guidelines and affirmation form are online at <https://forward.ny.gov/>.
- C) The financial viability of the applicant prior to the declaration of the state emergency by Governor Cuomo (March 2020), and the level of negative impact of the declared state disaster emergency on the operations and finances of the applicant.

8. How will Grant requests be reviewed?

Grant requests will be reviewed in the order they are received. The SEDCO Board of Directors has directed the Corporation’s Finance Committee comprised of members of the Board to review for approval all completed applications received by the Corporation. The Finance Committee will make recommendations to the full board for final determinations on all applications. The Corporation anticipates that funding decisions will be made as early as the week of **November 23rd**, and thereafter on a rolling basis depending on the availability of funds. A grant agreement must be executed with approved applicants prior to disbursement of any grant funds.

9. What is the cost of applying for the program?

There is no cost to apply.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Complete the grant application (available electronically at: www.syr.gov.net/SEDCO.Home.aspx)
2. Provide the following required documents:
 - For Small Business: 2019 Business Federal Tax Return including all schedules; an interim Profit & Loss Statement and Balance Sheet through at least September 30, 2020.
 - For Neighborhood Organizations: 2019 Form 990 federal tax filing, and latest annual report.

Aside from the foregoing, the Corporation reserves the right to request additional financial or other corporate governance or other materials or information it deems necessary to adequately review and assess the application.

3. Submit the completed application and supporting materials by email (preferred method) or by mail as noted above beginning on November 9th. Questions regarding this program should be directed to the SEDCO at business@syr.gov.net.
4. Applicants shall cooperate with the Corporation to satisfy any State or Federal mandated reporting requirements.
5. SEDCO shall have the right to request and consider additional information and factors.