

COUNTY OF BERGEN ANNOUNCES GRANT PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Bergen County CARES provides Direct Reimbursement to Municipalities and Small Business Grants up to \$10,000 for eligible local businesses

HACKENSACK, N.J. – Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco announces that the County of Bergen will launch a grant program to provide relief for municipalities straddled with expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic and small businesses financially impacted by the government ordered shutdown. The programs, which utilize CARES Act relief funds, will provide direct reimbursement to municipalities for costs associated with health officials, law enforcement, personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing improvements. “Non-essential” businesses that were forced to close as a measure to stop the spread of COVID-19 can receive up to \$10,000 in financial relief to cover rent, property mortgage, and utilities expenses.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious financial impact on governments and business communities across the country. It is important that we use available resources to support the municipalities in their efforts to combat the spread of the pandemic and one of the hardest hit sectors, small, mom and pop shops, who were forced to close their doors. These local businesses are the backbone of Main Street, Bergen County and it is important to support our fellow neighbors as we begin to reopen. This is why I am proud to announce the Bergen County CARES Municipal Reimbursement and Small Business Grant Programs,” said Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco.

“We understand our small Main Street businesses deemed non-essential during the shutdown have struggled to survive. Your continued survival and thriving is essential to us in Bergen County, and we encourage you to apply for this assistance with your rent, business mortgage, utility or other costs,” said Bergen County Freeholder Chairwoman Mary Amoroso. “We are also sensitive to the challenges our municipalities face to provide the critical resources needed to end this pandemic.”

Under the Bergen CARES Municipal Reimbursement Program, all 70 municipalities are entitled to direct reimbursement from the County for COVID-19 related expenses identified in the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act**. These expenses include payroll expenses for health care workers and public safety employees, PPE and building improvements.

To qualify for the Bergen County CARES Small Business Grant program, scheduled to receive applications mid-July, businesses must fall under the following criteria:

- Businesses with a physical location in Bergen County, NJ. Home-based businesses are eligible.
- Businesses deemed “non-essential” within the classification of “Businesses Required to Close” as per the Governor’s Executive Order No. 104, dated March 16, 2020

- Businesses with 1 - 19 full-time employees
- Sole-proprietorships; LLCs; LLPs; Corporations; and S-Corporations are eligible.
- Businesses owned by county employees and elected officials, as well as their immediate families, are not eligible
- Businesses must have been open and operating on March 1, 2020

Priority will first be given to businesses who have not received any Federal grant assistance, New Jersey Economic Development Authority grants or US Small Business Administration grant or other grant assistance.

The Bergen County CARES Municipal Reimbursement and Small Business Grant Programs are funded through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Federal relief fund. The County of Bergen intends to begin accepting applications for both programs by the end of the month. A subsequent announcement will be made regarding the small business grant application process. Questions about the County's grant programs can be sent to BergenCountyCares@co.bergen.nj.us.