



NEWS RELEASE

Economic Development

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\$2,500 Grant Still Available as part of the Microbusiness COVID-19 Grant Relief Program



San Bernardino County, CA (July 14, 2022) -- Microbusinesses across San Bernardino County can still take advantage of the Microbusiness COVID-19 Grant Relief Program launched earlier this year. San Bernardino County and Mastercard teamed up to award eligible businesses, with less than five employees, with a \$2,500 award to help offset the negative business impacts from the pandemic.

Roni Edis, founder of Genuine Photobooths, is an example of a local microbusiness that benefitted from the proactive grant relief program. Edis' business rents photobooths for special events from proms to weddings throughout Southern California. Edis' rental business suffered significantly when special events and public gatherings were cancelled due to COVID.

"This grant is a great help as we begin to recover from such a major business downturn. The money has helped to pay off our business loan, business registration fees and gas for our vehicles. Now as our calendar fills back up with proms and parties we are ready to go," Edis shared.

In San Bernardino County, 45 percent of local businesses have five employees or less, with 10 percent of those businesses being minority- owned. Like Edis, many of these businesses were severely impacted due to the closures and restrictions from COVID-19.

Money is still available. Eligible businesses and non-profits can apply for a \$2,500 grant towards qualified expenses such as the purchase of new equipment, investment in working capital, renewal of local permits, payment of business debt accrued during the pandemic, and costs resulting from COVID-19 pandemic and related health and safety restrictions or business interruptions as well as closures.

"This grant is especially impactful in that it targets small business owners and solo entrepreneurs. These business owners are the fabric of our economy and by supporting them we can help to encourage their success and growth," said Derek Armstrong, Director, Economic Development Department, San Bernardino County.

To disburse the funds, San Bernardino County is leveraging its membership with the City Possible network, a partnership model pioneered by Mastercard to address urban challenges and inequalities. The network has grown from 16 founding members in 2018 to more than 325 city members and candidate cities globally.

Qualified microbusinesses include:

- An entity that meets and self certifies that it began operation prior to December 31, 2019

- Currently active or has a clear plan to reopen
- Was significantly impacted by COVID-19 due to closure
- Had less than \$50,000 in revenues in 2019
- The business currently has fewer than five full-time employees in 2019 and 2020

Usio, a Mastercard program partner, and AmPac Business Capital, are processing applications and payments directly to eligible businesses through prepaid debit cards. San Bernardino County’s Economic Development Department is a member of City Possible.

To apply, businesses can go to <https://www.selectsbcounty.com/major-initiatives/microbusiness-covid-19-relief-grant>. Applications will be processed based upon receipt of completed application and eligibility requirements. For more information and to access frequently asked questions, go to www.selectsbcounty.gov. Funding for the grant is made possible by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate.



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