



NEWS RELEASE

Economic Development

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Date

San Bernardino County and Mastercard Launch New Microbusiness COVID-19 Grant Relief Program

San Bernardino County, CA (February 28, 2022) -- Today, San Bernardino County and Mastercard announced a new Microbusiness COVID-19 Grant Relief Program to award eligible businesses with less than five employees with a \$2,500 award to help offset the negative business impacts from the pandemic. 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.



Supporting small business owners is a continued priority for Mastercard, which pledged to bring 50 million small businesses, including 25 million women-owned businesses, into the digital economy by 2025. In San Bernardino County, 45 percent of local businesses have five employees or less, with 10 percent of those businesses being minority-owned. Many of these businesses were severely impacted due to the closures and restrictions from COVID-19.

Starting February 28, 2022 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.

“Microbusinesses were especially hard hit because of forced COVID-related closures and restrictions. These businesses are more often founded by women, minorities and veterans. Many times, these are entrepreneurs who are just starting out or seeking an opportunity to gain market share and then suffered substantial economic losses due to the pandemic. San Bernardino County is enthusiastic about an opportunity to help support these start-ups and small business owners to move forward and continue to thrive in our region,” said Chairman Curt Hagman, Fourth District.

“Creating an ecosystem in which small and micro businesses are well-positioned to succeed is an essential part of the economic health of cities as we recover from the pandemic, and a major focus of the City Possible global network,” said Miguel Gamiño, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Partnerships and Head of Global

Cities and City Possible at Mastercard. “The Microbusiness Grant Relief program will be crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability and inclusive recovery of micro-businesses in San Bernardino County for generations to come.”

San Bernardino County will work in collaboration with its marketing partners to reach microbusinesses to ensure they are aware of this program. Marketing partners include: Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship; Inland Council 4 Immigrant Justice; Inland Empire Regional Chamber of Commerce; Inland Empire Black Chamber of Commerce; Small Business Majority Inland Empire; Uplift San Bernardino; Asian Business Association Inland Empire; and the Small Business Development Center Inland Empire.

Qualified microbusinesses will be:

- 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, will process applications and payments directly to eligible businesses through prepaid debit cards. San Bernardino County’s Economic Development Department is a member of City Possible, a partnership and co-creation ecosystem pioneered by Mastercard that brings cities, companies and communities together to identify common challenges and co-develop solutions that advance inclusive and sustainable urban development.

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, please go to www.selectsbcounty.gov.

***Source:** Grant requirements set by State of California

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