

For Immediate Release – County of Berks – Press Release

Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available to Businesses Impacted by the Palmer Explosion

Reading, PA— 06/30/2023 — The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) recently announced an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) declaration in relation to the March explosion at the R.M. Palmer factory in West Reading. This sort of disaster loan assistance could apply to many small businesses, agriculture and aquaculture businesses, agriculture cooperatives, and non-profit businesses that cannot meet particular financial obligations as a result of the explosion.

Businesses that are not local to the physical location of the explosion may be eligible to receive EIAD loans if they meet the requirements.

“It is very important to understand that the applicant need not have experienced “physical damage” related to the incident,” said Berks County Director of Emergency Services, Brian Gottschall. “This program is different in this regard than most other similar programs generally available following a disaster that impacted parties are able to access. This is program is about support of businesses that sustained ‘economic injury,’ not necessarily physical damage.”

Gottschall also offered a hypothetical example of how a business remote from the physical location of the explosion might qualify for such a loan. He suggested that a hypothetical business in Lebanon might be the main supplier to Palmer of a particular candy ingredient. The impact of the Palmer disaster might cascade to that Lebanon business and they could qualify for assistance, he said.

The SBA will open a Business Recovery Center (BRC) at the West Reading Fire Dept to assist applicants in person. The BRC will be open July 7 through July 21, Monday – Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please note – the BRC will not be open on Friday, July 14.

Any specific inquiries about the EIDL for the Palmer disaster should be addressed to the SBA. Applicants or individuals with questions may call the SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955, email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visit the SBA Recovery Center at the West Reading Fire Department for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For additional information, please see the online link to an SBA Fact Sheet below.

Local county and state officials collaborated to secure the Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.

[Click here to view the fact sheet from the SBA regarding Economic Injury Disaster Loans for this incident.](#)

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