

For Release Thursday 9/10/2020

County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Release

Application portal opens for the Berks County Small Business New Start Grant program

Reading, PA— 9/10/2020 — Applications for the county’s newest grant program to assist local small business owners who have been struggling financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic are now being accepted. The application portal for the Berks County Small Business New Start Grant program opened at 9 a.m. on Sept. 10 and will remain open through Sept. 23. The portal can be accessed here: <https://communityfirstfund.org/financing/covid-loans/berks-county-small-business-new-start-program/>.

The \$6 million program, funded through the county’s CARES Act allocation, will award grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 to Berks County small business owners based on revenue level. The grants can only be used for costs incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is the latest component of the Rebuild Berks initiative from the Berks County Commissioner and Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and will be administered by Community First Fund, a non-profit, federally qualified community development financial institution (CDFI).

Potential applicants are encouraged to utilize this [application guide](#) for step-by-step directions and screenshots to help them navigate the application portal. A dedicated customer support team is also available to help applicants with questions about the online application at 888-594-7270. Other resources include a [FAQ sheet](#), [eligibility and criteria](#) and a [checklist of necessary documentation](#). All resources and documents are available in English and [Spanish](#).

Applicants can also connect with one of the following lenders from Community First Fund by phone or email if they have further questions about the application:

- Lucy Cortez, lcortez@communityfirstfund.org, 610-685-4940 (**Habla Español**)
- Alba Fernandez, afernandez@communityfirstfund.org, 610-396-7228 (**Habla Español**)
- John Scott, jscott@communityfirstfund.org, 717-205-6074

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