



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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‘CHIRP’ GRANT BOOSTING FAYETTE COUNTY BUSINESSES

Uniontown, PA – A new hospitality grant aims to help Fayette County businesses recover from hardships endured as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

State legislators recently passed Senate Bill No. 109, which included a provision known as the COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program or “CHIRP.” The program will allocate grant funding among accommodation and food/beverage service businesses statewide.

Fayette County’s share totals \$1,464,205, which is now available for businesses to apply for, in accordance with the state Commerce Law.

Fayette County Chief Community Development Specialist Art Cappella said the law authorizes the state Department of Community and Economic Development to “undertake ways and means of promoting and encouraging the prosperous development of Pennsylvania business, industry and commerce.”

“Grants will be awarded to eligible applicants as defined in (state) Act 1 of 2021, for the purpose of alleviating revenue losses and paying eligible operating expenses,” Cappella said. “This is a much-needed program, because numerous businesses were affected by the pandemic countywide.”

As tourism is one of Fayette County’s top industries, ensuring its hospitality sector remains operational is paramount, Cappella added.

“When local businesses were open to receive customers, there were many hurdles for owners to overcome, such as operating at very limited capacity and on modified hours,” he said. “For a period of time, I believe many of our businesses were closed. Unfortunately, that was the norm; all of which produced hardship for proprietors.”

Fayette County commissioners Dave Lohr, chairman; Vincent A. Vicites and Scott Dunn recently approved a contract with the Fay-Penn Economic Development Council to administer the grant to local applicants. The contract is conditioned upon a program audit of all funds expended.

Cappella said the grant is yet another way state legislators are rallying around our local businesses.

“Their goal is to keep them open; keep them employing people; and keep them serving their customers. In this regard, the impact of this funding is expected to be extremely effective,” he said. “It’s uplifting for our local tourism and hospitality industry, because the necessary money is now available to assist and, hopefully, will facilitate the recovery process. Also, with the COVID-19 vaccine becoming more and more accessible to folks, our commissioners believe that we’re coming out of this melancholy period.”

For more information about applying for the CHIRP grant, contact Fay-Penn at 724-437-7913 or visit www.faypenn.org.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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