



Westchester County launches \$5 million business FIRST grant program for MWBEs, SDVOBs & DBEs

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Westchester County, NY The Westchester County Office of Economic Development launched a \$5 million round of Business FIRST Grant funding to support Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), Certified Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Businesses (SDVOBs) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications will be accepted online and the application period will remain open for about four weeks.

Westchester County executive George Latimer said, "Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises, Certified Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Businesses and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises are important players in our local economy. They contribute to the diversity of our communities and, like many other businesses, have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased to make relief funding available to these ventures, and help them both build back up and plan for a brighter future."

Westchester County director of economic development Bridget Gibbons said, "The financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local business community is pervasive. We are committed to helping our small business community, including MWBEs, SDVOBs and DBEs, rebound and grateful to have funding available to invest in their next chapters."

Westchester County director of Minority and Women-Owned business development and Immigrant Affairs Martha Lopez said, "This \$5 million round of grant funding is an extension of the County's commitment to minority and women-owned businesses. We are proud to provide professional development, business development and networking opportunities to these entities throughout the year and are thrilled to now be extending financial resources to aid in their economic recovery."

Westchester County Business FIRST (Financial Investments for Recovery and a Sustainable Tomorrow) provides immediate financial relief to organizations in Westchester County that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. This round of funding will provide qualifying MWBEs, SDVOBs, and DBEs with grants of up to \$45,000. Grants will be provided on a reimbursable basis only and recipients must provide receipts to Community Capital before any funds will be disbursed. Those organizations needing help in completing their applications can email our partner Charlene Nixon, president and CEO of the Westchester Multicultural Chamber, to receive assistance at: businessfirst@wmccnys.org.

To be eligible, the organization's primary location must be in Westchester County. The organization must be currently open with plans to stay open, or temporarily closed with plans to reopen in 2022. To be eligible, MWBEs must be Registered with the County's MWBE program or Certified by the New York State Division of Minority and Women's Business, SDVOBs must be Certified by New York State as a Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Businesses (SDVOB) and DBEs must be Certified by a Certifying Partner in the New York State Unified Certification Program (NYSUCP).

Organizations who received funding from the federal government through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) are eligible to apply but the use of the 2022 Business FIRST grant funds should not duplicate purposes. Organizations who received a Business FIRST Grant in 2020 or 2021 from Westchester County are not eligible for this grant opportunity, nor are organizations who received a Shuttered Venue Operators Grant from the SBA.

The Westchester County Business FIRST grant program is being administered by the Westchester County Office of Economic Development through the American Rescue Plan.

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