

Gov. Evers: Invests \$120 million to support small businesses as COVID-19 cases surge

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New “We’re All In” grants investment includes \$70 Million for second round

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced today an additional \$70 million in the second round of “We’re All In” grants, bringing the second round total to \$120 million to be invested in Wisconsin small businesses. Today’s announcement brings the total investments in the “We’re All In” grant program to \$185 million.

“There’s no business that hasn’t been affected by this pandemic, and we know folks across our state need our support now more than ever,” said Gov. Evers. “As we head into the winter months, we know we have to do everything we can to make sure our businesses have the resources they need as we continue fighting this virus.”

Today’s announcement, which includes the \$50 million in grant [funding announced last month](#), comes as Wisconsin’s small businesses continue to struggle in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and in order to better meet anticipated demand for the program. During the two-week application period, which closed in early November, more than 48,000 grant applications were submitted for the second round of funding.

This summer, the first round of “We’re All In” grants provided more than \$65 million in grants to more than 26,000 businesses statewide. Despite the infusion of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds distributed by WEDC, many Wisconsin small businesses continue to struggle.

“In my conversations with restaurants, taverns, small retail stores, and other businesses that rely on people gathering indoors, we know that the continued surge of COVID-19 infections is deepening the strain and uncertainty these businesses have been facing since March,” said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes. “With thousands more businesses applying for the second phase of our ‘We’re All In’ grants than the first phase, we want to provide aid that can help these businesses carry on.”

The application for the grants closed Monday, Nov. 2. Priority will be given to businesses hardest hit by the pandemic. To have been eligible for the second round of “We’re All In” grants, an applicant must:

- Be a Wisconsin-based, for-profit business;
- Have had 75% or more of company labor costs in Wisconsin and 75% of their assets in Wisconsin in 2019;
- Earned more than \$0 and less than \$1 million in annual revenues (gross sales and receipts);
- Have started operating prior to Jan. 1, 2020 (seasonal businesses should use the highest total FTEs employed during the season); and
- Have filed their 2019 taxes.

The grants are funded by the federal CARES Act and are administered by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue in partnership with WEDC. Awards will be announced and funding distributed by mid-December.

The second round of “We’re All In” grants is the latest effort by WEDC to assist small businesses in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, WEDC provided \$2 million in state funds to diverse businesses under the Ethnic Minority Emergency Grant initiative and \$5 million to microbusinesses through the Small Business 20/20 Program.