

Gov. Evers: Unveils \$75M in grants to support equitable economic recovery and diverse business investment

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MILWAUKEE — Gov. Tony Evers today announced two new competitive grant programs totaling \$75 million to support diverse business investment in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The pandemic has underscored—and, in some cases, even exacerbated—disparities experienced by underserved communities, in particular for people of color in Wisconsin. Gov. Evers [earlier this year](#) announced \$50 million in grants to community partners working to eliminate disparities and promote equity and inclusion, bringing the governor's total investment into promoting diversity in the state's economic recovery from COVID-19 to \$125 million. The governor made the announcement today in Milwaukee's Dominican Center alongside business leaders representing some of Wisconsin's ethnic and diverse chambers of commerce.

“We’re working every day to ensure our economy recovers from this pandemic, and part of that means making sure every family, every business, and every community can bounce back,” said Gov. Evers. “These grants will help make sure some of our hardest-hit communities have a fighting chance to rebound and recover while ensuring our state can move forward and build a more prosperous, equitable future.”

The \$75 million investment announced today will be split into two programs: half will go to the Diverse Business Assistance Grant program, and half will go to the Diverse Business Investment Grant Program. The Diverse Business Assistance Grant program will provide \$37.5 million to support chambers of commerce and other collaboratives that provide technical assistance and other services to businesses owned by members of communities disproportionately affected by the coronavirus

pandemic. These grants will encourage more business development by these community members and ensure adequate support for them as they navigate an economy so influenced by the state of the pandemic. The Diverse Business Investment Grant program will provide an additional \$37.5 million to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to provide grants to micro-businesses with 10 or fewer employees that are owned by members of communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. These businesses have been both severely distressed by the economic effects of COVID-19 and have historically had difficulty accessing the credit and capital necessary to recover.

“The Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition is honored to stand with Governor Evers and his Administration to ensure that ethnic and diverse businesses in the state of Wisconsin receive the much needed technical assistance and financial supports that they need,” said Marjorie Rucker, chair of the Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition. “Ethnic and diverse businesses are often lumped into the ‘small business category’ without fully understanding the unique issues that they face. This award helps to balance the scale in favor of ensuring that these ethnic and diverse businesses get the attention that they need so that they can participate in the trajectory of true sustainability and growth in Wisconsin.”

“Investing in the success of our small business communities has been a key strategy of the Evers Administration from the start,” said Department of Administration Secretary Joel Brennan. “We are committed to making sure that every community in Wisconsin has an equal chance to thrive.”

In addition, Gov. Evers today also announced an open application period for the [previously announced](#) \$50 million Equitable Recovery Grant program. The previously announced Equitable Recovery Grant program will provide a total of \$50 million for community-based organizations working to increase equity and eliminate disparities. The program will have two tracks, with \$25 million focused on organizations providing health, early childhood, and education services or programming, and \$25 million for organizations providing economic support, housing, and environmental justice services. Grants up to \$1 million will be provided per eligible nonprofit organization, and applications will be accepted through Nov. 5, 2021. Grant program criteria for the Equitable Recovery Grant program, upcoming informational webinar, and Q&A submissions are available on the [program website](#).

All three programs are funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act and will be administered by the Department of Administration (DOA). Applications for the

Diverse Business Assistance Grant program and the CDFI Diverse Business Investment Grant program will become available in the next few weeks.

For updates on other recovery-related grant opportunities, sign up for the [Badger Bounceback update list](#).