

Dept. of Administration: DOA visit highlights \$2.5 million state investment for Kenosha businesses

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Kenosha, Wis. - Today, Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Secretary-designee Kathy Blumenfeld toured downtown businesses with Mayor John Antaramian and representatives from Downtown Kenosha, Inc. (DKI) as part of a visit to highlight state investments. Governor Tony Evers made a combined \$2.5 million investment in small businesses in the City of Kenosha as part of overall pandemic relief efforts, and Kenosha County received an overall \$162 million investment, including \$10.8 million for small business support.

Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian welcomed the visit from secretary designee Kathy Blumenfeld. "We are grateful for the pandemic relief for local small businesses," he said. "These last two years have been difficult, and the funding comes at a critical time to support their continued operations."

The Secretary-designee, Mayor Antaramian, and local stakeholders met with business owners, and toured Blue House Books and Smarty's Sweets and Treats, which both received \$10,000 Main Street Bounceback grants, as well as Equinox Botanical Boutique, which received a combined \$7,500 in We're All In, and Wisconsin Tomorrow Grants.

"On every visit, we hear how grateful folks are to be able to sustain their dreams, and how pandemic relief investments from Governor Evers have been pivotal in helping ensure their businesses continue to thrive," said DOA Secretary-designee Kathy Blumenfeld. "It's especially exciting to be meeting with three women entrepreneurs, hear their stories, and see the continued recovery of downtown Kenosha."

“It is an honor to represent our thriving downtown community as a partnered Main Street organization. The last two years have been quite challenging for small businesses especially,” said Brit Windel, DKI board member. “We, as an organization, were incredibly impressed with how well our business owners navigated through the pandemic. Innovative thinking, an incredibly supportive community and the State’s willingness to help our economy through different arms of funding, grants, and the recent bounce back grant have allowed for new business to start and existing ones to grow.”

Governor Tony Evers announced the [Main Street Bounceback grant program](#) in the spring of 2021 with the first grants made in August 2021, using \$75 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, to help small businesses and communities grow by populating vacant storefronts with new businesses and nonprofits. Earlier this week, Governor Evers announced state will [provide an additional \\$25 million investment](#) into the program, for a total investment of \$100 million to help entrepreneurs open new businesses or expand their existing operations. Overall investments supporting small businesses across the state total over \$1 billion.

Visit BadgerBounceback.wi.gov to view pandemic-related assistance as well as the latest data and success stories about how COVID-relief investments are making a difference across the state. For updates on other recovery-related grant opportunities, sign up for the [Badger Bounceback update list](#).