



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

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Dane County Set to Approve \$15 Million for Latest Round of Small Business Pandemic Support Grants

Investment in Grant Program Totals \$29 Million Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic

Dane County is set to infuse another \$15 million into small business pandemic recovery efforts, County Executive Joe Parisi announced today. Pending County Board approval later this evening, the funds will go to support the county's Small Business Pandemic Support Grant Program, a partnership launched one year ago with the organization Dane Buy Local.

"So many of our businesses are continuing to struggle to make ends meet and rebound from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "While recovery will not happen overnight, these grants play a crucial role in helping our local economy and area businesses bounce back. A huge thank you goes out to Dane Buy Local for partnering with us on this effort and working to get these grants out and into our community as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Funds for the new grants will come from Dane County's local aid allocation from the recently passed federal American Rescue Plan. To date, the local partnership has received more than \$14 million in funds to help sustain Dane County small businesses throughout the pandemic. The county's program was first launched last April with an initial \$800,000 in county dollars, prior to passage of the first federal government Covid-19 rescue plan known as the CARES Act. At the time of its creation, it was one of the very first local government-run, small business grant rescue programs in the entire country.

"While some business segments are starting to see progress, many more are still trying to find their footing after having exhausted their financial resources. In no way are businesses secure, but they've at least had a fighting chance because of the proactive efforts of Dane County through the grant program," said Dane Buy Local Executive Director Colin Murray. "The work is not done, and more grants are imperative to be able to continue the fight. The businesses need us, and we need the businesses. Additional grant funds from Dane County remain a crucial factor in how our community fares after what has been a historic period not experienced for generations, and one that most have never experienced before."

Dane Buy Local awarded \$4 million in Round 2 from this grant program, announced back in January 2021. All of those funds have now been allocated to just over 400 businesses in Dane County, with the average grant totaling \$10,000 each. A focus of support was provided to retail, restaurants, independent contractors, event and music spaces, and gym and fitness centers. In Round 1, 25% of the total grants went to minority owned business and 63% went to woman owned businesses. In Round 2, the number of grants going to minority owned businesses increased to 39%, with 59% going to woman owned businesses.

Dane Buy Local will administer Round 3 of the grants. Business owners will be able to fill out an application form beginning next week on Dane Buy Local's website (www.danebuylocal.com) to learn more about the program and/or apply for a grant. Applications will be accepted until funds run out.

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