



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: **Economic & Workforce
Development Department**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**City of Oakland, Working Solutions Announce
Disbursement of \$500,000 in Emergency Grants to
Small Businesses**

Additional Contributions Needed To Meet Demand

Oakland, CA – Today, the City of Oakland and Working Solutions, a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), announced the disbursement of emergency grants to 90 extremely low-income small businesses in Oakland to help them weather the COVID-19 crisis.

The Oakland Small Business Emergency Grant Program was administered by Working Solutions, with \$500,000 in private philanthropic dollars from the recently established [Oakland COVID-19 Relief Fund](#). Demand was overwhelming; more than 900 individual businesses applied to Working Solutions for the 90 available grants, representing a total demand of more than \$5 million. More funding is needed to provide additional grants to Oakland’s most vulnerable businesses. To donate to the Oakland Small Business Emergency Grant Program, please visit the Working Solutions website at: www.workingsolutions.org/donate or contact Working Solutions at grants@workingsolutions.org or (415) 780-1217.

All 90 grants went to extremely low-income business owners, earning 35 percent of [Area Median Income](#) (AMI) or less. Other characteristics of the grantees:

- 86% of the businesses are owned by people of color
- 69% of the businesses are owned by women
- 84% of the businesses generate less than \$250,000 in annual revenue
- 22% went to business owners that used a non-English application
- 90% of the businesses rent their space

Grants went to businesses throughout Oakland, with a majority going to businesses located in East Oakland, Chinatown, West Oakland, Fruitvale, and Downtown neighborhoods. A detailed demographic and geographic breakdown of the grant recipients is attached. The grants will support a wide range of businesses, from retail shops, beauty salons, and bakeries to fitness, car repair, and arts-related businesses.

“Our small businesses have been devastated in recent weeks and with this fund, we were able to very quickly distribute much needed cash to some of our most vulnerable businesses,” said Mayor Libby Schaaf. “But the need remains great. We urge our private and philanthropic partners to donate additional funds so the grant program can support more businesses, as we lobby for additional State and Federal aid to be made available. Our businesses need help now.”

The grants were made to cover costs such as rent, utilities, worker payroll, outstanding debt, and other immediate operational costs. To qualify, a small

(more)

business owner had to be low-income, with priority given to extremely low-income business owners. Businesses also had to be based in Oakland, and have suffered financial loss due to the COVID-19 crisis. Targeted outreach about the grant program was conducted to businesses owned by people of color, non-English speakers with the application available in four languages, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations that may have trouble accessing other forms of relief capital.

“Working Solutions is pleased to administer this program and has quickly gotten funds to some of Oakland’s most under-resourced businesses during this crisis,” said Sara Razavi, CEO of Working Solutions. “We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic will require multiple phases of response, and we will continue our efforts to support low-income business owners.”

Hear from three grant recipients on what this funding means for their businesses.

[English](#) [Mandarin](#) [Spanish](#)

Additional Resources for Small Businesses

A list of up-to-date resources, including information about worker benefits and public and private sources of funding for small businesses, can be found on the City of Oakland’s [Business & Worker Resources website page](#). The site is updated regularly as more information becomes available, so please check it often. All small businesses are encouraged to immediately pursue other resources, including zero-interest loans from KIVA.org, Facebook’s new small business grants, and financial products and technical advice from local nonprofits such as AnewAmerica, Pacific Community Ventures, Alameda County Small Business Development Center, and Main Street Launch.

About Working Solutions

[Working Solutions](#) is a nonprofit, U.S. Treasury-certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides affordable capital, free business consulting, and community connections for underserved entrepreneurs – primarily low-income individuals, women, and people of color – to start and grow thriving local businesses in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Founded in 1999 as a workforce development program, Working Solutions launched its lending services in 2005. Working Solutions complements its financial services with business consulting support focused on financial and risk management. To date, Working Solutions has made \$24 million in microloans and grants to over 1,000 local small businesses and provided over 12,000 hours in business consulting services.

About the Oakland COVID-19 Relief Fund

The [Oakland COVID-19 Relief Fund](#) was recently launched to support nonprofits working with Oakland’s most vulnerable community members – including seniors, children, limited-English speakers, small businesses, and people experiencing homelessness as well as our first responders. The Relief Fund provides immediate grants to nonprofit organizations working on the frontlines in four priority areas: food, homelessness, community health, and economic security.

To date, the fund has raised over \$4.5 million dollars in private funding through the generosity of major foundations and corporations as well as more than 150 community members who have made individual gifts. To donate to the fund, visit [OaklandFund.org](#).



Working Solutions
Capital. Consulting. Community.

2020 Oakland Small Business Emergency Grants

April 21, 2020

	Grand Total		Grant Recipients	
Unique Applications Received:	937		90	
English	835	89%	70	78%
Spanish	54	6%	8	9%
Chinese	41	4%	9	10%
Vietnamese	7	1%	3	3%
Race of Business Owner:				
Asian	265	28%	26	29%
Black or African American	227	24%	29	32%
Hispanic or LatinX	145	15%	17	19%
Multi-racial	18	2%	1	1%
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian or American Indian	12	1%	1	1%
White	190	20%	11	12%
Other	54	6%	3	3%
Not Provided or Alternative Provided	26	3%	2	2%
Gender of Business Owner:				
Female	500	53%	62	69%
Male	412	44%	27	30%
Nonbinary	5	1%	0	0%
Transgender	1	0%	0	0%
Not Provided	19	2%	1	1%
Business Revenue:				
\$501K - \$1M	97	10%	4	4%
\$251K - \$500K	124	13%	10	11%
\$101K - \$250K	175	19%	14	16%
\$51K - \$100K	187	20%	20	22%
<\$50K	348	37%	41	46%
Not Provided	6	1%	1	1%
Rent or Own Business Location:				
Rent	815	87%	81	90%
Own	122	13%	9	10%
Employees:				
	Average:		Average:	
Pre COVID-19 Full Time	2.1		1.5	
Current Full Time	1.1		0.9	
Pre COVID-19 Part Time	1.8		1.7	
Current Part Time	0.8		0.7	
Business Zip Code:				
94601	116	12%	9	10%
94602	39	4%	4	4%
94603	29	3%	3	3%
94605	47	5%	7	8%
94606	65	7%	7	8%
94607	142	15%	14	16%
94608	35	4%	0	0%
94609	71	8%	7	8%
94610	60	6%	7	8%
94611	62	7%	6	7%
94612	101	11%	13	14%
94615	0	0%	0	0%
94617	0	0%	0	0%
94618	28	3%	3	3%
94619	55	6%	6	7%
94621	41	4%	4	4%
Outside of Oakland	46	5%	0	0%