



City of
OAKLAND
California

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**City of Oakland Outlines Small Business, Workforce
Support to Mitigate Impacts of COVID-19**

Oakland, CA –To mitigate the economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City wants to highlight a variety of programs and efforts to support small businesses and workers. These resources include assistance with small business taxes, state and federal loan programs, worker benefits programs, and other direct business support. The City has also launched a [website](#) to serve as a portal for all the local, state and federal resources available to support small businesses and workers during this crisis.

“Oakland’s small businesses, and the workers that support them, are essential to the vitality of our city,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “The sharp decline in business and revenue caused by COVID-19 puts workers and businesses at great risk and we need to mitigate these impacts. These are just the first steps we are undertaking to support our small business community.”

Assistance with Business Taxes

The City will work with small business owners to help meet their tax obligations in a flexible manner. In response to this crisis, the City’s Finance Department will waive late payment penalties for small businesses resulting from failure to file taxes due March 1, 2020 on time due to COVID-19. To apply for a payment plan or to seek waiver of penalties due to COVID-19, please call the customer service line at (510) 238-3704 or email BTwebsupport@oaklandca.gov.

Direct Technical Help for Small Businesses

Small businesses can receive direct help from the City’s Business Assistance Center by visiting visit oaklandbusinesscenter.com and completing the **online assessment form**. Staff in the Business Assistance Center will then work directly with the business to connect them with Oakland’s many business support organizations that offer financial products, technical assistance and other services to help local small businesses sturdy themselves in face of the pandemic.

Call for Data about Small Business Losses to Inform Program Development

With help from private philanthropic partners, the City is actively exploring funding opportunities to help vulnerable small businesses who have experienced losses related to COVID-19. To aid this work, the City is inviting businesses to submit data about the nature and extent of the revenue losses resulting from COVID-19 via [an input form](#). This data will help inform the grants funds, and help Oakland be prepared to take advantage of forthcoming State and Federal financial programs (see below). We will share additional details as these programs are developed.

State and Federal Loan Programs to Help Small Businesses

The Federal SBA is working directly with state Governors to provide targeted, low-interest loans to small businesses and non-profits that have been severely impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The SBA’s [Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#) provides

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small businesses with working capital loans of up to \$2 million that can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.

These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%.

The City's website will be updated as more detail about the availability of these loans for Oakland small businesses becomes available. General information is [available online](#).

In addition, the State of California's Small Business Finance Center provides loan guarantees and direct loans for small businesses that experience capital access barriers through its [Disaster Relief Loan Guarantee Program](#).

Oaklanders employed by small businesses may also be facing impacts from COVID-19. Here are available resources to help Oakland's workforce.

City of Oakland's Paid Sick Leave Requirement

The City is reminding all workers and employers of Oakland's voter-approved sick leave benefits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that workers have the ability to take paid time off when they are sick. [Measure FF](#), voter-approved in November 2014, requires the accrual of paid sick leave for any individuals employed in Oakland. The minimum rate of accrual is one hour paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked. Employers with less than 10 employees must allow employees to accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick leave at a time and larger employers with 10 or more employees must allow employees to accrue at least 72 hours of paid sick leave. If an employee feels as if their paid sick leave accrual is not accurate, they should reach out to minwageinfo@oaklandca.gov.

Waiting Period for State Unemployment & Disability Insurance Waived

Governor Newsom's [Executive Order](#) on March 12, 2020, waives the one-week waiting period for people who are unemployed and/or disabled as a result of COVID-19 to seek unemployment and disability benefits. Affected workers can visit the [California Labor & Workforce Development Agency's website](#) to review what benefits are available to them including other benefits related to sick leave, paid family leave and workers' compensation benefits as well. Additional information and resources can be found at [Ca.Gov/Coronavirus2019](#)

Help with Mounting Housing Costs and Residential Displacement

Through the [Keep Oakland Housed](#) program, services are available to all Oakland residents who are at risk of losing their housing. In addition to emergency financial assistance to help with rent, utility payments, and other housing-related costs, the program also offers supportive services and legal representation for tenants with an active eviction lawsuit.

City Website to Provide Information for Small Businesses and Workers

In this rapidly evolving situation, the City is committed to providing up-to-date information and online resources to support local businesses and workers as they become available. Please visit oaklandbusinesscenter.com for the latest information.