



City of
OAKLAND
California

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 8, 2020

**City, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the SF
Bay Area to Provide Webinars, Consultations to Assist
Oakland Small Businesses with Lease Negotiations**

Oakland, CA – The City of Oakland received \$36.9 million in State of California CARES Act funding. The Oakland City Council allocated \$150,000 of that funding to the nonprofit Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area (LCCRSF) to provide legal advice and assistance on lease negotiations to small businesses that have suffered revenue losses due to COVID-19.

Many Oakland small businesses have struggled to pay rent and require legal advice to help negotiate lease terms with commercial landlords. LCCRSF will provide legal assistance through commercial leasing webinars, one-hour consultations, and longer-term legal assistance. Business owners can access these free legal services at <https://lccrsf.org/legal-services-for-oakland-small-businesses/>

“While the Oakland City Council has passed one of the strongest eviction moratoriums in the nation, we know Oakland’s struggling small business community needs legal insight on how to approach their landlords about payment plans and other lease terms,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “Knowledgeable attorneys will provide advice and assistance to help small businesses retain their brick-and-mortar locations preserving the character of our commercial neighborhoods and the availability of goods and services for Oakland residents and visiting shoppers.”

“We are excited to partner with the City of Oakland to provide critical legal services to small businesses experiencing the painful financial impacts of COVID-19,” said Tobias Damm-Luhr, Legal Services for Entrepreneurs Staff Attorney at LCCRSF. “This collaboration is an opportunity to ensure that our local businesses are not evicted and displaced during the pandemic and that they can continue providing their goods and services to the community.”

LCCRSF will hold **webinars on commercial lease negotiations during COVID-19** through the end of 2020. While the 60- to 75-minute webinars are free, advance registration is required. Presented by volunteer attorneys from local law firms, the webinars will be offered in various languages as noted below.

(more)

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Webinars are scheduled for:

- Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 5 p.m. (English)
- Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 5 p.m. (English)
- Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 2 p.m. (Spanish)
- Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at Noon (English)
- Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 5 p.m. (Vietnamese-Tentative)
- Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 3 p.m. (English)
- Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 5 p.m. (Cantonese-Tentative)
- Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at Noon (English)

Webinar recordings in several languages will also be posted to LCCRSF's and the City's website.

For more individualized legal advice, Oakland small business owners will be able to request **hour-long, one-on-one consultations** with an attorney. To access this free service, business owners complete an online application at <http://bit.ly/OaklandLeaseAdvice>. LCCRSF staff will then contact the client to schedule a 30-minute intake call. The intake call facilitates client/attorney matching.

Participation in a webinar prior to the one-on-one consultations is encouraged, but not required. The one-on-one consultation includes review of client's lease and related documents before the consultation.

Longer-term legal assistance, which may include lease negotiation, pre-litigation and settlement negotiations or representation in a court proceeding, will be available for up to 16 Oakland low-income small business owners who cannot afford to hire an attorney on their own. The assistance provided will depend on the expertise of the volunteer and contract attorneys who are available to provide services at the time of the clients' requests. Participation in a one-hour consultation is not required prior to the request longer-term assistance, which is capped at \$5,000 per client for payment of attorneys' legal fees. Small business owners who wish to receive additional legal assistance will be responsible for attorney's fees above \$5,000.

About LCCRSF

As one of the oldest civil rights institutions on the West Coast, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area (LCCRSF) works to dismantle systems of oppression and racism and build an equitable and just society. Formed in 1968 to bridge the legal community and the Civil Rights Movement, LCCRSF advances the rights of people of color, immigrants, refugees, and low-income individuals.

Grant Programs Available

This is the latest CARES Act-funded program launched by the City of Oakland. Grant programs for [small businesses](#), [individual artists and arts nonprofits](#), [community-serving nonprofits](#) and [low-income renters and homeowners](#) as well as an [RFQ to fund support for low- and moderate-income renters and homeowners](#) were announced in September. Learn more about the \$36.9 million in CARES Act Funding at: oaklandca.gov/CaresAct

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