



News Release

Unified Government Public Relations

701 N. 7th Street, Room 620
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Mike Taylor, Public Relations Director (913) 573-5565

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2020

WyCo Distributes \$825,000 in Recovery Grants to 85 Small Businesses

Helps Owners Overcome Unforeseen COVID Costs & Losses, Invest in Future

To support local small businesses impacted by COVID-19, the Unified Government (UG) recently distributed \$825,000 in grants to more than 85 local small businesses in Wyandotte County through the *WyCo Loves Local Biz Grants* program. These grants, distributed primarily in \$10,000 and \$20,000 increments, are intended to help offset unforeseen costs or losses resulting from COVID, while encouraging continued reinvestment as the community attempts to recover.

“Local and small businesses are the backbone of Wyandotte County and critical to our economic recovery and future growth efforts,” said Mayor David Alvey. “As such, the *WyCo Loves Local Biz Grant* program provides much-needed relief to local businesses, helping them offset unforeseen hurdles caused by COVID while also allowing them to invest in their future. By helping local companies succeed and grow, the UG will simultaneously maintain and create jobs for residents throughout the entire community.”

The impact of these recovery grants on local business owners and entrepreneurs has been immediate and profound, helping restaurants, barbershops, day-care facilities, bakeries, salons, and others offset the impact of the economic downturn on their individual operations, employees, and customers. The monies have been used for personal protection equipment (PPE) purchases, rental or mortgage payments, facility remediation/sanitization requirements, vendor payments, improved technology, etc. The response has been overwhelming and emotional, with heartfelt appreciation, joy, and tears from the recipients, many who said this unexpected relief was critical to helping their business survive and recover.

“This COVID-relief recovery grant has had a significant, immediate impact for our locally-owned business,” said Jason Oliver, owner of J. Oliver Construction in Kansas City, KS. “It has helped offset unanticipated costs and income loss related to COVID, and allowed us to sustain our employees and our small company until the economy recovers.” The company installs commercial playsets for schools, neighborhoods, and others in the region, and since COVID has restricted in-person sales meetings the grant monies have allowed them to create a website and hire a marketing person to assist with new business development calls.

Regina Williamson, owner of Gina’s Braiding Lounge in Kansas City, KS offered, “The *WyCo Loves Small Biz Grant* was an unexpected and invaluable resource for me. As an independent small business owner, it has provided a bridge to manage short-term financial stress caused by COVID, will help us continue serving our customers, and allows me to invest in the future of my business.” Williamson is using the grant monies to help with business expenses and other costs since customer traffic to her salon has been impacted by COVID.

Created by the UG's Economic Development team, utilizing federal CARES Act funding, the UG Commission approved this unique program recognizing its ability to directly and immediately impact local small businesses struggling under the weight of the pandemic. Applications were due in late September, with the grants being distributed to recipients in two separate Rounds over the last several weeks.

Media Inquiries: Mike Taylor
UG Public Relations Director
(913) 573-5565
mtaylor@wycokck.org

Dave Reno
UG Public Information Officer
(913) 573-5307
dreno@wycokck.org