



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2021

County Board of Supervisors provides \$70 million in 4 rounds of Business Assistance Grants

Ventura, CA - The County of Ventura Board of Supervisors has unanimously supported more than \$70 million in Business Assistance Grants for small businesses throughout the County of Ventura since the summer of 2020. The Board received a report at Tuesday's Board of Supervisors meeting of the latest status and the impact those funds are having on local businesses. More than 7,000 businesses are in the final review to receive \$10,000 in grant funding.

"In the midst of such difficult times it's been extraordinary to stand up for our community and small businesses and allocate funds to address multiple health, social and economic impacts. I am grateful that the County's strong financial position allows us to support our local economy through supportive programs like Business Assistance," said Chair of the Board of Supervisors Linda Parks. "This funding has helped many small businesses keep their doors open."

The County launched programs one and two to provide \$5,000 grants for eligible COVID-19 impacted businesses making between \$25,000 and \$2.5 million in gross revenues. A third program allowed those businesses that received grants to qualify for an additional \$5,000. Businesses that had not received any previous County business grants were eligible to apply for \$10,000 in funding in the fourth program.

"The survival of our local businesses, the economy, and jobs they support is essential to the wellbeing of Ventura County. Every business matters. Each one represents owners, workers, jobs and families that are vital to our community. We hope that the support will help these businesses continue to move forward," said County Executive Officer Mike Powers. "We have heard deep gratitude from businesses who have received grants and we appreciate the opportunity to help them during this challenging time."

In total 1,452 businesses submitted applications during the Fourth Business Assistance Grant program. There were five total walk-in sites located in Saticoy, Port Hueneme, Oxnard, Simi Valley, and Ventura where businesses could go to receive assistance with filing their grant application. The application period closed on September 2, 2021. Outreach for the fourth program was focused on businesses that had not previously applied for help. The effort required close collaboration with cities, chambers of commerce, and local nonprofit organizations assisting more than 7,000 businesses through the course of the 4 programs.

"The first grant helped us keep the lights on. It enabled our health care providers to continue to see patients and provide much needed free, accessible primary care to victims and survivors of human



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trafficking and domestic violence. The additional grant will do that plus allow us to begin providing trauma informed therapy services proven to help with healing such as art therapy, trauma sensitive yoga and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing,” said Doctor Anthony Walls the Medical Director of Healthcare for Justice, a nonprofit clinic formed specifically to provide free direct primary healthcare to victims and survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence here in Ventura County.

The business recovery effort has been supported by a dedicated team of disaster service workers who have been devoted to help every business have a chance at getting help. During the third program, extensive outreach was needed to explain to previous participants that they qualified for a second \$5,000 grant. With a deadline looming less than a week away, there were more than 1,300 businesses that were eligible for the second \$5,000 but had not applied. The team called every business. Lists of eligible businesses were shared with cities who emailed and called businesses as well. Chambers of commerce volunteered to help. Emails went out daily to remind business owners to apply. The effort resulted in 860 businesses applying in one week. The response rate for eligible businesses was 84.5%

The Board of Supervisors has allocated over \$373 million in community assistance from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund under the CARES Act to support businesses, renters, seniors, homeless individuals, farmworkers, cities, and hospitals that have been impacted by the pandemic.

Currently, the Business Assistance Grant programs are closed to new applicants. More information on business assistance can be found at www.VCbusinessgrants.org.