

Response to Novel COVID-19 Coronavirus

April 1, 2020

To the members of the Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. and Greater Milwaukee Community,

Thank you for your patience with us making this announcement on behalf of our organization to the public. We have been busy the past several days in communication with all of our members and clients, making sure all is well and rapidly responding when all is not well.

We have been swiftly coordinating and filling gaps between our referring business organizations, social services agencies' capacity and our client's immediate needs.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and Pregnancy](#). We are taking all precautions to keep our business members and ourselves safe.

Per CDC and State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services Guidelines:

- All Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce Staff are complying with the Governor's order to shelter in place, leaving home only when essential.
- We sanitize surfaces of our homes including high traffic areas and commonly touched areas such as door handles, light switches, and handrails.
- We wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after every time of blowing noses, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- We cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the (covered) trash.
- We avoid touching our eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

We are also requiring the following of our members:

- We are requiring that our business members disclose if they themselves, or anyone in their family, is sick AT ALL, or have had contact with a known case of COVID-19, or traveled to a high risk area, to call us and we can discuss the plan for their care.
- In the event that a Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce staff arrives at a home where anyone is sick with the flu, fever, vomiting, coughing, or displaying any respiratory issues upon arrival, the staff person will not enter into the home/ end the visit to avoid potential spread.

As per the [Governor's Safer-at-Home order](#), Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce is described under Section 13 'Essential Businesses and Operations' where Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce Staff provide business restoration advise and support.

We are committed to ensuring that our business members have access to resources that support the success of their business.

Please know we care deeply about the health and wellbeing of our members, as we are doing all we can to vigorously safeguard families while answering calls for assistance with diapers, baby essentials, groceries, and general household items. Our safety measures and practice

Here is the link for the EDBC's COVID-19 Small Business Impact Grant:

<https://www.edbcwisconsin.org/covid19> The explanation is on our website and also in the grant application so including it as an additional resource in your weekly correspondence is great if you have businesses that you think would want to take advantage.

Please note the following:

- 1) This grant program is only available to dues-paying twbcc business members that are a part. Please email me separately to discuss if you have any questions.
- 2) This grant is up to \$500 (if the request is smaller than we can stretch our funds). It can cover things such as commercial rents, technology upgrades to internal software, payroll for employees, inventory, marketing and branding and general capacity- building services. We will issue the checks directly to the businesses (due to shelter-in-place guidelines). Before a grant is issued to a business, someone from the EDBC's Grant Committee will reach out to ensure that the applicant claiming to be a member is actually a member in good standing (this means that your dues are PAID and received through a date this fiscal year). If you do not have a membership structure that is self-explanatory (it costs X to be a member of our chamber and it is easily found, accessible and communicated to the general public) then applicants claiming to be a part of your chamber may not be awarded. Because the EDBC is responsible for tracking the outcomes and data for these grants, we need to ensure that this money is distributed in line with the rules that are set-forth in the terms of the grant.
- 3) All businesses that apply MUST make less than \$1 million dollars per year and may be asked to provide a Balance Sheet (the ask will come from the Grant Committee). Again, these are CRA funds so they must be tracked accordingly.
- 4) These funds should arrive the middle of April 2020.

Thanks everyone, be well and take care of yourselves and be considerate to those around you. I look forward to see you all again soon.

Sincerely,

Ruben W. Hopkins
Chairman/CEO
The Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc.