



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2020

Rental and business grant programs launch June 17 and June 24 *County aims to help those struggling from impacts of COVID-19*

Ventura, CA – The County of Ventura launches Rental and Business Assistance Programs aimed at providing relief from the impacts of COVID-19. Residents can apply for rental assistance from June 17 to July 1, 2020 at www.ventura.org/rent and business owners can apply at www.vcreopens.com from June 24 to July 8, 2020.

“Our community is hurting. It is our hope that these programs will provide at least some relief where it is needed most. Helping our community members and our business owners is critical as we recover. There is a long way to go, but these are important first steps,” said Mike Powers, County Executive Officer.

The Rental Assistance Program may provide temporary rental assistance for Ventura County residents who owe past-due rent because of a hardship due to COVID-19. Priority will be given to eligible applicants with an annual household income of less than 50% area median income, followed by 80% AMI.

The application process opens online at www.ventura.org/rent on June 17, 2020. Applications must be fully completed by July 1, 2020, including submission of information requested from each applicant’s landlord to support the application. If more eligible households apply than total funding can support, a computerized lottery system will be used to fund eligible households at random.

“We anticipate a great need for this program countywide,” said Melissa Livingston, Director for the Human Services Agency. “Many renters are just now returning to work, and they’re struggling to pay for child care, food, and other basic needs – all as they’re watching their back-rent debt grow. This rental program is designed to relieve some of that financial stress.”

Those who qualify could potentially receive rental assistance in the amount of \$1,500 for a studio/1 bedroom and \$2,500 for a 2 bedroom or larger, with a maximum of two months of rent owed. While the funding may not fully cover monthly rent, it will assist in reducing amounts owed.

Payments will be made directly to landlords.

Community outreach for this program will be key. Community members are encouraged to help spread the word about this opportunity. The Human Services Agency will work with other County agencies, cities and community partners including El Concilio, Interface 211, United Way, Red Cross, 805Help.Org, Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Help of Ojai, Cabrillo Economic Development, Westminster Clinic, the Santa Paula Latino Town Hall and other community groups to encourage eligible individuals to apply.

The rental program is federally funded by the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and prioritizes rental assistance for those with very low incomes who have been unable to pay rent due to the impacts of COVID-19.



COUNTY OF VENTURA COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Mike Powers
County Executive Officer

800 So. Victoria Ave., Hall of Administration, Ventura, CA 93009
<http://www.ventura.org> <http://www.vcnewschannel.com>

Ashley Bautista
Public Information Officer
TEL: (805) 654-2640

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The Business Assistance Grant Program includes grants of \$5,000 each for small businesses to alleviate impacts from COVID-19 for allowed uses such as payroll support, rent and lease payments, costs for personal protective equipment, purchases related to the operation of their businesses, and extraordinary business expenses for adhering to compliance protocols for reopening. The applications will be available from June 24 to July 8, 2020 at www.vcreopens.com.

“This program will help mitigate the devastating impacts that COVID-19 has had to our local businesses. We will work with chambers of commerce, business improvement districts, cities and other business organizations to help reach those most in need,” said Paul Stamper, Deputy County Executive Officer.

The funding will be awarded in two phases. For the first phase, Business Assistance Grants will be \$5,000 awards to 1,000 recipients and will be available to those small businesses and nonprofit organizations that meet the following criteria:

- The business or nonprofit organization maintains a business license in Ventura County.
- The business or nonprofit organization was in business on, or before, March 17, 2020.
- In 2019, the business or nonprofit organization had total annual gross revenue between \$25,000 and \$2 million.
- The business or nonprofit has registered with www.vcreopens.com if eligible.
- The nonprofit organization is exempt from tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) per an IRS determination letter.

The Ventura County Community Foundation will oversee the COVID-19 Business Assistance Grant Program with the coordination of a Special Oversight Committee. To ensure efficient and immediate distribution of funding to those impacted.