



Development  
Services Agency

# Development COVID-19 Update

April 17, 2020



## OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Development has assigned a team of staff members to read and respond to thousands of emails that Ohioans have sent to [BusinessHelp@Development.Ohio.Gov](mailto:BusinessHelp@Development.Ohio.Gov). So far, the team has responded to 1,600 emails, providing information about applying for Economic Injury Disaster Loans and Paycheck Protection Program funding and many other types of questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [Coronavirus.Ohio.Gov/BusinessHelp](https://Coronavirus.Ohio.Gov/BusinessHelp) website also is attracting significant traffic. From April 8 through April 14, the site had 11,650 visits and 13,305 pageviews. Weekday visits to the website regularly top 2,000.

The **Office of Small Business Relief** and Development's business centers have been helping small businesses apply for economic assistance. So far, more than 38,000 Paycheck Protection Program loans have been approved for Ohio businesses, the sixth-highest total in the U.S. Those loans total \$10.37 billion, also the sixth-highest in the country.

Director Lydia Mihalik conducted media interviews with Columbus Business First in support of the Office, and Business Services Division Staff provided information about the office in a webinar hosted by Team NEO that attracted more than 100 economic development officials in northeast Ohio.

The 1-833-BIZ-OHIO phone line is now actively directing callers to the U.S. Small Business Administration or their local small business resource partners. Those include **Development's Small Business Development Centers, Minority Business Assistance Centers, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership.**



## MORE HELP ON THE WAY FOR INDIVIDUALS

Development's Office of Community Assistance is making changes to program guidelines as a result of an Executive Order that Governor Mike DeWine signed relating to emergency rule-making authority on April 8. A provision allowing a rule modification for Development's Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) was included in the order.

With the emergency rule, a client's income can be calculated on a 30-day basis, instead of the previous rule's 90-day requirement. Additionally, the emergency rule allows the income threshold to be the current rule level of 125 percent of the federal poverty guideline and added in the language "or at an eligibility level designated by the United States Congress or the federal Department of Health and Human Services." This addition was necessary because the federal CARES Act sets the threshold for CSBG benefits at 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines instead of the previous 125 percent. Development now has 120 days from the effective date to make the rule permanent.

In addition, the **Office of Community Assistance** provided guidance to stakeholders who implement the **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** on the federal CARES Act. Specifically, the stimulus checks (up to \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per qualifying child) and the federal unemployment supplement (called disaster emergency assistance) are considered excluded income for the purposes of determining HEAP benefits. And the online Energy Assistance Application portal has been updated so that individuals who are self-employed can provide 30-day income information in order to demonstrate the amount of income received and the impact from COVID-19.



## WE'RE RESPONDING TO SMALL BUSINESSES

Since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis in Ohio, local **Small Business Development Centers** have provided advice and assistance to thousands of businesses, and **Minority Business Assistance Centers** across the state are doing the same.

Many of those businesses have received at least an hour of formal counseling or have attended a training event. Thousands more have reached out with specific questions that are being answered through phone calls and emails. Those informal requests for assistance are at least 10 times the normal volume for our SBDCs.

The typical SBDC provides assistance to 10,000 companies every year, and the Ohio SBDC at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs reports a 500 percent increase in new clients in the past few weeks compared to a similar period. That increase is being experienced across the SBDC network.

Our assistance networks also are being proactive in reaching out to businesses. Offices across the state are organizing webinars and virtual meetings, and they're producing fact sheets and training videos.



## TOURISMOHIO PROMOTES SUPPORT LOCAL OHIO

Director Mihalik has conducted several interviews set up through TourismOhio to promote the Support Local Ohio Campaign, including with WSYX, WCOL and Cleveland Magazine.

The Support Local Ohio campaign advertising began Monday, April 13. Advertising channels include TV, digital, native, connected TV, YouTube, social, and print. TV will run through May 10, and all other advertising channels will continue through May 17.

iHeartRadio has begun promoting TourismOhio's Support Local Ohio campaign on all of their Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus stations for free.



Their promotion includes iHeartRadio in each market doing four social media posts per day, four live mentions per day, placements on their website and retweets, tags, or reposts of Ohio. Find It Here. social content.

TourismOhio has shared a sample news release with stakeholder groups and members of the tourism industry so that organizations and businesses can use it as a template to communicate with local media about the Support Local Ohio campaign.

In addition, the [Ohio.org/e-Learning](https://ohio.org/e-Learning) page featuring online learning opportunities continues to grow with more offerings available. The print-at-home TourismOhio [activity book is now live](#) on the e-learning page and is a perfect at-home learning activity for grade school children.

NEWS WEATHER ON YOUR SIDE CORONAVIRUS CHIME IN

### State of Ohio launches new marketing effort to help small businesses

by Rodney Dunigan | Thursday, April 9th 2020

Support local! It's a message we are hearing over and over. Small businesses across Ohio are fighting to stay open, now the state is launching a new effort they hope will help. (WSYX/WTTE)





## SUCCESS STORY

B.R. Knez Construction Inc., a Concord, Ohio, commercial and residential real estate developer, is in a better position today after working with the **Ohio Small Business Development Center** at Lakeland Community College and supported by the Office and the **Development Services Agency**.

The company experienced a significant downturn after Ohioans began sheltering in place and was forced to reduce staff. The company reached out to Cathy Walsh, the director at the Lakeland Community College SBDC, who provided critical information and advice on the Paycheck Protection Program.

The company's initial application was submitted on April 3. It was approved two days later, and the company received the loan funds on Tuesday, April 14.

"We are relieved to have payroll covered for the next two months," said Gillian Hall, Vice President of Operations and General Counsel for B.R. Knez Construction.



**Development** also is using its social media channels to raise awareness of programs and assistance available through the state and federal governments. We also are urging small businesses to reach out to **Ohio Small Business Development Centers** and **Minority Business Assistance Centers** around the state for help in applying for federal assistance and to plan for the future.



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We welcome your thoughts and comments about this newsletter. Email [Jonathan.Gormley@development.ohio.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Gormley@development.ohio.gov)