



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

News Release

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Montgomery County Small Business Assistance Program helping Wheaton businesses that have demonstrated revenue losses during construction of new County office building

More than \$222,000 has been distributed to 8 businesses impacted by first stages of three-year Wheaton Revitalization Project and an additional \$12,000 more has been approved

Montgomery County's Small Business Assistance Program, which was created by County Executive Ike Leggett and the Montgomery County Council to provide technical and financial assistance to qualified Downtown Wheaton businesses during the three-year Wheaton Revitalization construction project, has distributed more than \$222,000 to eight businesses in the first phase of the program. An additional \$12,000 has been approved for dispersal to three additional businesses. Applications from six other businesses are currently being reviewed.

More than 90 businesses in the "Wheaton Triangle" area that may be impacted by the construction of a new 14-story Montgomery County office building and adjacent town square have had the opportunity to apply for the innovative form of help from the County to stabilize their businesses during the construction period that began in June 2017.

Businesses are eligible for reimbursement of revenue losses if they can demonstrate an adverse financial impact since construction began. The unique aspect of the County program is that businesses owners will be eligible for direct financial assistance—up to a maximum of \$75,000 over the construction period. That limit was established as part of the legislation that created the program.

The amounts of approved reimbursements have ranged from \$1,680 to \$68,270. In addition to the eight businesses that have received reimbursements, the County's Department of Finance is processing applications from six additional businesses. The Latino Economic Development Center, which has contracted with the County to assist businesses during construction, is working with at least three other businesses to prepare applications.

The County Council enacted Bill 6-12 that created the Small Business Assistance Program. The program established \$200,000 in seed money during Fiscal Year 2018 and County Executive Leggett provided for additional funding in his FY19 recommended budget that the Council is now reviewing. The intent of the program is to assist the Wheaton businesses surrounding the construction site, many of which are sole-proprietors and have Latino ownership.

"Small businesses are vital to our community and protecting them is a top priority," said Councilmember Nancy Navarro, who represents Council District 4 that includes Downtown Wheaton. "This is why I felt it was

necessary to sponsor Bill 6-12 at the County Council, creating the Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP). These are businesses have served this community in so many ways for a very long time, so now they need our support to ensure they get through the construction phase of this revitalization project.”

Eligible businesses that have yet to apply for assistance can do so through the County’s Department of Finance, which oversees the program. Applications and program details are available, in English and Spanish, via the department’s website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/finance. Go to the link for “Small Business Assistance Program.”

In addition to financial assistance, the Small Business Assistance Program offers technical assistance to the impacted businesses. Businesses have received marketing, business planning and legal assistance that is designed to help develop long-term plans that will take them well-beyond the construction period. The Latino Economic Development Center has been working to provide technical and marketing assistance to the businesses. The Maryland Small Business Development Center, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Montgomery County and the Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce also have been involved in providing assistance.

The project will transform Wheaton’s central business district with a mixed-use, transit-oriented development. In addition to the construction of the 14-story government office building, the project will provide 397 below ground parking spaces, first floor retail space and the new town square. Most significantly impacted during construction is the Wheaton Triangle area between Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue. The local roads that form the Triangle area include Grandview Avenue, Reddie Drive and Triangle Lane.

The main occupant of the new building will be the relocated Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which is now in Downtown Silver Spring. The 308,000 square-foot, LEED platinum certified Wheaton office building also will be home to several County departments including Permitting Services, Environmental Protection, Health and Human Services, Recreation and Community Use of Public Facilities. In addition, relocating to the new building will be the Wheaton Urban District and the Mid-County Regional Services Center.

A camera has been installed to view construction on the site and can be accessed via the project’s website at: wheatonproject.com.

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