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LeeCARES Business Relaunch grants end June 26; Business Relaunch begins July 6

Fort Myers, FL, June 19, 2020 – Businesses have a final opportunity to apply for help through the LeeCARES Business Relaunch grant program from June 22 to June 26. Then, the county will move to its next phase of assistance to businesses.

Under the Business Relaunch program, assistance is available to businesses with one to 25 employees as of March 1 that were closed by Gov. Ron DeSantis' Safer at Home Order. The application period will close at 8 p.m. Friday, June 26.

The one-time, \$5,000 relaunch grants are to help offset the unintended costs of reopening or relaunching a small business, such as sanitation, signage or marketing. Funds can only be used to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by the required closures that are not covered by insurance or another federal program. Business owners must be Lee County residents.

On July 6, Lee County will launch its COVID-19 business assistance program for job creation. The program, referred to as "Business Rehire," will:

- Provide grant funding to small businesses for rehiring full-time equivalent (FTE) positions that were on the payroll as of March 1, 2020. Eligible positions must be rehired on or after July 6, 2020.
- Provide grants of \$5,000 per full-time equivalent positions rehired, up to \$10,000 for businesses with 10 or fewer employees or up \$20,000 for larger qualified businesses with fewer than 250 employees. Note: 501(c)3 and 501(c)19 organizations are eligible.
- Allows grants to be used for operating expenses not covered by other resources, including working capital, professional services or employee training.

Applications and additional eligibility requirements will be available online at www.LeeFLCares.com or by appointment by calling 239-533-2273.

Both the Business Relaunch and the Business Rehire programs are part of the Lee Board of County Commissioners plans to allocate about \$134.5 million from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The funding includes:

- \$45 million to Human Services programs including the Individual Assistance
- \$25 million to Business Relaunch and Rehire programs and PPE.
- \$23,950,000 for Public Safety and Medial expenses, including contact tracing, EMS transport, quarantine housing, etc.
- \$20 million for Governmental COVID-19 direct expenses for Lee County and Constitutional Offices, including PPE, facility safety, public education and messaging, data collection, elections, telework, etc.
- \$20.5 million for general reserves for COVID-19 costs.

A dashboard that shows assistance statistics is available at www.LeeFLcares.com/transparency.

Visit www.LeeFLcares.com for additional information about all available programs.

Application instructions also are available in Spanish by calling 239-533-2273 (or 239-LEE-CARES); applicants without internet access can also call the number. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

Updates about the county's response to coronavirus can be found at www.leegov.com/COVID-19.