



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Applications for Polk Cares 2020 funds available May 19

Bartow, Fla. (May 18, 2020) — Beginning Tuesday, May 19, Polk County individuals and small business owners may apply online for financial assistance meant to provide relief to those affected by cutbacks and closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In late April, the county received \$126 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act grant meant to provide relief to small businesses and residents who were either furloughed or laid off from their jobs. The Board of County Commissioners allocated \$40 million for small business economic development needs and \$30 million for health and human service needs. The remaining \$56 million will be used for community healthcare related to the coronavirus and county and local government's costs and services in dealing with COVID-19.

Both funds will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis until the allocation is gone. Funds allocated by Polk County from the federal government's CARES Act to both small businesses and individuals do not have to be paid back.

The online application process will require residents and business owners to fill out a form and attach verifying documentation with the application. Residents who do not have technology access to complete the online process may contact United Way of Central Florida at 2-1-1 to apply for assistance from Polk County.

A call center to assist residents with questions regarding Polk County's CARES Act financial assistance will open on Tuesday, May 19. Call center help will be available from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday - Saturday. Assistance will be provided in English and Spanish by calling (863) 298-7500. The call center will be closed for Memorial Day on Monday, May 25.

The online applications for both households and small businesses are available on the Polk County website at www.polk-county.net/polk-cares-2020. You may print the application and required documentation and either mail it or deliver it; however, applications submitted electronically will be

reviewed much quicker. Printed applications may be delivered or sent to the Communications Division, Board of County Commissioners, 330 W. Church St., Bartow, FL 33830.

Individuals/Households

Individuals and/or households may apply for rent, mortgage and utility assistance. Individuals who have lost their job or income due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and reside in a household with combined income of less than \$75,000 will be eligible for \$2,000 assistance.

On your application, you must confirm that you have not received other COVID-19 assistance for rent, mortgage or utility payments.

Required documents include:

- Valid Florida ID or Florida Driver License
- 2019 Income Tax return, or your 2018 tax return and the most recent paystubs for the past 60 days
- Proof of loss of income related to COVID-19 impacts due to loss of employment (furlough, lay-off letter from employer, unemployment statement, etc.)
- Utility invoice, and mortgage or rent bill

Small Business

Small businesses that can show they were impacted by COVID-19 include funding levels of \$1,000 for those who are self-employed, \$2,500 for businesses with 2 – 9 employees, and \$5,000 for businesses with 10 – 25 employees.

Small business applicants must attest they:

- Were negatively impacted by COVID-19
- Have the authority to apply for this grant on behalf of the business
- Have not received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL); or benefited from the SBA Debt Relief Program as provided under the CARES Act
- Will use the grant funds for authorized business expenses only
- Will apply for a Polk County Business Tax Receipt if not registered with the Polk County Tax Collector
- Plan to resume normal operations after emergency guidelines are lifted
- Shall cooperate with Polk County or appropriate officials for grant auditing purposes

Required business documents include:

- W-9, DBA, Employer ID Number, or Social Security number for sole proprietors
- Valid photo ID
- Copy of active state business registration from Florida Division of Corporations

- W3 Summary or IRS Form 941 prior to February 15, 2020 (businesses with 2-25 employees only)
- Information to estimate your company's average monthly expenses for wages, business utilities, and commercial lease (or mortgage interest), and other business expenses before February 15, 2020.

For more information, visit the county's website at www.polk-county.net or the call center at (863) 298-7500 on or after Tuesday, May 19.

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