



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD WORK SESSION AGENDA
JANUARY 5, 2021

**Work Session will follow the 9:00 AM County Board Meeting.

1. Business Assistance Grant Program (SF 31) - Attachment
Mr. Robert Meyer, County Administrator
Mr. Josh Milow, Deputy County Administrator

In an effort to comply with social distancing guidelines, public in-person attendance at County Board Work Sessions is currently suspended. Below are the ways to participate/view the meeting.

Virtually via Computer	By Telephone
https://zoom.us/j/92559135336?pwd=SWE0dXJCROF6Ukxiak9tQ0t5b0VKQT09	Toll-free at 877-853-5247
Meeting ID: 925 5913 5336	Passcode: 508887

Business Assistance Grant Program (SF 31)

Things to consider:

- How to structure a program based on several considerations, including, but not limited to:
 - Balancing the needs between people who have already gotten assistance in prior rounds or in the state Department of Revenue funding vs. those who have not.
 - Is there a specific industry in the county that was particularly hit hard (hotels, restaurants, nail salons, chiropractic care, dry cleaners, wedding facilities/event centers, etc. AND/OR nonprofits like museums, art boards, performing arts).
 - Non-profit eligibility (all or targeted?). Legislation states “Nonprofits, nonprofit arts organizations, nonprofit museums, and nonprofit fitness centers that earn revenue similar to businesses, including but not limited to ticket sales and membership fees, are eligible for grants.”
 - Are franchises and home-based businesses eligible?
 - Should more assistance go to businesses with more employees similar to how the Department of Revenue is doing with their grants?
 - Determining how to assess impact/loss as well as need to create tailored approaches to prioritize funding to entities with higher needs.
 - What time period should be used to evaluate loss of revenue?
 - Whether to consider how a business plans to use the funds? How should that be captured in an application?

- Suggestions for how to set up the application process
 - The application will be guided by who we tailor the program for. While striving for simplicity, the application should have certain core items including:
 1. Business contact information (Name, DBA, Address, NAICS code, etc).
 2. Certification that business is located in Blue Earth County and does not have current tax liens with the Secretary of State.
 3. Certification question which asks whether the business has seen a COVID impact.
 4. Documentation of reduction of revenue during a specified timeframe with narrative explanation.
 5. Documentation of the number of employees
 6. A question that identifies new hospitality businesses not eligible for the Dept of Revenue assistance.
 7. Asking businesses to write down what their need is and how they plan to use the funds in an attempt to make sure they are going towards capital and staff expenses, rather than being taken without intent to stay open. A reminder that this round of business relief does not have the same rigorous documentation standards of the federal CARES Act guidelines that slowed down the administration of funds but does require certification that funds will be used for “operations expenses”.
 8. Question on what other assistance the business has received including any direct assistance from MN Dept of Revenue and previous County assistance.
 9. Signature/attestation saying that the recipient may be required to provide additional forms attesting to and will be liable to pay back funds if they are

found to have misrepresented their data or not spent money according to eligible uses.

- How to set up a structure for the process
 - A county may use up to 2.5% of its funds for internal administrative expenses OR contracting with a third-party nonprofit or private firm for assistance.
 - Who should provide oversight to the administration of the funds and selection of grants?
- Timeline
 - All grant funds must be spent by March 15th.
 - Counties will need to decide the merits of getting funds out quickly vs. taking a bit more time to market and screen applications to assess grant amounts based on need and impact.
 - Need to balance timelines in conjunction with Board meeting dates