

# CITY OF ROME

## SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### COVID-19 EMERGENCY RELIEF GRANT

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The City of Rome, through the Community Development Department, will provide operating assistance to business owners for the purpose of assisting small businesses that are in jeopardy as a result of the COVID-19 public safety measures. This unique assistance will be provided in the form of a grant and is in an effort to help continue small business operations and keeping local residents employed. As the City is utilizing federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, all operating assistance must be compliant with federal regulations.

Retail, commercial, service and entertainment businesses that rely on customers making purchases at their establishments are especially affected by the recent Covid-19 pandemic. This program is designed to provide relief to those types of businesses that have been negatively affected by the Covid-19 self-isolating period.

### HOW IT WORKS

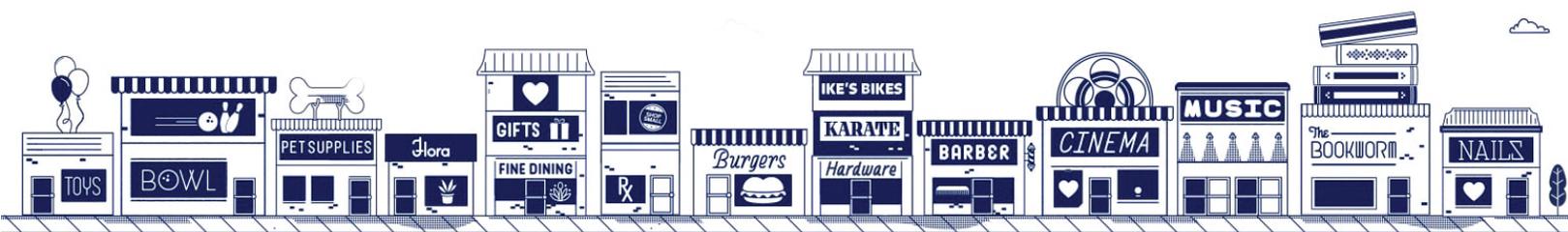
Under this program, the City will provide an emergency relief grant for small businesses negatively affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and public safety measures. Businesses with up to 50 “full time equivalent” employees are eligible to apply for funds, which will be used to pay for normal business expenses that have been made more difficult due to declining revenues caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees will receive additional points in the scoring of each application. Businesses may receive up to \$5,000 in funds under this program. Businesses must have a physical location in the City of Rome and have experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19. Funding is limited and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

### FUNDING & COMPLIANCE

The City will be offering COVID-19 Emergency Relief grant funds not to exceed \$5,000 per business. As the City is utilizing federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, all operating assistance must be compliant with federal regulations. In the event of a default against the terms outlined and agreed to in the grant agreement, the business applicant shall re-pay to the City the amount of the grant plus any interest and costs required. If your business is able to retain (or create) at least ONE low or moderate income employee within six months after the receipt of the grant funds, and receipts are provided that show the funds were used for eligible expenses- the grant terms will be deemed to have been met.

### ELIGIBLE BUSINESSES

Retail      Wholesale      Service      Entertainment      Restaurant / Bar



## ELIGIBILITY

Small businesses, meeting the criteria stated above, that have experienced 30% or more loss in revenue due to the COVID-19 outbreak are eligible to apply for this emergency grant. Funds may be used for operating expenses for running day to day business operations including but not limited to covering payroll and rent. Businesses that are national chains or franchises are not eligible to apply to this program. Loan funds are for commercial purposes only. Funds cannot be used for equipment purchases, construction or expansion related costs.

## JOB REQUIREMENTS

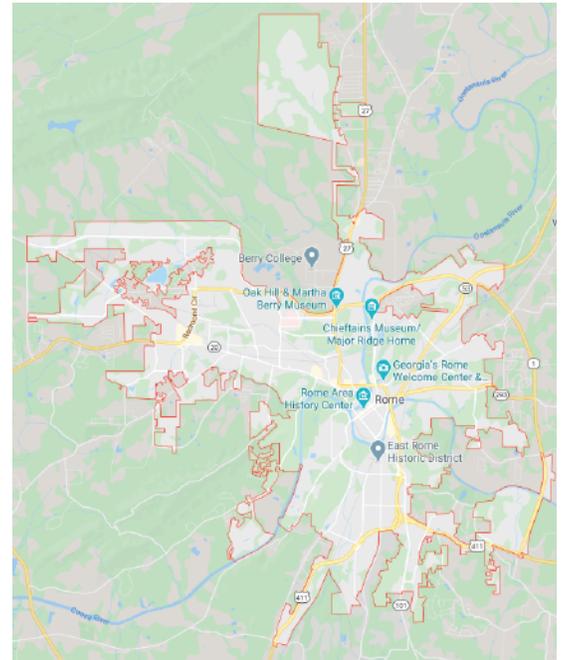
To meet the threshold for this loan there must be sufficient documentation that the jobs would have been lost without the loan assistance. This will include the certification provided by returning the Income Verification Form (Appendix C of the application) for each low/moderate income employee.

The City requires either that (i) a business owner submitting the application for the loan must be a low/moderate income individual (see Appendix A in application); or (ii) the business must provide evidence that at least one (1) low/moderate income employee is being retained.



## GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

This program only provides assistance to small businesses located in the City of Rome, Georgia.



## PROCESS

The City has a Grant Review process that is carried out through city staff. The review process shall take no more than two (2) weeks after all required submittal materials have been received. After review, and if approval is granted, checks will be mailed to businesses which may take up to two (2) additional weeks, although the goal would be to mail the checks within one (1) week. All of the information submitted for our review must be signed and dated. Please contact Bekki Fox with any questions or comments by email at [bfox@romega.us](mailto:bfox@romega.us) or by calling (706) 236-4477.