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## **New city loan program unveiled for small businesses - by Donald Grebien**

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Donald Grebien

The unexpected coronavirus pandemic has been difficult for Pawtucket's small businesses, the backbone of Pawtucket's economy. The city thanks them for their patience, support, and understanding during these challenging times. The city cannot imagine the stress and burden being put on them.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Pawtucket has initiated a new emergency loan program, created by the City's Pawtucket Business Development Corp. (PBDC), to quickly get funds into the hands of Pawtucket business owners.

The intent of PBDC's newly created emergency loan program is to quickly provide financial relief to small businesses to help them survive during this pandemic. I wish to recognize the Pawtucket City Council and PBDC for their leadership in providing assistance in creating this new program and working with our small businesses."

In these trying times, PBDC's COVID-19 Emergency Loan Program provides interim relief to small Pawtucket-based businesses with 25 or fewer employees, who can demonstrate a loss of revenue caused by the virus crisis. The loan can be used to pay operating expenses for day to day business operations which include but are not limited to payroll and rent.

PBDC will require business owners submitting the application to either be low-moderate income or to provide documentation that at least one low-moderate job be either created or retained. The application will include income guidelines.

The emergency loan amount of \$10,000 comes with a 2% interest rate. Due to the ongoing hardships caused by COVID-19 virus pandemic, PBDC's loan will be deferred for the first 12 months after the loan is administered. After 12 months, businesses will begin to make their monthly loan payment. After repayment begins, the businesses will have two years to complete full repayment of the loan.

In addition to creating an emergency loan program, PBDC is offering a one-month forbearance on all PBDC loans to assist these businesses to continue operating.

Along with the city's new emergency loan program, for easy access, we are compiling all federal, state, and nonprofit resources to assist small businesses impacted by COVID-19 on the city's website. This information is being updated on a timely basis.

With Pawtucket restaurants forced to close due to the COVID-19 epidemic, we have also compiled a listing of Pawtucket restaurants that are supplementing their income by offering take-out and delivery. This listing can be found on the city's website and is being heavily promoted through social media and through local newspapers.

Finally, my administration and the Pawtucket City Council have issued a joint policy declaration calling for no property tax increase in next year's budget to help our businesses and residents maintain their financial viability.

During these times of uncertainty, we are committed to standing by Pawtucket's business community. Together, we will get through this.

For questions regarding how the city assists Pawtucket businesses during the COVID-19 emergency please contact us at [businessassistance@pawtucketri.com](mailto:businessassistance@pawtucketri.com) or please call us at 728-0500 ext. 437.

Donald Grebien is the mayor of city of Pawtucket, R.I.

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