



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

**Small Business Relief Program provides assistance to 50 local businesses, creates partnerships with Illinois State students**

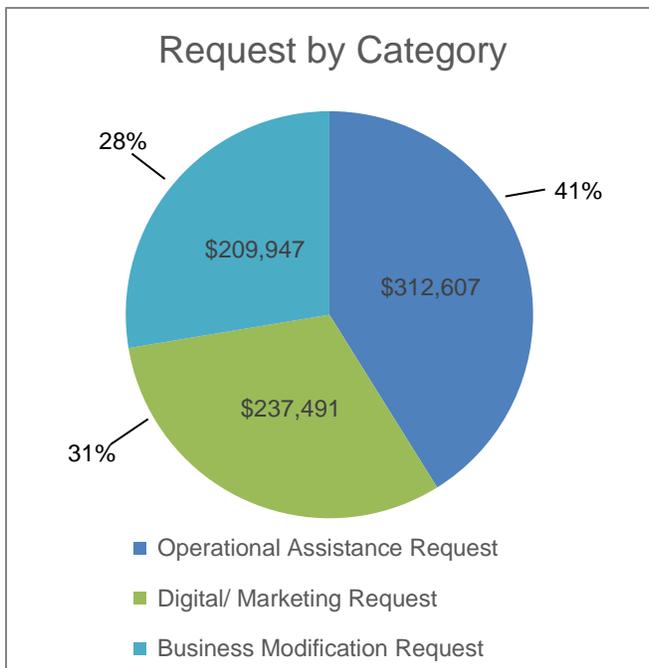
Normal, IL – Jan. 27, 2021 – Fifty Normal businesses received grants totaling \$450,000 from The Town of Normal’s Small Business Relief Program to assist with COVID-19 impacts.

“As a long-standing business owner, I know how important these funds are in sustaining many small businesses during these unprecedented times. I proudly support all efforts to bring financial assistance back to our community,” said Mayor **Chris Koos**.

The Town granted the money through the State’s Local CURE (Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency) Economic Support Grant Program, a federally funded effort from the Coronavirus Relief Fund. The Town opened applications for local businesses on Dec. 1.

“We had 67 businesses apply for grants,” said **Eric Hanson**, Assistant City Manager. “All told, they asked for \$760,045 in assistance, more than \$300,000 than we had to award.”

Funds were requested in the following categories:



1. **Operational Assistance Grant:** e.g., rent, mortgage or utilities, etc.
2. **Digital and Marketing Support Grant:** e.g., social media marketing, point of sale systems, website enhancements, etc.
3. **Business Modification Grant:** e.g., building modifications, additional cleaning supplies, etc.

“These businesses are the backbone of our local economy and we are proud to support them,” explained Hanson. “The need is great and our goal was to help as many as possible. Per state requirements, we could only reimburse for COVID-related expenses incurred and paid for by Dec. 30.

“A cross-functional staff team meticulously reviewed all applications. The process was both time-consuming and rewarding. Staff enjoyed learning more about applicants,” he added.

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Businesses could apply for up to \$15,000 total, or \$5,000 in each grant category. Grant awards ranged from a minimum of \$807 to the \$15,000 maximum. The average grant award was \$9,000.

“I can’t thank the Town of Normal enough for administering this program. Staff was fantastic and smart to work with and made the details easier to gather,” said **Kristin Moore**, owner of Uptown Gifts. “We greatly appreciate all these efforts.”

Applicants self-selected into six business types (see chart below), and grants were awarded across all six categories. Restaurants received the highest allocation of funds, with \$192,755 awarded in grants, or 68 percent of the funds requested in that category.

The following businesses received the highest grant awards: Destihl Beer Hall, DP Dough, Los Potrillos, Moe’s Southwest Grill, The Original Pancake House, The Rock and Windy City Wieners.

Grant awards were made to the following types of businesses:

<b>Type of Business</b>	<b># of applicants:</b>	<b>Total Requests:</b>	<b>Money awarded:</b>
Restaurant	20	\$283,500	\$192,755
Professional Services	12	\$104,075	\$55,346
Personal Services	8	\$83,450	\$33,141
Retail	8	\$73,970	\$48,373
Hospitality	4	\$46,000	\$19,868
Other	15	\$169,050	\$100,517
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>\$760,045</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>

Several businesses who originally applied for the Town’s SBRP received funds from the Business Interruption Grant (BIG) from the State of Illinois making them ineligible for additional assistance through the SBRP. When combined with the State’s recently distributed BIG grants, the SBRP grants helped give more than \$1 million back to Town of Normal businesses.

Some businesses who applied did not receive awards because they did not meet the State’s eligibility requirements, or they did not receive a full award because of documentation requirements.

“The state’s required documentation is immense. We talked with applicants to ensure business owners provided the paperwork needed,” said Hanson. “Applicants not receiving money unfortunately couldn’t provide necessary documentation. We also saw this from interested businesses. We had 90 businesses express interest, but only 67 applied. In those cases, the state’s required documentation was too large an obstacle for the businesses to overcome.

For a full list of grant recipients, see the attached list “Small Business Relief Program Awards.”

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## Sidebar:

### Local businesses take advantage of marketing partnerships with Illinois State University

Three local businesses applying for the Digital and Marketing Support Grant received additional help, thanks to partnerships with students in Illinois State University's College of Business.

"We are excited the Small Business Relief Program also helped create opportunities for local businesses to get additional support," said Hanson. "We partnered with student organizations and faculty advisors at ISU to provide local businesses with online assistance and visibility. We are proud to facilitate mutually beneficial experiences for students and businesses."

The Town of Normal worked with ISU's College of Business to pair students looking for real-world experience with businesses needing additional digital and marketing support. Businesses taking advantage of the marketing partnerships with ISU include Fabulous Affairs, Uptown Gifts and Wild Country.

"This was a win-win," said **Aaron Charlton, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Marketing at ISU. "Our students consulted with interested business to identify how best they could help. They identified several opportunities to improve search engine optimization, increase online visibility, improve digital transactions and enhance social media marketing."

Businesses benefitting from student services include a gift shop and boutique, a wedding planner and an outdoor sports store.

"Working with the ISU students was very helpful and an overall great experience," said **Kristin Moore**, owner of Uptown Gifts. "The students made astute assessments of our social media/online presence that will help us make informed decisions going forward. It was a very worthwhile exercise."

Participating students are members of the ISU's chapter of the American Marketing Association, Business Information Systems Club and senior capstone classes.

"Our students were excited for the chance to gain valuable experience in helping businesses address these issues," added Charlton.

Business owners applying for the Digital and Marketing Support Grant partnered with ISU students for about 30 hours of work. Businesses signed engagement contracts for work to be completed by Dec. 30.

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*For questions related to ISU's role in the Digital Marketing Partnership, contact*  
**Dr. Aaron Charlton at 480-626-3885**

**Appendix:****Small Business Relief Program Awards**

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Total Awarded</b>
A&A Alterations	Personal Services	\$ 3,971
All Seasons Golf Learning Ctr	Other	\$ 10,000
Anderson's Barber Shop	Other	\$ 6,592
Bairds Auto Care	Other	\$ 5,000
Baymont	Hospitality	\$ 6,368
Campustown	Retail	\$ 7,510
Coffee Hound	Restaurant	\$ 7,693
Coffeehouse	Other	\$ 5,000
Cortese Foot and Ankle	Professional Services	\$ 10,000
Destihl Beer Hall	Other	\$ 15,000
Discovery of Hope	Professional Services	\$ 1,800
DP Dough	Restaurant	\$ 15,000
Emack & Bolio's	Restaurant	\$ 12,067
Fab Affairs	Other	\$ 12,717
Fine EatZ (BloNo Pizza)	Restaurant	\$ 11,937
Garlic Press	Retail	\$ 8,719
Griesbaum Chiropractic	Professional Services	\$ 5,000
Hair Design by Ketra	Personal Services	\$ 3,600
Harlan Vance	Other	\$ 5,000
Holiday Inn	Hospitality	\$ 13,500
I&G Paint Maintenance	Personal Services	\$ 5,000
Kim's Martial Arts	Personal Services	\$ 4,500
Kochi	Restaurant	\$ 8,721
Los Potrillos	Restaurant	\$ 15,000
Maggie Miley's	Restaurant	\$ 11,712
Mani Pedi	Professional Services	\$ 5,000
Mexa Maya	Restaurant	\$ 11,847
Moe's Southwest Grill	Restaurant	\$ 15,000
Mudzi's Coffee (Gloria Jean's)	Restaurant	\$ 10,000
Ohm Fit	Retail	\$ 4,200
Olive Bin	Retail	\$ 10,863
Pancake House (The Original)	Restaurant	\$ 15,000
Proving Ground	Other	\$ 14,051
Pub II	Restaurant	\$ 9,367

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**Small Business Relief Program Awards - continued**

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Total Awarded</b>
Resonate Massage	Professional Services	\$ 5,000
Royal Nails	Professional Services	\$ 5,000
Shea Grehan	Professional Services	\$ 807
Shear Logic	Personal Services	\$ 7,870
Signature Brows	Personal Services	\$ 8,200
Subway	Restaurant	\$ 5,000
The Rock	Restaurant	\$ 15,000
Tom's Appliance Repair	Professional Services	\$ 8,304
Tony's Tacos	Restaurant	\$ 14,411
Uptown Dance	Other	\$ 6,244
Uptown Gifts	Retail	\$ 10,632
White Oak Brewery	Other	\$ 11,151
Wild Country	Retail	\$ 6,449
Windy City Wieners	Restaurant	\$ 15,000
Workout Company	Other	\$ 9,762
Zozzaro Chiropractic	Professional Services	\$ 14,435
<b>50</b>		<b>\$ 450,000</b>

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