

New Bedford requesting responses from nonprofit organizations interested in supporting small businesses

Mayor Jon Mitchell and City officials are requesting responses from local nonprofit organizations interested in supporting small businesses, by managing federal funds to provide targeted grants and technical assistance.

The Small Business Assistance Program is the City's fourth announcement of investments funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), designed to address economic and public health impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Bedford-based nonprofit organizations may apply to manage ARPA funds on the City's behalf to not only help small businesses affected by the pandemic, but also to grow the City's economy. Nonprofit support can include targeted grants, technical assistance, counseling, and business planning services, along with capital expenses such as business incubation space in eligible areas, rehabilitation of commercial properties, and COVID-19 mitigation measures.

"Facilitating direct support for local small businesses through qualified, experienced nonprofits will kickstart growth and economic resurgence," Mayor Jon Mitchell said. "This program will generate jobs and strengthen connections in our nonprofit and business communities."

All nonprofits selected to receive funds will complete a subrecipient risk assessment, meet with City staff for pre-award counseling, agree to requirements described in the subrecipient grant agreement, and submit quarterly reports for ARPA compliance.

Partnerships between a New Bedford-based nonprofit organization and an organization outside New Bedford are permitted, so long as the local nonprofit is the lead agency for grant management.

Other interventions that support small businesses may be proposed beyond those listed above, but they must be related and reasonably proportional to the harm caused by the pandemic, and reasonably designed to address the identified harm. The program is designed to be forward-looking and accelerate local business development as the City emerges from the pandemic, rather than compensate for business losses from COVID.

“The Small Business Assistance Program will have the effect of aligning business and purpose, as New Bedford-based nonprofit organizations will provide support to small businesses while they regain their footing, leading to profitability and a rebound in our City’s economy,” said Ward 5 City Councilor Scott Lima, chair of the council’s redevelopment committee.

Eligible nonprofit organizations can view the Request for Responses on the City’s ARPA website: www.newbedford-ma.gov/arpa.