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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director

Indian River County Launches Small Business Grant Program

One-time grants available for small businesses impacted by COVID-19

Vero Beach, FL – Using a portion of its federal CARES Act funding, Indian River County has launched its Small Business Recovery Grant Program, aimed at assisting local businesses in the hospitality industry that were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Partnering with the FL Small Business Development Center at Indian River State College and the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, the program provides grants of up to \$5,000 per business, focusing on for-profit locally-owned small businesses in the Hospitality Industry. The business must have less than 25 employees, including the owner. This industry sector includes locally or independently owned restaurants, hotels, RV parks, bars, craft breweries, tour operators, and travel consultants. They can be home-based businesses or sole proprietors. Funds may be used for business expenses incurred between 3/1/2020 through 12/31/2020.

“This collaborative effort between Indian River County and the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce will provide CARES Act funds to those local businesses that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be a great benefit to our community as we continue to work together against the impacts of COVID-19,” explains County spokesperson Brian Sullivan.

All applications are to be submitted electronically, through the FL Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at IRSC. [Access your IRC Small Business Recovery Grant Application here.](#) “The SBDC is a great partner, especially as we try to navigate through this difficult economic environment”, states Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director for the Chamber. “Tom Kindred, SBDC Regional Director, and his staff are quite savvy with this application process. Over the years, the SBDC has processed hundreds of FL Bridge Loan applications in our region on behalf of the state,

so it just made sense to bring them on board.”

Applicants must provide proof of financial distress due to COVID-19 when submitting their application, with copies of previous years' Profit & Loss statements or QuickBook reports. (Confidential information will be shredded once the application is processed.) They must also state how they intend to use the funds.

[IRC Grant Application](#)

Grant criteria for eligible applicants include:

- Locally or independently owned business in the Hospitality Industry that are located in Indian River County, FL, including home-based businesses and sole proprietors
- No more than 25 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, including the business owner
- In operation since October 1, 2019
- Expects to return to full operations after all local and state emergency guidelines for COVID-19 are rescinded
- Up-to-date on tangible personal property taxes and real estate taxes
- The business and business owners are in good standing (i.e. no active judgements, liens, bankruptcies, etc.)

Ineligible businesses include:

- More than 25 FTE employees
- Publicly traded companies
- Non-profit organizations
- Those not in the hospitality industry sector
- Business that has applied for, or received, CARES Act grant funding from a municipality in Indian River County

Applications will be reviewed and processed by the SBDC at IRSC as they are submitted, with a list of approved applications sent to the County's Budget Office weekly for payment. SBDC will notify the business owner if their application is approved or not. Grants will be disbursed to eligible businesses on a first-come/first-served basis, until the funds are exhausted. Any questions, call Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director with the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, 772-567-3491.

The [Indian River County Chamber of Commerce](#) is a county-wide non-profit organization representing the business community. The Chamber provides a wide variety of business services and benefits for its members and advocates on behalf of the local business community to create an environment where all businesses will thrive and succeed. The Chamber serves as the primary economic development organization and tourism promotion office, working on behalf of the [Indian River County Board of](#)

County Commissioners.

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