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## Wilmette Expands Economic Relief Program to Include Small Service-Based Businesses

### Board Approves Additional \$156,000 to Assist Wilmette Small Businesses During COVID-19 Crisis

WILMETTE, IL. (April 17, 2020) – On April 14, 2020, the Wilmette Village Board unanimously voted to expand the Village's economic relief program to include service-based businesses negatively impacted by the current public health crisis. Examples of service-based businesses eligible for the grant program range from entertainment to fitness to personal service like dry cleaning, as well as spa and beauty services. Examples of businesses not covered under the program include financial, consulting, real estate and insurance services. Wilmette businesses are encouraged to review eligibility requirements and apply for the program at the [Village's website](#).

This supplements the \$375,000 program approved last month by the Board that rebates a portion of municipal sales tax to eligible businesses. Due to the success of the program and continuing crisis, the Board approved an additional \$156,000 to provide immediate financial support to these other vital small businesses in Wilmette.

Wilmette Village President Bob Bielinski stated, "We recognize that COVID-19 has placed a substantial burden on the Village's small business community. This program will provide funds for businesses that need help now making payroll or paying suppliers." He added, "As a local government, Wilmette has the ability to move faster than the federal and state governments, which are implementing more substantial financial assistance programs for small businesses. The intent of this program is to put money into the hands of businesses immediately so they can continue to remain in business until they are able to access those larger programs."

On March 24,, the Village Board approved a sales tax rebate economic relief program for local small businesses. This program rebates a portion of the Village's share of municipal sales tax to eligible local businesses. Since the program was based upon rebating municipal sales tax, service businesses, which don't collect sales tax, were ineligible for the program. The Village Board requested program options to provide financial assistance for service providers with the goal of preserving the Wilmette business community and local economy.

The expanded grant program will rebate half of one percent (0.50%) of a business's annual revenues, and the grant will be limited to a maximum initial benefit of \$1,500. Businesses will not be required to repay the money they receive under the program.

President Bielinski added, "Service-based businesses are a component of the vitality of our business districts. In addition to providing convenience to residents, they also help to support the retail and restaurants in our business districts by bringing customers to the area. These grant programs show that the Village is committed to helping our business community during difficult times and demonstrate their significance to our local economy."

Small service-based businesses which were operating in the Village as of March 17, 2020 and suffered a decline in sales of at least 15% due to the COVID-19 pandemic, may be eligible for the program. Because the program targets small businesses, businesses that generated more than \$7.5 million in annual sales in 2019 are not eligible for the program. Businesses that are part of a franchise system or part of a chain with more than four units are not eligible. Additionally, private clubs and

home occupations are also not eligible. The grant can be used for payroll, paying suppliers and other operating expenses, but cannot be used for capital improvements or rent.

To learn more and to apply for the program, visit the [Village's website](#).

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