



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 3, 2021

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**KALKASKA COUNTY SMALL BUSINESSES CAN APPLY FOR COVID RELIEF FUNDS BEGINNING MAY 10, 2021
Through Venture North Regional Resiliency Program in Partnership with County EDC and Kalkaska DDA**

KALKASKA, MICHIGAN – Kalkaska County small businesses with nine employees or less impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic may apply for grants of up to \$5,000 from the Regional Resiliency Program beginning at 8 a.m. on Monday, May 10th; the grant application will close on Friday, May 21st at 5 p.m.

The grant application must be completed online at www.venturenorthfunding.org. A minimum of \$30,000 is available pending additional funding contributions. The program is administered by Venture North Funding and Development and coordinated in Kalkaska County with the Kalkaska Economic Development Corporation (KEDC) and the Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Venture North will contribute \$20,000 towards the Kalkaska County program with the KEDC providing an additional \$10,000. The Venture North amount includes a portion of a \$200,000 grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation to administer the program in the Venture North ten-county northwest Michigan region.

“We’re pleased that both the EDC and DDA are partnering with us and providing local coordination for the program,” said Venture North President Laura Galbraith. “Local representation helps with outreach to encourage submission of applications. They review all applications and make recommendations to us on funding which we follow in making grants.”

“We’re glad to support businesses in any way we can,” said Cash Cook, Director of the Downtown Development Authority for the Village of Kalkaska. “These grants can be used to respond to urgent needs related to COVID-19 or for adapting a business to operate while meeting safety standards.”

“If any eligible business is struggling with completing the application they should contact us and we will provide help,” said Laura Galbraith, President of Venture North. “It should take about 30 minutes to complete. In addition to the RRP, businesses can also call us for help with business plans, financial forecasting or seeking assistance from other agencies. Ideally, businesses will recover to the point that they will contact us for growth financing which is our core business.” Galbraith explained that Venture North can

provide creative financing terms and conditions if circumstances warrant and they often partner with other banks and credit unions to support business needs.

“The EDC was pleased to financially contribute toward the program,” said Tim Ellis, trustee of the Kalkaska Village Council and member of the EDC for the County. “We hope other organizations and individuals will consider the desperate need for help from small businesses trapped by the most devastating pandemic in over a century.”

Galbraith said that any organization or individual may donate funding to increase the amount available for grants to area businesses. Funds may be donated online by going to “Donate to the RRP” at www.venturenorthfunding.org or by calling 231-995-7115.

Venture North Funding and Development provides commercial financing and technical assistance to support business growth and job creation in their ten-county region, often in partnership with other financial institutions. As a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Venture North also focuses on providing support for underserved populations such as minority, women and veteran owned businesses in low-income communities.

