

Warren County, Pennsylvania

WARREN-SBG

SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARY

By the Warren County Commissioners
8-4-2020

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Background and Information

The Board of Warren County Commissioners applied for COVID19 County Relief Block Grant funding on Tuesday, June 16th in the form of an application through DCED (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development) which requested \$3,539,294. This amount was prescribed by DCED and is the amount allocated to the county, based on population, as a part of the CARES act funding given to the states by the federal government. The application was approved and the \$3.5 million grant deposited with the County on July 13th, 2020.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The \$2 trillion economic relief package aims to protect the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The CARES Act provides economic assistance for local governments and American workers, families, and small businesses.

Act 24 of 2020 was signed by Governor Wolf on May 29, 2020. This legislation provides \$625 million in CARES Act funding by means of block grants for counties in the commonwealth through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). This funding is strictly for support of COVID-19-related activities to offset the cost of direct county COVID-19 response; assist businesses and municipalities; provide behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment services; fund nonprofit assistance programs; and deploy broadband to unserved or underserved areas.

Through review and deliberation regarding documentation provided by DCED it has been determined by the Commissioners that a majority of the money, initially \$2 million, would be allocated to a Small Business Grant (Warren-SBG) program to provide support to local non-governmental business and nonprofit organizations. This program would run until the end of the year, December 31st, 2020, and provide three rounds of funding with the first totaling \$1 million and finishing up by the end of August 2020.

The following document outlines the parameters of that program including an overview, the timeline for operations, the various business and financial consultancy services required for operation and the RFP processes to retain those services, the qualifications for application, the process for application as well as the process for review and approval. The overarching goals are fairness and transparency in providing this needed relief to the struggling small businesses in Warren County. This is to be done in an objective and orderly manner, without preference based on any political, racial, ethnic, gender, economic status or other discriminatory factors.

Program Overview

To operate the Warren-SBG program, this document outlines a framework that is prescribed to provide an efficient method to both facilitate business and nonprofit applications and the needed oversight to prevent fraud, nepotism, bias and other forms of unethical behavior. This framework, which includes the Board of County Commissioners, County Governmental Office of Finance and Administration, the selection and hiring of consulting agencies performing the duties of Business Liaison and Financial Review, the Treasurer, the County Solicitor, and finally the County Auditing Agency, Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC, includes a variety of checks and balances and multiple layers of review in order to prevent errors and corrupt behavior. All agencies involved are expected to function with the highest ethical standards in mind including objectivity, transparency, and frugality.

The County will release RFPs for a Business Liaison Agency and Financial Review Agency (see attached) who, once hired based on qualifications and fees, will interact on the County's behalf with business and nonprofit applicants to guide them through the application process, gather information, and make individual determinations on eligibility based on the criteria set out by the County. There will be three grant phases where interested organizations can submit their grant applications, one in August, one in September, and a final in November. The Business Liaison Agency will collect the applications and all financial data will be passed to the Financial Review Agency. Both agencies will review the applications and make reports with recommendations based on the criteria provided by the County.

Recommendations, once completed, and all financial data will be passed to the Commissioners Office for review and grant awards will be made at a special public Commissioners Board meeting to be advertised where public comment and input is welcomed. All data on grant awards and deliberations will be publicly available. Once awards are made, the Business Liaison Agency will coordinate with successful applicants and the CFO to make sure checks are issued and all follow-up paperwork, if needed, is completed and in good order.

The first grant round in August will be governed by the parameters outlined in this policy paper. The second and third rounds may have different parameters as the Commissioners may change the parameters to either loosen or tighten entry to the program. The grant rounds will continue until the \$2 million allocated for grants is depleted.

1. Definitions

1.1.1. Board of Commissioners

Ben Kafferlin, Tricia Durbin, and Jeff Eggleston, were elected in 2019 to serve four-year terms starting in 2020 who oversee the budget and general operations of Warren County Government.

1.1.2. Business Liaison Agency (BLA)

The County will be contracting with a “Business Liaison” agency which will be working with local businesses to help them complete applications, receive and review applications, and coordinate with the Financial Review agency to gather all data and facilitate the financial review of applicants. This agency will be selected as part of an RFP process, paid via CARES funds as part of the project, and managed by the Commissioners and OFA during the course of the program.

1.1.3. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act

Federal legislation signed into law on March 27, 2020. The \$2 trillion economic relief package aims to protect the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19.

1.1.4. The County

The County Government of Warren County, administered by the Board of County Commissioners and their agents.

1.1.5. County Auditing Agency

The public accounting firm generally contracted by Warren County Government, in this case, Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC, to provide professional auditing services to the County and in this case will provide additional consultation via a separate contract for CARES related services.

1.1.6. County Auditors

Susan Swanson, Helena Swanson, and Rick Hutley are the current board of elected County Auditors, elected in 2019 to serve four-year terms starting in 2020. They provide general oversight of the finances of Warren County, but should not be confused with the “County Auditing Agency” which is an outside firm hired to provide additional auditing oversight. In the case of the Warren-SBG Program, the County Auditors will have limited involvement in the actual program but will be auditing the results as part of their overall audit of the County finances for their general report to DCED.

1.1.7. County Office of Finance and Administration (OFA)

Directed by Eric Hern, the Office of Finance and Administration oversees all contracts, transactions, and fiscal related affairs of the County and will be managing disbursements as part of the approval process of the Warren-SBG Program.

1.1.8. County Solicitor

The legal representative of the County and the Commissionoerns.

1.1.9. County Treasurer

The Treasurer's Office is the custodian of county funds and is responsible for the collection of real estate taxes, fees, receipts, and grants payable to the County.

1.1.10. COVID19 County Relief Block Grant

State program to provide CARES Act funding to Counties. Warren County has received \$3.5 Million which must be used on COVID-related expenses in 2020.

1.1.11. Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

State agency that will be overseeing the distribution and utilization of the CARES grant funding. All reports and auditing information will be circulated through DCED.

1.1.12. Financial Review Agency (FRA)

A person, persons, or agency that will receive the applications from the Business Liaison and review the information thoroughly based on the parameters set forth by this document and the contract with the County and determine whether the various businesses fit the criteria for approval of a grant.

1.1.13. Nonprofit

Any entity that provides services to the community and is legally considered a nonprofit entity through Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Agencies must be 501(c)(3)s or 501(c)(19)s.

1.1.14. Small Business

For the purpose of the Warren-SBG Program, a small business will be any Warren County business that has less than 100 employees and suffered a demonstratable economic loss or unbudgeted expense due to COVID-19 and can provide paperwork proving business status, legal certifications and operations within Warren County. For businesses and agencies related directly to tourism (hotels, outfitters, restaurants, etc.) the threshold is 500 employees or less to be considered a small business for eligibility.

1.1.15. Tourism Business

The CARES program provides special designations related to Tourism which allow tourism-related businesses who've suffered a demonstrable economic loss as a result of COVID-19 and have 500 and fewer employees to be considered eligible. For this program, "Tourism Businesses" are equipment outfitters that sell items such as kayaks, boats, fishing equipment, hiking equipment, tourism pamphlets and informational materials, boots, active lifestyle clothing; boat rental companies; restaurants; hotels, motels, inns, and bed and breakfasts; businesses that provide training and guidance services for tourists; wineries and breweries; any business that frequently has tourists as patrons.

2. Business/Nonprofit Eligibility

2.1.1. Employee Threshold

Businesses must have 100 or fewer employees to qualify. Tourism Businesses and nonprofits must have 500 or fewer employees.

2.1.2. Income/Operations

Businesses and nonprofits must have been in operation on February 15th, 2020 and be able to demonstrate taxable income generated in the year prior to February 15th.

2.1.3. COVID-19 Affected

Businesses and nonprofits must demonstrate that COVID-19 has had an adverse economic impact and makes their grant request necessary to support the ongoing operations of the applicant.

2.1.4. Base of Operations

Businesses and nonprofits must have a location of operations in Warren County where they provide services or sell merchandise.

2.1.5. Legal Compliance

Businesses and nonprofits must have been, and remain, in compliance with all relevant laws, orders, and regulations during the period of the COVID-19 disaster emergency under the Governor's proclamation dated March 6, 2020, and any and all subsequent renewals. The foregoing includes, but is not limited to, orders by the Governor, Secretary of Health, or other commonwealth officials empowered to act during the emergency. Any non-compliant business will be ineligible for funding under this program and may be required to return all, or a portion, of the funds awarded.

2.1.6. Ownership in Good Standing

No owner of any business or nonprofit applicant with more than a 20% share of the equity of the applicant can be incarcerated, on probation, on parole; presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction; or has been convicted of a felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance within the past five years, or any other felony within the last year and will be considered ineligible.

3. Consulting Agencies

3.1. Business Liaison Agency (BLA)

3.1.1. BLA Overview

The agency should have experience working with businesses, have an extensive understanding of the local business community, be able to function as the point of contact for all public interactions related to the Warren-SBG Program, be available to help businesses fill out their application and collect the necessary paperwork, have the ability to evaluate business agencies based on general business practices, and have the tools to properly market the Warren-SBG Program so that the maximum number of organizations are aware of and have access to the program. The BLA will be selected as part of an RFP process to take place in July.

3.1.2. Public Relations

All news releases, interviews, public interactions, social media content and traditional media coordination for the Warren-SBG Program will be handled by the Business Liaison Agency with some help from the County Government.

3.1.3. Marketing

Within a short timeframe, the Business Liaison Agency will be in charge of promotion for the program including print advertising, social media advertising, radio, print materials including flyers, and other forms of promotion to make the community and specifically the business community aware of the program. The Business Liaison Agency will have the autonomy to use what they believe are the best tools available to market and promote the Warren-SBG Program.

3.1.4. Applications

All applications will run through the Business Liaison Agency. Forms will be made available on the County website and the BLA's website for download and printing. The BLA will be responsible for circulating print applications as requested. The BLA will be

responsible for coordinating with the Financial Review Agency to forward information and follow up with applicants to make sure all required documentation is provided.

3.1.5. Recommendations

All applications will be reviewed by the BLA as well as the Financial Review Agency. Although both agencies will provide observations based on the criteria outlined by the County, the BLA will also provide additional qualitative data based on its experience working with businesses and based on best business practices. This qualitative data should be in written form and be of an objective nature. The qualitative data provided by the BLA will be mixed with the overall quantitative data in the final determination by the Commissioners.

3.1.6. Documentation/Archives

Copies of all documents and correspondence generated and collected as part of the Warren-SBG Program must be turned over to the County Office of Finance and Administration within 30 days of the conclusion of the program. The BLA will then be required to retain copies of the documentation for at least 7 years after the close of the Warren-SBG Program for retention and auditing purposes.

3.2. Financial Review Agency (FRA)

3.2.1. FRA Overview

The FRA should have experience reviewing financial documents, understand general accounting principles, and have a record of high ethical standards as it relates to finances. Although the BLA will be doing its own review, the FRA will be focused entirely on the financial aspect of the applications and performing a checklist to make sure all financial data has been received and that the applicants are compliant based on the parameters outlined by the County. There may be more than one FRA working as a consultant on this project. The FRA(s) will be selected by the Commissioners as part of an RFP process to take place in July, 2020.

3.2.2. Coordination with BLA

The Financial Review Agency will work closely with the BLA to collect documentation and review checklists provided by the County to make sure all necessary documents are collected and interested applicants are given every opportunity to provide information and be considered as part of the program. The FRA will not have any direct interaction with the public, but function purely in a support role working directly with the BLA. It will be the BLA's responsibility to divide responsibilities if there's more than one FRA approved.

3.2.3. Documentation/Archives

All documents and correspondence generated and collected by the FRA must be provided to the BLA within 30 days of the close of the program (see *Section 9*). The BLA will be responsible for holding copies of all materials during the required 7-year period for review and auditing purposes.

3.3. County Auditing Agency

The County Auditing Agency, Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC, will be working with all agencies (BLA, FRA, OFA) as an informational consultant and will be available to answer questions related to regulations, and work in a support role for all CARES related issues.

4. SCHEDULE

4.1. RFP Process

4.1.1. RFP Deadline

RFPs for both the BLA and FRA (see attachments) will be released and interested agencies should apply on or before Tuesday, August 4.

4.1.2. RFP Review and Approval

In order for the Commissioners to deliberate over RFP applications and officially hire approved agencies, the Commissioners will review applications at their regularly scheduled Work Session on Monday, August 10th at 12:00 PM in the Commissioners Conference Room.

4.1.3. Agency Contracts

Once applications are approved at the work session, contracts will be finalized with the respective agencies through negotiation with the County Solicitor and OFA. Those contracts will be included on the agenda for the Commissioners Public Meeting on August 12th. The final contracts will be voted on at the Commissioners regularly scheduled public meeting on Wednesday, August 12th, 2020 at 12:00 pm in the Jackson Courtroom.

4.2. First Grant Round

4.2.1. Application Period

The first application period will start August 17th at 8:00 am and end Friday, August 28th at 4:30 pm. Applicants will bring, email, or mail completed paperwork to the BLA by close

of business on August 28th. No postmarks will count. Documentation must be “in-hand” by 4:30 pm on August 28th. No exceptions.

4.2.2. Application Review

All applications will be received by the BLA and shared with the FRA upon receipt. Both agencies will review applications starting August 17th and will be responsible to provide reports and recommendations to the Commissioners by the end of the day on Friday, September 4th at 4:30 pm. All information will be sent to the OFA and then forwarded to the Commissioners for review as the information is generated by the consultants and provided to the OFA.

4.2.3. Commissioners Review

The Commissioners will review all of the applications, reports, and recommendations provided by the BLA and then deliberate on the applications at their Work Session Scheduled for Tuesday, September 8th at 12:00 pm.

4.2.4. Commissioners Approval

The Commissioners will then vote on the reports at their regularly scheduled Public Meeting on Wednesday, September 9th at 12:00 pm in the Jackson Courtroom.

4.2.5. Checks Issued

After the approval of the Commissioners, all successful applicants will be issued checks coordinated by the OFA and the Treasurer’s Office within 10 days of final approval.

4.3. Second Grant Round

4.3.1. Application Period

The first application period will start September 14th at 8:00 am and end Friday, September 25th at 4:30 pm. Applicants will bring, email, or mail completed paperwork to the BLA by close of business on September 25th. No postmarks will count. Documentation must be “in-hand” by 4:30 pm on August 28th. No exceptions.

4.3.2. Application Review

All applications will be received by the BLA and shared with the FRA upon receipt. Both agencies will review applications starting September 14th and will be responsible to provide reports and recommendations to the Commissioners by the end of the day on Friday, October 2nd at 4:30 pm. All information will be sent to the OFA and then forwarded to the Commissioners for review as the information is generated by the consultants and provided to the OFA.

4.3.3. Commissioners Review

The Commissioners will review all of the applications, reports, and recommendations provided by the BLA and then deliberate on the applications at their Work Sessions Scheduled for Monday, October 5th at 12:00 pm and Tuesday, October 13th at 12:00 pm in the Commissioners Conference Room.

4.3.4. Commissioners Approval

The Commissioners will then vote on the reports at their regularly scheduled Public Meeting on Wednesday, October 14th at 12:00 pm in the Jackson Courtroom.

4.3.5. Checks Issued

After the approval of the Commissioners, all successful applicants will be issued checks coordinated by the OFA and the Treasurer's Office within 10 days of final approval.

4.4. Third Grant Round**4.4.1. Application Period**

The first application period will start October 19th at 8:00 am and end Friday, October 30th at 4:30 pm. Applicants will bring, email, or mail completed paperwork to the BLA by close of business on October 30th. No postmarks will count. Documentation must be "in-hand" by 4:30 pm on Friday, October 30th. No exceptions.

4.4.2. Application Review

All applications will be received by the BLA and shared with the FRA upon receipt. Both agencies will review applications starting October 19th and will be responsible to provide reports and recommendations to the Commissioners by the end of the day on Friday, November 6th at 4:30 pm. All information will be sent to the OFA and then forwarded to the Commissioners for review as the information is generated by the consultants and provided to the OFA.

4.4.3. Commissioners Review

The Commissioners will review all of the applications, reports, and recommendations provided by the BLA and then deliberate on the applications at their Work Session Scheduled for Monday, November 9th at 12:00 pm.

4.4.4. Commissioners Approval

The Commissioners will then vote on the reports at their regularly scheduled Public Meeting on Wednesday, November 11th at 12:00 pm in the Jackson Courtroom.

4.4.5. Checks Issued

After the approval of the Commissioners, all successful applicants will be issued checks coordinated by the OFA and the Treasurer's Office within 10 days of final approval.

4.5. Close of Program

Copies of all documentation related to the program will be collected by the BLA and delivered to the OFA within 30 days of the final grant approval.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1. Application Availability

A digital submission form (*see Attachment A for form outline*) will be available via a link on the County website and any other relevant website. All documents and correspondence regarding application will go through that single application form/document upload system to allow for a single database with all initial information provided by businesses and nonprofits. The County shall reserve that system and the Business Liaison Agency and Financial Review Agency will both have access to the database, and the system will be paid for via CARES money as part of the project expenses.

Applicants will need to access the system via the web. There will be no printed applications or paper documents exchanged so that paperwork is neither lost or missing from the process and all government agencies can access the initial application information. The BLA will be responsible for coordinating with businesses that have little or no access to the internet and provide opportunities to both scan documents to provide in PDF format and computers to access the internet to upload the documents. All files must be digitized for the initial application. Cloud based systems such as Formstack or Wufoo could be used to create the forms database. ***It is expected that when an applicant files an application through the system that a member from the BLA calls them immediately on receipt to make contact and confirm receipt of the application.***

For additional supporting documentation, or amendments to applications, a second form should be created that just has an upload and description section. This would be used for additional documents requested that were not a part of an initial application. On the additional form, applicants would include their **case number** (*see section 6.2.*) in the form for reference.

5.2. Case Number

Every submission via the online application will be assigned a case number which will follow the application from start to finish. Applicants will receive a summary of their application via email and the case number will be included. When submitting additional information, upon request, applicants will include their case number referencing the previous form submission. *If they do not include the case number in future submissions of additional information, the submission will*

be considered invalid. Applicants MUST include the case number in any follow up correspondence.

5.3. Application Review

Both the BLA and the FRA will receive copies of the applications and all associated documentation via email, or will have access to the submission database and will download and review information directly. The BLA/FRA will coordinate on the review during the period allocated in the schedule (see Attachment D for a detailed schedule) and produce a coordinated report. The FRA will work in support of the BLA and report to the BLA but is expected to act generally as a separate, objective entity as it relates to providing opinions and including its insights in the final combined report. Any challenges with a coordinated effort between the BLA and FRA should be discussed directly with the Commissioners Office immediately. The BLA will be in charge of the final report and collecting data/insights from the FRA and incorporating it into the final report. The BLA will be required to communicate with all applicants on an ongoing basis to provide answers to questions and coordinate the applicants efforts. The FRA is not required to communicate directly with the applicants.

5.4. Parameters for Approval

All entities involved should understand that the purpose of this program, created in response to Federal and State Legislation, is to address the economic crisis brought on by COVID-19. Therefore, the fundamental goal of this program is to stimulate the local economy and help struggling businesses and nonprofits so the parameters of the program application have been kept liberal in order to ensure the maximum impact.

5.4.1. General Eligibility Compliance

Businesses and Nonprofits must comply with all elements of Section 3 of this document.

5.4.2. Demonstrated COVID-related Loss/Expense

Businesses must provide suitable documentation to demonstrate a loss or expense that is directly related to COVID. Although it will be the BLA and FRA that will review documentation and determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a COVID-related loss or expense has been generated, the following methods can be considered as part of the overall evaluation. In closing, the threshold for a COVID-related loss or expense must be generous and the BLA and FRA must use their best judgement in judging that loss but also create the widest possible threshold so that as many small businesses, with (in some cases) limited documentation, have the opportunity to participate in this program.

Bank Statements

1-2 Years worth of bank statements (example June 2019-June 2020) which show a general decline in income or unexpected COVID-related expenses around the time of the COVID-shutdown in Pennsylvania.

Accounting Report

Income/Expense reports generated from accounting software or CPA that shows loss of revenue or increase in COVID-related expenses.

Receipts

Invoices, receipts or other proof of purchase of COVID-related materials such as PPE, expanded outdoor seating, masks, disinfectant, face shields, plexiglass shields for clerks, disinfectant wipes, renovations to allow for social distancing, etc. All expenses must be COVID-related and either reduce the spread via making areas more sanitary, provide protection for workers and the public, or allow for greater social distancing of workers and customers.

Tax Returns/Other Documents

Tax returns mixed with other current documents that show a previous year's income averaged by month along with documentation that shows a decline in the months during the COVID-crisis (May-December 2020).

5.5. Grant Amounts

- 5.6. If applicants comply with all elements of Section 3 and can definitively demonstrate a COVID-related loss or expense, their applications will be evaluated to determine the recommended grant amount considering their loss based on an overall formula. For the first round of grants, which has a total allocation of \$1 million, the total collective losses of all businesses that meet the criteria of Section 6.4. will be compared to the total allocation and the following formula will be used to determine the recommended grant amount which will have no minimum or maximum.

$$\boxed{\text{Total Grant Fund(a)}} \div \boxed{\text{Total Loss of Applicants(b)}} = \boxed{\text{\% of Applicants Loss for Recommended Grant Award(c)}}$$

As an example, if the total loss exhibited by the applicants (in aggregate) is \$1.25 million, we would divide the total grant fund (\$1 million) by the \$1.25 million and allow all applicants (which would show that the \$1 million is 80% of the total loss of \$1.25 million) to have 80% of their demonstrated COVID-related losses and expenses as their recommended grant amount. A business, in that scenario, which demonstrated a loss of \$100,000 would receive a grant amount of \$80,000.

6. Formal Approval Process

6.1. Final Report

After the review period for each grant window (see Attachment D for complete schedule), the BLA and FRA will create a report with their recommendations and note. This should be considered a summary with a condensed review of each application. This will not include the detailed financial information provided by the applicant, but an overview. That overview should include the name and address summary of the business; number of employees; their status as recommended for a grant or recommended denial; an overview of their demonstrated loss and/or expense with some details on the nature of those items (summary of monthly loss of income and how that was calculated, total amount of receipts and their general nature, etc.); any other relevant data the BLA/FRA believe the Commissioners need to make a decision. The goal is to avoid the unnecessary disclosure of potentially proprietary data regarding businesses, but still provide enough data for the Commissioners to make an informed review and for the Commissioners to know that the review was done by the BLA/FRA to the best of their ability. That report may be delivered in digital or print format to the Director of Finance and Administration of the County.

6.2. Vote at Public Meeting

The Commissioner will then add the report to a public meeting agenda and vote on it. Commissioners at that meeting may deliberate about individual items and suggest amendments. In the end, whether edited through the meeting, or left unchanged, the Commissioners will vote on the report in its entirety. Those organizations that have remained “recommended” for a grant will receive an amount agreed upon in whatever package is approved.

6.3. Final Notification

The BLA will be responsible for contacting all businesses that applied after the final vote on the report to let them know about their status. This should happen prior to any reporting in the local newspaper out of respect for the applicants. This may be a challenge depending on the timeframe but must be done immediately after the vote by the Commissioners.

7. Distribution of Funds

The BLA will coordinate with OFA to authorize checks based on the final vote by the Commissioners from CARES funds and make sure they are properly delivered to the approved organizations. This should happen within 10 days of the final vote.

8. Grant Round Debrief

After each grant round, the BLA, FRA, and Commissioners are expected to meet to discuss the outcome of the previous round and determine the parameters for the next round. This could take place at a Work Session or other semi-formal meeting of the Commissioners. Once all of the details of the next round are determined, the group will release information to the public to begin the promotion and application process.

9. Data Storage/Right to Know

All records for this program must be kept for potential review by the County, State, and Federal Governments as well as for the possibility of Open Records Requests.

9.1. BLA Records Storage

It is expected that the BLA will keep copies of all records generated including emails, application submissions, all financial documentation, and any record considered relevant to the review and recommendations of potential grantees for a period of at least 7 years.

9.2. FRA Records Storage

The FRA is not required to retain records but is required to turn copies of all records over to the BLA for retention. That should include emails and any info other than what was generated other than via the online application forms.

9.3. Records Transfer to the County

The BLA will transfer copies of all records (generated by both BLA and FRA) to the County OFA within 30 days of the close of the program at the end of the year (December 31st, 2020). In the meantime, all Office of Open Records Requests must be fulfilled via coordination with the BLA and the County Solicitor.

9.4. Open Records Requests

Prior to the project being closed (December 31st, 2020), the BLA must work in conjunction with the County Solicitor and County Right-to-Know Officer to address all Open Records Requests made either through the state Office of Open records or through the County's Right-to-Know forms. The County Solicitor will review all documents provided in conjunction with the request and redact anything considered outside the scope of the Open Records law or the Request itself.

ATTACHMENT A – Draft Application Info

The information below is a summary of the questions and statements that will be included on the digital application for people to utilize in applying for the Warren-SBG Program. This data will be converted into an online form. ***This should not be confused with a PDF that can be printed and submitted.*** You must apply via the website All data will be HTML, mobile friendly, and viewable via a desktop, phone, or tablet. All data must be submitted via the form, online.

Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant Application

Section 5001 of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”), which became law on March 27, 2020, establishes a Coronavirus Relief Fund. The CARES Act requires that governmental recipients of Coronavirus Relief Fund money use it for expenditures that (1) were necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency; (2) were not accounted for in the governmental budget most recently approved as March 27, 2020; and (3) were incurred, on a cash basis, during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

Related guidance issued by the United States Department of the Treasury (“U.S. Treasury”) permits funds to be used to provide “grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures.” Frequently Asked Questions issued by the U.S. Treasury indicates that such grants may be used to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures as well as “to benefit small businesses that close voluntarily to promote social distancing measures or that are affected by decreased customer demand as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.” Such effects must relate to the period that began on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.

Pennsylvania Act 24 of 2020 provides that Coronavirus Relief Fund Money distributed through the Commonwealth, which includes the funds received by the County used to fund this Business Interruption Grant program, may be used for small business grant programs to “support businesses with fewer than 100 employees with priority given to those businesses that did not receive a loan or grant through the federal Paycheck Protection Program or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program established under the CARES Act.” In addition, such grants are available to businesses and other entities that are primarily engaged in the tourism industry, with 100 or more employees. Current interpretation of federal CARES Act guidance related to the definition of the term small business suggests that entities with more than 500 employees generally would not be deemed to be a small business for CARES Act purposes at this time. In the event your entity is above the applicable thresholds, a review will be conducted to determine whether any exceptions apply.

Act 24 further provides that CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund money may be used for nonprofit assistance programs for entities that are an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Current interpretation of federal CARES Act guidance suggests that Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) entities qualify as small businesses for the purposes of CARES Act business interruption grants but that entities with more than 500 employees would not be eligible for such grants at this time.

Applicant Requirements Include:

- Must be appropriately licensed and operating in the County.
- Must operate from a physical location in the County.
- Must be a business that employs 100 people or less; a nonprofit that employs 500 people or less; or is a Tourism-related business and employs 500 people or less.
- Must have been in operation on February 15th, 2020 and be able to demonstrate taxable income generated in the year prior to February 15th, 2020.
- Must be able to clearly demonstrate via any means that the organization suffered a COVID-related loss or expense. ***This grant will only provide funding for your loss and will provide funding beyond that loss. A grant awarded through this program, cannot be coupled with any other Federal or State CARES related assistance to generate revenue beyond any loss you can demonstrate.***
- Must have been, and remain, in compliance with all relevant laws, orders, and regulations during the period of the COVID-19 disaster emergency under the Governor’s proclamation dated March 6, 2020, and any and all subsequent renewals. The foregoing includes, but is not limited to, orders by the Governor, Secretary of Health, or other commonwealth officials empowered to act during the emergency. Any non-compliant business will be ineligible for funding under this program and may be required to return all, or a portion, of the funds awarded.
- No owner of any business or nonprofit applicant with more than a 20% share of the equity of the applicant can be incarcerated, on probation, on parole; presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction; or has been convicted of a felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance within the past five years, or any other felony within the last year and will be considered ineligible.

Contact/Applicant Details

This person will be the “applicant” and main contact for this grant process. All communications will go through this person. This does not have to be the owner of the business, but is a designated representative.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____ Confirm Email Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Address: _____

Date of Application: _____

Business/Nonprofit Details

Please fill out the information below as completely, and to the best of your knowledge as possible. It is important that all business/nonprofit information be completed in its entirety.

Business Legal Name: _____ DBA (doing business as): _____

Business EIN: _____ Business Phone: _____

NAICS Code: _____

Business Type; (Corp., Partnership, LLC, etc.) _____

State of Incorporation: _____ Business Address: _____

Date Business Established: _____ Business Website: _____

Is your organization appropriately licensed and operating in the County? (Yes/No)

Does your organization operate from a location in the County? (Yes/No)

Please list all locations that your organization was operating on February 15th in Warren County with a brief description of their function or service.

Please list any additional locations that began operation after February 15th in Warren County with a brief description of their function or service.

Is your organization a Section 501(c)(3) non-profit entity under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986? (Yes/No)

Is your organization a Section 501(c)(19) non-profit entity under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986? (Yes/No)

Is your organization a private small business? (Yes/No)

If your organization is not a private business or a Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) non-profit, please explain the nature of your organization and its classification for legal and tax purposes.

How many total people does your organization employ? _____

Are you a Tourism-related business with less than 500 people employed with your organization? (Yes/No)

If the previous answer is "yes", please explain how your organization is primarily engaged in the tourism industry.

During the period that began on March 1, 2020 and runs through December 30, 2020, how has your organization been affected by COVID-19 (including but not limited to) required closure orders, voluntarily closures to promote social distancing measures, or decreased customer demand as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Did your organization receive CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program assistance? (Receipt of such funds will not disqualify applicants, but first preference is given to applicants that did not receive such funds.) (Yes/No)

If your business/nonprofit did receive CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program assistance, what was the amount? _____

Did your organization receive CARES Act Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program assistance? (Receipt of such funds will not disqualify applicants, but first preference is given to applicants that did not receive such funds.) (Yes/No)

If your business/nonprofit did receive CARES Act Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program assistance, what was the amount? _____

What was the gross revenue for the business March 1 through June 30, 2019? _____

What was the gross revenue for the business March 1 through June 30, 2020? _____

Does your business owe any local, state or federal taxes? (Owing back taxes does not eliminate you from consideration as a part of this program) (Yes/No)

Given the data you provided, and any CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program assistance or CARES Act Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program assistance, what do you believe the appropriate amount of grant funding should you receive through this program? _____

Is any owner, with 20 percent or more of the equity of the applicant business or nonprofit, incarcerated, on probation, on parole; presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction; or has been convicted of a felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance in the last five years, or any other felony within the last year? (Yes/No)

Private for-profit businesses must provide a completed W-9 form and financial documentation that supports the business's projected impact related to COVID-19. Non-profit entities must provide financial documentation that supports the entity's projected impact related to COVID-19. Those documents can include, but not be limited to, bank statements, tax returns, receipts, audited

financials, accounting reports, or other types of verifiable financial data. All data not directly related to your application should be blacked out or redacted in some way.

All applicants must provide a photo/scan of their Government Issued Photo ID for all owners holding more than a 20% equity position in the business or nonprofit.

Additional documents may be requested including your most recent Federal Tax Returns including 2018 to 2019 business and personal Federal Tax Returns including Schedule C; internal profit and loss statements for the period January 1st through June 30th, 2020; Articles of Incorporation of Corporations or LLCs; fictitious name registration; business license; statements of outstanding bills accumulated during the period of March 1st, 2020 to date segregated by Payee; among others.

Please scan these documents and attach them to your application using the file upload buttons below. Documents should be in a Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Adobe PDF or other common format for review.

Selected Applicants will be required to sign a Business Interruption Grant Agreement.

I certify that all information on this application is truthful and complete to the best of my knowledge and that I am authorized to submit this application.

Signature of Applicant

Once your application is completed, a customer service representative from [Business Liaison Agency name] will be in contact with you to go over your application and discuss any addition documentation needed.

ATTACHMENT B – RFP for Business Liaison (DRAFT)

Warren County, PA Request for Proposals (RFP) For Business Liaison Services

RFP Release Date: Tuesday, August 4th, 2020

RFP Due Date: Monday, August 10, 2020 by 11:45 am

Contact:

Eric Hern

Director of Finance and Administration

204 4th Avenue

Warren, PA 16365

Phone (814) 728-3408

Fax (814) 728-3471

ehern@warren-county.net

1. Background Information

a. CARES Act/County Assistance Block Grant

The Board of Warren County Commissioners applied for COVID19 County Relief Block Grant funding on Tuesday, June 16th in the form of an application through DCED (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development) which requested \$3,539,294. This amount was prescribed by DCED and is the amount allocated to the county, based on population, as a part of the CARES act funding given to the states by the federal government. The application was approved, and the \$3.5 million grant deposited with the County on July 13th, 2020.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The \$2 trillion economic relief package aims to protect the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The CARES Act provides economic assistance for local governments and American workers, families, and small businesses.

Act 24 of 2020 was signed by Governor Wolf on May 29, 2020. This legislation provides \$625 million in CARES Act funding by means of block grants for counties in the commonwealth through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). This funding is strictly for support of COVID-19-related activities to offset the cost of direct county COVID-19 response; assist businesses and municipalities; provide behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment services; fund nonprofit assistance programs; and deploy broadband to unserved or underserved areas.

Through review and deliberation regarding documentation provided by DCED it has been determined by the Commissioners that a majority of the money, initially \$2 million, would be allocated to a Small Business Grant (Warren-SBG) program to provide support to local non-governmental business and nonprofit organizations. This program would run until the end of the year, December 31st, 2020, and provide three rounds of funding with the first round totaling \$1 million and finishing up by the end of August 2020.

b. Program Overview

This Request for Proposal is for development agencies and individuals with a background in business management, public relations and general business operations to review and generate a proposal to outline how they'd perform as a Business Liaison Agency (BLA). The BLA is outlined in the Business Grant Summary which can be acquired from the County's Office of Finance and Administration (OFA) or downloaded from the County website (<http://warrencopa.com>).

Fundamentally, BLA will be the main point of contact and essential manager of the application and review portions of the Warren-SBG Program. The BLA will monitor the application portal, receive applications from the application management system and review the paperwork based on the parameters provided by the County. There will be no paper copies provided. All applications will be in a digital format.

The BLA will be responsible for working with the FRAs (Financial Review Agencies outlined in the Business Grant Summary) to provide applications to them, follow up with the FRAs to make sure reviews are being finished in a timely manner, gather any additional documentation from applicants or have questions answered and provide that additional information to the FRAs,

coordinate with the FRAs on producing a summary report that will be used to approve the applications and recommend grant amounts.

A principle responsibility of the BLA will be to work with local businesses and nonprofits to make sure they are able to apply, understand the application process, help organizations format and manage documentation they intend to submit, follow up with any requests for additional documentation or to answer questions, notify organizations of their approval or denial of their application, and at the end of each grant round make sure each agency receives the granted amount approved by the Commissioners.

There will be three grant windows in which the BLA will be required to review applications and coordinate with applicants. Each grant round is outlined in the schedule provided in this RFP. At the end of each grant window, the BLA and FRA(s) will work to produce a report which will be provided to the Commissioners for a vote. The Commissioners may follow up with the BLA with specific questions about their recommendations.

After each grant window, the BLA will meet with the FRA(s) and the Commissioners to determine the outcome of the previous grant window and define any changes that need to be made to ensure the program is more effective in the following round.

Once the entire program is completed and all grant windows are closed, the BLA will collect all emails and data (not gathered via the application system) from the FRA(s) and combine it with the application data generated from the application system, as well as the BLAs own documentation into a comprehensive archive of all data generated as part of the program. The BLA, as part of the program's commitment to transparency, must be prepared to provide any emails or additional documentation related specifically to the program and the BLAs review to the County Right-to-Know officer in the case of an open records request.

2. Scope of Work

a. Application Receipt and Organization

Grant applications will come through an online, cloud-based system created by the County to both the FRA and the BLA. All cases will have a case number, which is shared between all entities involved in the program. The BLA will be responsible to organize those files in their system according to case number. All files will be digital. The BLA will forward application data to the FRA(s) so they can do their own review.

b. Application Review

The BLA will review documents provided on all cases in their que over the course of each grant window according to the timelines outlined in the schedule, and determine using the parameters outlined in the Business Grant Summary and the individual/agency's own experience to determine if the applicants can demonstrate a COVID-related loss or expense.

c. Coordination with the FRA(s) (Financial Review Agency)

The BLA will work closely with the FRA(s), and the BLA will be the point of contact for applicants. If there is a lack of documentation, or a need for additional documentation on a specific case, the BLA will communicate with the applicants to request those specific documents (which may be requested by an FRA as well). The BLA and FRA are generally equal parts of the review process.

d. Report Generation

Once the applications have all been reviewed, the BLA will coordinate with the FRA(s) on a joint report which will include all cases, as prescribed in the Business Grant Summary, and make recommendations on approval or disapproval of applications and what the recommended grant amount should be. If the BLA and FRA have similar perspectives on an applicant, they may unify their information included in the report on that applicant. If they disagree on any aspect of the applicant, both perspectives must be included in the report and parsed out in an applicant-by-applicant basis. It will be up to the BLA and FRA to determine the format of the report, but the elements of the report must follow the minimum requirements outlined in the Business Grant Summary.

e. Right-to-Know Accommodation

The FRA(s) will work directly with the BLA on all records management issues. Due to open records law, it is possible that the BLA/FRA(s) will be asked to provide emails or correspondence as part of a right-to know request. No proprietary, personnel, or sensitive information related to the agency will be disclosed; however, all general correspondence and any ancillary documents that are generated by the agency will be subject to open records requests. The BLA will notify the FRA(s) of any right-to-know request, the FRA(s) will turn the needed records over to the BLA who will in turn provide the records to the County Right-to-Know Officer and the County Solicitor who will review the documents and properly redact any information not applicable either to the request or is outside the scope of the Open Records Law.

f. Final Records Collection

The BLA/FRA(s) will be required to keep complete and detailed records of their deliberation and review of applications and any correspondence with each other, the Applicants or the Commissioners Office. All records generated by the FRA(s) must be turned over to the BLA for storage (of a minimum of 7 years). "All records generated" would be any record (includes but not limited to email, receipt, letter, written notes, policy or work instructions generated internally, etc.) that is generated for the purpose of carrying out the program.

3. Proposal Requirements**a. Title Page**

A title page showing the firm's name, the date of proposal, point of contacts, business address, telephone numbers, and email addresses.

b. Letter of Interest and Experience

A signed letter of transmittal from the firm or individual submitting the proposal explaining briefly the experience, licenses, and general capabilities to perform the scope of work outlined in the RFP. The letter should state that said individual or agency agrees to perform all of the work outlined in the County's RFP within the time periods established by the County and can exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. The letter must also contain a certification that the person signing the proposal is entitled to represent the firm or individual, empowered to submit the bid, and authorized to sign a contract with the County on behalf of the audit firm.

c. Fee Schedule

Agencies/Individuals interested in making a proposal to provide services should include a general fee schedule for all clerical/review work to be done. Although in *Section 3.d.* we'll be requesting a per-application estimate, there's a variety of ancillary work requirements that will

be conducted via an hourly rate (transfer of files at the end of the project, meetings with Commissioners and the FRA(s), special correspondence, etc.) and it's important for everyone involved to have an idea of your expectations of compensation.

d. Per Application Estimate

Using the Fee Schedule and the scope of work outlined in the Business Grant Summary, please attempt to estimate your overall cost to review an **average application**. Understanding that the applications may take one to two hours to review and that there may be as many as 100 applications overall. Applications may consist of any combination of tax returns, accounting reports, income and loss statements, receipts and a variety of other paperwork used to outline a loss or expense.

4. Responding to the RFP

Five copies of your proposal must be received no later than Monday, August 10 at 11:45 am to be considered as an FRA for the first round of grants. Proposals may be received after that deadline and those proposals will be reviewed and the related agencies or individuals may be approved and then hired as additional FRAs for future grant rounds. Proposals may be emailed to ehern@warren-county.net (in PDF format or Microsoft Word) or mailed/messangered to the County Office of Finance and Administration, addressed as follows:

Warren County Office of Finance and Administration
Attn: Eric Hern, Director
204 4th Avenue
Warren, PA 16365

No faxed materials will be accepted. Postmarks are not considered proof of delivery. Emailed proposals shall not be deemed received until a confirmation email sent by the County Office of Finance and Administration is received in reply to the submitted proposal, confirming the emailed proposal was received and the format was readable by the County. If the proposal is hand delivered, it must be delivered to and stamped by personnel at the County Office of Finance and Administration on the 1st floor of the County Courthouse at 204 4th Avenue in Warren.

Any amendments to this RFP will be in writing and will be issued to all persons or businesses that have indicated an interest to receive RFP amendments. No proposal will be considered that is not responsive to any issued amendments.

5. Schedule

a. Schedule for RFP Process

This RFP will be open and available for potential BLAs until August 10th at 11:45 am.

RFP Released:	Tuesday, August 4th
Deadline for BLA Proposals:	Monday, August 10th at 11:45 am
Review and Selection:	Monday August 10th at 12:00 pm Comm. Work Session
Contracts Finalized:	Wednesday, August 12th at 12:00 pm Comm. Meeting

b. Program Schedule

Grant Round	Description	Start Date	End Date
1st Round	Application Period	August 17, 2020 at 8:00 am	August 28, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	August 17, 2020	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm	September 9, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	September 9, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	September 9, 2020 after public meeting	September 19, 2020
2nd Round	Application Period	September 14, 2020 at 8:00 am	September 25, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	September 14, 2020	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm	October 14, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	October 14, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	October 14, 2020 after public meeting	October 24, 2020

3rd Round	Application Period	October 19, 2020 at 8:00 am	October 30, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	October 19, 2020	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm	November 11th, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	November 11th, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	November 11, 2020 after public meeting	November 21, 2020

6. Proposal Evaluation

The County intends to select the most qualified firms or individuals that exhibit the strongest ability to provide the highest quality service, based upon the following criteria:

- Firm/Individual's understanding of the engagement and the County's needs.
- Firm/Individual's local municipal audit expertise/experience including references from similar engagements.
- Experience and qualifications of individuals to be assigned to the County's engagement including resources available for the timely completion of the application review and scheduling of work.
- Overall cost of services.

The selection team shall be the Warren County Board of Commissioners with assistance provided by the County's Director of Finance and Administration as well as input from the County Solicitor. Final selection will happen at the Commissioners Work Session at 12:00 pm on August 10th in the Commissioners Conference Room in the Courthouse.

7. Contract Duration

The selected individual or agency shall be designated as a County BLA (for the purpose of the Warren SBG Program) for term commencing on August 12, 2020 and ending January 31st, 2021. Either party may cancel the contract by 30-day written notice. The County reserves the right to extend the contract beyond the original period, negotiating each subsequent period separately as to price and work performed.

8. Acceptance or Rejection and Negotiation of Proposals

The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any irregularities in the request for proposal, to accept or reject any item or combination of items in a proposal, to request additional information or clarifications from respondents, and to negotiate or hold interviews with any one or more of the respondents. By requesting proposals, the County is in no way obligated to award a contract or to pay expenses of the proposing firms in connections with the preparation or submission of a proposal. Furthermore, the County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals prior to execution of a contract, with no penalty to the County of Warren.

DRAFT

ATTACHMENT C – DRAFT RFP for Financial Review
Agency (DRAFT)

Warren County, PA
Request for Proposals (RFP)
For Financial Review Services

RFP Release Date: Tuesday, August 4th, 2020
RFP Due Date: Monday, August 10, 2020 by 11:45 am

Contact:

Eric Hern

Director of Finance and Administration

204 4th Avenue

Warren, PA 16365

Phone (814) 728-3408

Fax (814) 728-3471

ehern@warren-county.net

9. Background Information

a. CARES Act/County Assistance Block Grant

The Board of Warren County Commissioners applied for COVID19 County Relief Block Grant funding on Tuesday, June 16th in the form of an application through DCED (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development) which requested \$3,539,294. This amount was prescribed by DCED and is the amount allocated to the county, based on population, as a part of the CARES act funding given to the states by the federal government. The application was approved, and the \$3.5 million grant deposited with the County on July 13th, 2020.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The \$2 trillion economic relief package aims to protect the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The CARES Act provides economic assistance for local governments and American workers, families, and small businesses.

Act 24 of 2020 was signed by Governor Wolf on May 29, 2020. This legislation provides \$625 million in CARES Act funding by means of block grants for counties in the commonwealth through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). This funding is strictly for support of COVID-19-related activities to offset the cost of direct county COVID-19 response; assist businesses and municipalities; provide behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment services; fund nonprofit assistance programs; and deploy broadband to unserved or underserved areas.

Through review and deliberation regarding documentation provided by DCED it has been determined by the Commissioners that a majority of the money, initially \$2 million, would be allocated to a Small Business Grant (Warren-SBG) program to provide support to local non-governmental business and nonprofit organizations. This program would run until the end of the year, December 31st, 2020, and provide three rounds of funding with the first round totaling \$1 million and finishing up by the end of August 2020.

b. Program Overview

This Request for Proposal is for financial institutions and individuals with a background in financial management and accounting to review and generate a proposal to outline how they'd preform as a Financial Review Agency (FRA). The FRA is outlined in the Business Grant Summary which can be acquired from the County's Office of Finance and Administration (OFA) or downloaded from the County website (<http://warrencopa.com>).

Fundamentally, an FRA will receive applications from the application management system and review the paperwork based on the parameters provided by the County. There will be no paper copies provided. All applications will be in a digital format. There may be more than one FRA for this program and all FRAs will coordinate with the BLA (Business Liaison Agency) (outlined in the Business Grant Summary) to gather any additional documentation from applicants or have questions answered. An FRA will not be required to meet with or contact applicants, but simply review the documentation provided based on the parameters provided by the county.

There will be three grant windows in which an FRA will be required to review applications. Each grant round is outlined in the schedule provided in this RFP. At the end of each grant window, an FRA will work with the BLA to produce a report which will be provided to the Commissioners

for a vote. The Commissioners may follow up with the FRA with specific questions about their recommendations.

After each grant window, the FRA will meet with the BLA and the Commissioners to determine the outcome of the previous grant window and define any changes that need to be made to make the program more effective.

Once the entire program is completed and all grant windows are closed, the FRA will provide all emails and data (not gathered via the application system) would be turned over to the BLA for archiving in the case of a right-to-know request. The FRA, as part of the program's commitment to transparency, must be prepared to provide any emails or additional documentation related specifically to the program and the FRAs review to the County Right-to-Know officer in the case of an open records request.

10. **Scope of Work**

a. **Application Receipt and Organization**

Grant applications will come through an online, cloud-based system created by the County to both the FRA and the BLA. All cases will have a case number, which is shared between all entities involved in the program. The FRA will be responsible to organize those files in their system according to case number. All files will be digital.

b. **Application Review**

The FRA will review documents provided on all cases in their que over the course of each grant window according to the timelines outlined in the schedule, and determine using the parameters outlined in the Business Grant Summary and the individual/agencies own experience to determine if the applicants can demonstrate a COVID-related loss or expense.

c. **Coordination with the BLA (Business Liaison Agency)**

The FRA will work closely with the BLA, and the BLA will be the point of contact for applicants. If there is a lack of documentation, or a need for additional documentation on a specific case, the FRA will need to reach out to the BLA who will in turn communicate with the applicants to request those specific documents. The BLA and FRA are generally equal parts of the review process.

d. **Report Generation**

Once the applications have all been reviewed, the FRA will coordinate with the BLA on a joint report which will include all cases, as prescribed in the Business Grant Summary, and make recommendations on approval or disapproval of applications and what the recommended amount. If the BLA and FRA have similar perspectives on an applicant, they may unify their information included in the report on that applicant. If they disagree on any aspect of the applicant, both perspectives must be included in the report and parsed out in an applicant-by-applicant basis. It will be up to the BLA and FRA to determine the format of the report, but the elements of the report must follow the minimum requirements outlined in the Business Grant Summary.

e. **Right-to-Know Accommodation**

The FRA will work directly with the BLA on all records management issues. Due to open records law, it is possible that the FRA will be asked to provide emails or correspondence as part of the right-to know request. No proprietary, personnel, or sensitive information related to the agency

will be disclosed; however, all general correspondence and any ancillary documents that are generated by the agency will be subject to opens records requests. The FRA will be notified by the BLA of a right-to-know request, the FRA will turn the needed records over to the BLA who will in turn provide the records to the County Right-to-Know Officer and the County Solicitor who will review the documents and properly redact any information not applicable either to the request or is outside the scope of the Open Records Law.

f. Final Records Collection

The FRA will be required to keep complete and detailed records of their deliberation and review of applications and any correspondence with the BLA or the Commissioners Office. All records generated by the FRA must be turned over to the BLA for storage. Those records do not include the application documents received via the Application System created by the County, which the County and the BLA will have access to. "All records generated" would be any record (includes but not limited to email, receipt, letter, written notes, policy or work instructions generated internally, etc.) that is generated for the purpose of carrying out the program.

11. Proposal Requirements

a. Title Page

A title page showing the firm's name, the date of proposal, point of contacts, business address, telephone numbers, and email addresses.

b. Letter of Interest and Experience

A signed letter of transmittal from the firm or individual submitting the proposal explaining briefly the experience, licenses, and general capabilities to perform the scope of work outlined in the RFP. The letter should state that said individual or agency agrees to perform all of the work outlined in the County's RFP within the time periods established by the County and can exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. The letter must also contain a certification that the person signing the proposal is entitled to represent the firm or individual, empowered to submit the bid, and authorized to sign a contract with the County on behalf of the audit firm.

c. Fee Schedule

Agencies/Individuals interested in making a proposal to provide services should include a general fee schedule for all clerical/review work to be done. Although in *Section 3.d.* we'll be requesting a per application estimate, there's a variety of ancillary work requirements that will be conducted via an hourly rate (transfer of files at the end of the project, meetings with Commissioners and BLA, special correspondence, etc.) and it's important for everyone involved to have an idea of your expectations of compensation.

d. Per Application Estimate

Using the Fee Schedule and the scope of work outlined in the Business Grant Summary, please attempt to estimate your overall cost to review an **average application**. Understanding that the applications may take one to two hours to review and that there may be as many as 100 applications overall. Applications may consist of any combination of tax returns, accounting reports, income and loss statements, receipts and a variety of other paperwork used to outline a loss or expense.

12. Responding to the RFP

Five copies of your proposal must be received no later than Monday, August 10 at 11:45 am to be considered as an FRA for the first round of grants. Proposals may be received after that deadline and those proposals will be reviewed and the related agencies or individuals may be approved and then hired as additional FRAs for future grant rounds. Proposals may be emailed to ehern@warren-county.net (in PDF format or Microsoft Word) or mailed/messengered to the County Office of Finance and Administration, addressed as follows:

Warren County Office of Finance and Administration
Attn: Eric Hern, Director
204 4th Avenue
Warren, PA 16365

No faxed materials will be accepted. Postmarks are not considered proof of delivery. Emailed proposals shall not be deemed received until a confirmation email sent by the County Office of Finance and Administration is received in reply to the submitted proposal, confirming the emailed proposal was received and the format was readable by the County. If the proposal is hand delivered, it must be delivered to and stamped by personnel at the County Office of Finance and Administration on the 1st floor of the County Courthouse at 204 4th Avenue in Warren.

Any amendments to this RFP will be in writing and will be issued to all persons or businesses that have indicated an interest to receive RFP amendments. No proposal will be considered that is not responsive to any issued amendments.

13. Schedule

a. Schedule for RFP Process

This RFP will be open and available for potential FRAs for the length of the program, which will last until December 31st, 2020. Although there is a narrow window for the first grant round, individuals and agencies are encouraged to make proposals after August 10th.

RFP Released:	Tuesday, August 4th
Deadline for First Round Proposals:	Monday, August 10th at 11:45 am
First Round Review and Selection:	Monday August 10th at 12:00 pm Comm. Work Session
First Round Contracts Finalized:	Wednesday, August 12th at 12:00 pm Comm. Meeting
Second and Third Round Proposal:	Should be received before November 30th, 2020

b. Program Schedule

Grant Round	Description	Start Date	End Date
1st Round	Application Period	August 17, 2020 at 8:00 am	August 28, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	August 17, 2020	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm	September 9, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	September 9, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	September 9, 2020 after public meeting	September 19, 2020
2nd Round	Application Period	September 14, 2020 at 8:00 am	September 25, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	September 14, 2020	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm	October 14, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	October 14, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	October 14, 2020 after public meeting	October 24, 2020
3rd Round	Application Period	October 19, 2020 at 8:00 am	October 30, 2020 at 4:30 pm

	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	October 19, 2020	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm	November 11th, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	November 11th, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	November 11, 2020 after public meeting	November 21, 2020

14. Proposal Evaluation

The County intends to select the most qualified firms or individuals that exhibit the strongest ability to provide the highest quality service, based upon the following criteria:

- Firm/Individual's understanding of the engagement and the County's needs.
- Firm/Individual's local municipal audit expertise/experience including references from similar engagements.
- Experience and qualifications of individuals to be assigned to the County's engagement including resources available for the timely completion of the application review and scheduling of work.
- Overall cost of services.

The selection team shall be the Warren County Board of Commissioners with assistance provided by the County's Director of Finance and Administration as well as input from the County Solicitor. Final selection (for the first round) will happen at the Commissioners Work Session at 12:00 pm on August 10th in the Commissioners Conference Room in the Courthouse. Subsequent proposal reviews (from August 10th onward) will be conducted at Commissioners Work Sessions which are generally on Mondays in the Commissioners Conference Room in the Courthouse at 12:00 pm.

15. Contract Duration

The selected individual or agency shall be designated as a County FRA (for the purpose of the Warren SBG Program) for term commencing on August 12, 2020 and ending January 31st, 2021. Either party may cancel the contract by 30-day written notice. The County reserves the right to extend the contract beyond the original period, negotiating each subsequent period separately as to price and work performed.

16. Acceptance or Rejection and Negotiation of Proposals

The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any irregularities in the request for proposal, to accept or reject any item or combination of items in a proposal, to request additional information or clarifications from respondents, and to negotiate or hold interviews with any one or more of the respondents. By requesting proposals, the County is in no way obligated to award a contract or to pay expenses of the proposing firms in connections with the preparation or submission of a proposal. Furthermore, the County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals prior to execution of a contract, with no penalty to the County of Warren.

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ATTACHMENT D – Program Schedule

Grant Round	Description	Start Date	End Date
1st Round	Application Period	August 17, 2020 at 8:00 am	August 28, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	August 17, 2020	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	September 4, 2020 at 4:30 pm	September 9, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	September 9, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	September 9, 2020 after public meeting	September 19, 2020
2nd Round	Application Period	September 14, 2020 at 8:00 am	September 25, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	September 14, 2020	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	October 2nd, 2020 at 4:30 pm	October 14, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	October 14, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	October 14, 2020 after public meeting	October 24, 2020

3rd Round	Application Period	October 19, 2020 at 8:00 am	October 30, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Application Review Period (by BLA and FRA)	October 19, 2020	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Report Generated by BLA and FRA	N/A	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm
	Review of Report by Commissioners	November 6th, 2020 at 4:30 pm	November 11th, 2020 at 12:00 pm
	Vote on First Round Grants by Commissioners	N/A	November 11th, 2020 at 12:00 pm at Commissioners Public Meeting in the Jackson Courtroom at the Courthouse
	Checks to Be Issued to Grantees (within 10 day period)	November 11, 2020 after public meeting	November 21, 2020

ATTACHMENT E – F.A.Q.s

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Warren SBG Program

This list of Frequently Asked Questions is based on the current statutory provisions and federal and Commonwealth guidance relating to Pennsylvania Act 24 of 2020 (“Act 24”), the Pennsylvania COVID-19 – County Relief Block Grant Program, and the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”) Coronavirus Relief Fund provisions as of June 25, 2020. The existing guidance is limited and open to interpretation in many ways. This interpretation is subject to change and future amendments to Act 24 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the COVID-19 – County Relief Block Grant Program guidance issued by the Commonwealth, the CARES Act by Congress, or related guidance from federal agencies could change some of the following answers. The following FAQ should not be extended to cover other facts or situations not addressed in this FAQ.

1. What laws provide the basis for the Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant Program?

Pennsylvania Act 24 of 2020 distributes federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund money to certain Pennsylvania counties. Act 24 permits the County to establish grant programs to support certain small businesses and to provide nonprofit assistance programs for tax exempt entities covered by Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Under the federal CARES Act such programs fall within the general category of business interruption grants. The County must distribute such funds no later than December 30, 2020.

2. What type of organizations are eligible for a Grant?

Pennsylvania Act 24 of 2020 provides that Coronavirus Relief Fund money distributed through the Commonwealth, which includes the funds received by the County used to fund the Business Interruption Grant Program, may be used for small business grant programs to “support businesses with fewer than 100 employees with priority given to those businesses that did not receive a loan or grant through the federal Paycheck Protection Program or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program established under the CARES Act.” In addition, such grants are available to businesses and other entities that are primarily engaged in the tourism industry, with 100 or more employees. Current interpretation of federal CARES Act guidance related to the definition of the term “small business” suggests that entities with more than 500 employees generally would not be deemed to be a small business for CARES Act purposes at this time. In the event your business is above the applicable thresholds, a review will be conducted to determine whether any exceptions apply.

Act 24 further provides that CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund money may be used for nonprofit assistance programs for entities that are an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Current interpretation of federal CARES Act guidance suggests that Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) entities qualify as small businesses for the purposes of CARES Act business interruption grants but that entities with more than 500 employees generally would not be eligible for such grants at this time. In the event your non-profit entity is above the applicable thresholds, a review will be conducted to determine whether any exceptions apply.

3. Is my organization eligible for a grant even if it did not close during the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Possibly. Based on the current guidance, your organization may be eligible for a grant even if it did not close, but it must have experienced some negative effects such as lost revenues or additional costs due to COVID-19. Limited guidance has been issued by the Commonwealth regarding the application of Act 24. Guidance issued by the United States Department of the Treasury (“U.S. Treasury”) permits funds to be used to provide “grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures.” Frequently Asked Questions issued by the U.S. Treasury indicate that such grants may be used to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures as well as “to benefit small businesses that close voluntarily to promote social distancing measures or that are affected by decreased customer demand as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.” Such effects must relate to the period that began on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.

4. My non-profit entity had to cancel fundraising events due to COVID-19. Is that a basis for obtaining a grant?

Yes. Lost revenue due fundraisers that were cancelled due to COVID-19 are an example of an effect of COVID-19 that would provide a basis for a non-profit entity to receive a grant.

5. What other requirements apply?

Applicants must be appropriately licensed and operating in the County. Applicants must also operate from a physical location in the County.

Applicant Requirements Include:

- Must be appropriately licensed and operating in the County.
- Must operate from a physical location in the County.
- Must be a business that employs 100 people or less, a nonprofit that employs 500 people or less; or is a Tourism-related business and employ 500 people or less.
- Must have been in operation on February 15th, 2020 and be able to demonstrate taxable income generated in the year prior to February 15th, 2020.
- Must be able to clearly demonstrate via any means that the organization suffered a COVID-related loss or expense. ***This grant will only provide funding for your loss and will provide funding beyond that loss. A grant awarded through this program, cannot be coupled with any other Federal or State CARES related assistance to generate revenue beyond any loss you can demonstrate.***
- Must have been, and remain, in compliance with all relevant laws, orders, and regulations during the period of the COVID-19 disaster emergency under the Governor’s proclamation dated March 6, 2020, and any and all subsequent renewals. The foregoing includes, but is not limited to, orders by the Governor, Secretary of Health, or other commonwealth officials empowered to act during the emergency. Any non-compliant business will be ineligible for funding under this program and may be required to return all, or a portion, of the funds awarded.
- No owner of any business or nonprofit applicant with more than a 20% share of the equity of the applicant can be incarcerated, on probation, on parole; presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction; or has been convicted of a felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance within the past five years, or any other felony within the last year and will be considered ineligible.

6. How will the grant amount be determined if my organization is approved for a Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant?

If applicants comply with all elements of Section 3 and can definitively demonstrate a COVID-related loss or expense, their applications will be evaluated to determine the recommended grant amount considering their loss based on an overall formula. For the first round of grants, which has a total allocation of \$1 million, the total collective losses of all businesses that meet the criteria of Section 6.4. will be compared to the total allocation and the following formula will be used to determine the recommended grant amount which will have no minimum or maximum.

$$\boxed{\text{Total Grant Fund(a)}} \div \boxed{\text{Total Loss of Applicants(b)}} = \boxed{\% \text{ of Applicants Loss for Recommended Grant Award(c)}}$$

As an example, if the total loss exhibited by the applicants (in aggregate) is \$1.25 million, we would divide the total grant fund (\$1 million) by the \$1.25 million and allow all applicants (which would show that the \$1 million is 80% of the total loss of \$1.25 million) to have 80% of their demonstrated COVID-related losses and expenses as their recommended grant amount. A business, in that scenario, which demonstrated a loss of \$100,000 would receive a grant amount of \$80,000.

7. When will my organization be informed if it is approved for a Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant?

Please see Attachment D of this document to see a full schedule of the program.

8. When will my organization receive its grant if it is approved for a Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant?

Within 10 days of the final vote by the Commissioners on the applications recommended by the Business Liaison Agency coordinating this program.

9. Are the rules relating to the Warren-SBG Program subject to change?

Like many things related to the COVID-19 pandemic, state and federal guidance affecting the Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant Program is subject to change. Some of the limited guidance issued by the federal government has already been revised several times. The Commonwealth has not yet issued extensive guidance relating to Act 24 and the COVID-19 – County Relief Block Grant Program but is likely to do so in the near future.

10. I heard that CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund money cannot be used for revenue replacement – does this apply to my non-governmental organization?

No. The requirement that Coronavirus Relief Fund money cannot be used for revenue replacement only applies to governmental entities. Grants received by eligible private businesses and eligible non-profit entities can be used for any lawful purpose.

11. If my organization applies for a Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grant Program, will federal or Commonwealth approval of its application be required?

No. The U.S. Treasury has indicated that federal approval of CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund money requests is not required. At this time, the same is true of the Commonwealth. The County will be making decisions relating to the approval or denial of requests for Non-Governmental Business Interruption Grants.

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ATTACHMENT F – Business Interruption Grant Agreement

Business Interruption Grant Agreement

Name of Recipient Entity: _____

Business Address of Entity: _____

Telephone Number of Entity: _____

Name of Authorized Signer: _____

Business Address of Authorized Signer: _____

Email Address of Authorized Signer: _____

Telephone Number of Authorized Signer: _____

By signing this form, I affirm that the entity applying for this assistance has experienced the following types of COVID-19 business interruption effects:

By signing this form, I acknowledge that Recipient is obligated to retain records regarding business interruption effects related COVID-19, including but not limited to lost revenues due to required closures, voluntary closures intended to enhance social distancing, and decreased customer demand due to COVID-19. Such records shall be made available to representatives of the County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or the United States government upon request and in the format requested.

I further acknowledge that no elected official, officer, appointee, agent or employee of the County may be charged personally or held contractually liable by or to the Recipient with respect to matters pertaining to Coronavirus Relief Fund money.

I further affirm that I am authorized to sign and submit this Certification Form.

I certify under penalty of law that this document and the information submitted herein and in Recipient's Application are, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate and complete. I understand that false

statements made herein or in the Application or other information submitted are subject to the penalties for unsworn falsification to authorities set forth in 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904.

Name

Title

Date

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