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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **GO TOPEKA ANNOUNCES UP TO \$2M IN NEW ECONOMIC STIMULUS FOR BUSINESSES, WORKERS IMPACTED BY COVID-19**

*Small business emergency fund, called 'HOST Relief Program,' will distribute resources to businesses, displaced workers across the Capital City of Kansas and Shawnee County*

*Additional donors are encouraged to support the Fund at  
[SupportTopeka.com/HOST](https://SupportTopeka.com/HOST)*

**TOPEKA, KS -- March 23, 2020** – [GO Topeka](https://www.gotopeka.com) announced today the creation of the “[HOST Relief Program](#)” to provide up to \$2 million in economic stimulus for businesses and workers affected by COVID-19. HOST, which stands for Helping Others Support Topeka, is a small business emergency resource fund developed by private sector leaders designed to provide immediate aid.

“With the HOST Relief Program, we’re trying to inject some needed capital back into local companies to get them through this difficult time. We hope this program also provides some aid to workers displaced by COVID-19,” says Scott Hunsicker, owner and president, [Kansas Financial Resources](#). “In a lot of other communities, there are people calling up local agencies, like the Chamber of Commerce, asking, ‘What can you do for me?’ In Topeka, we’re asking, ‘How can we help?’ This is what sets Topeka apart from so many other communities – its altruistic spirit.”

Over \$300,000 in donations has been raised since March 21 from the private sector, with the intent of purchasing products or services from Shawnee County businesses. These resources, which can take the form of gift cards, vouchers or direct product purchases, will be quickly distributed to those workers displaced, temporarily or permanently, as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Additional corporations and individuals are encouraged to support the HOST Relief Program and can [sign up online](#).

“On Saturday morning, I received a call from a local business owner. He had an idea to pledge private-sector support to augment our public efforts to help small businesses and displaced workers. The outcome of this philanthropic pursuit was more than I could imagine,” said Matt Pivarnik, CEO of GO Topeka. “Scott Hunsicker and his colleagues are heroes in my eyes and their heart for community is inspiring.”

GO Topeka will complement this effort with a pledge to match up to \$1 million dollars donated for this initiative, pending approval by the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) this Wednesday. The public dollars will be distributed in the form of new small business grants to provide more sustainable support during the COVID-19 crisis.

“GO Topeka stands by its local businesses during this trying time,” says Molly Howey, president of GO Topeka. “We hope that this fund will serve dual purposes of injecting needed cash into our small business community, while at the same time providing economic support to dislocated workers impacted by COVID-19.”

“HOST was created to show the small businesses in Topeka and Shawnee County that they hold a special place in the heart of the community,” says Glenda Washington, senior vice president of Women & Minority Owned Small Business Development, a program of GO Topeka. “When your back is up against the wall, we’ll be there to help you fight the good fight. Because, we are one.”

The HOST Relief Program will take two forms: private sector dollars which will provide immediate relief to small businesses through purchases, and public sector dollars which will be designated for direct support to Shawnee County businesses through emergency grants. An emergency session of JEDO has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, to formally approve the release of funds.

More details on the HOST Relief Program, including how donors, small businesses and individuals can participate, can be found at

<http://SupportTopeka.com/HOST>. Participation requests will be evaluated by the private sector committee.

### **About Greater Topeka**

The Greater Topeka area in Shawnee County represents a community of 178,915 people, located in the Greater Kansas City region. As the state capital of Kansas, Topeka is home to a dynamic employer base with headquartered companies including Hill's Pet Nutrition, Advisors Excel, Security Benefit, Capitol Federal and Evergy. Topeka is proud to be a part of the [#KCHeartland](#).

### **About GO Topeka**

GO Topeka creates opportunities for economic growth that provide a thriving business climate and fulfilling lifestyle for Topeka and Shawnee County. GO Topeka operates under the Greater Topeka Partnership, the leading economic development agency in the region. <https://www.gotopeka.com/>

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**If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Bob Ross at [Bob.Ross@TopekaPartnership.com](mailto:Bob.Ross@TopekaPartnership.com).**