



Contact Bob Ross
Title SVP of Marketing &
Communications

Telephon 785.234.2644

e
Email Bob.Ross@TopekaPartnership.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2020

JEDO APPROVES \$1M IN NEW GRANTS TO PROVIDE RELIEF TO SHAWNEE COUNTY SMALL BUSINESSES; PRIVATE DONATIONS REACH ALMOST \$500,000

TOPEKA, KS – April 1, 2020 – [GO Topeka](#) is pleased to announce that the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) has approved \$1 million in additional relief grants for small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new HOST Relief Grants are intended to provide sustainable support and capital to local businesses in Shawnee County.

The public dollars will complement private dollars raised since March 21. To date \$476,000 has been raised through 23 private donors. Together they form the [HOST Relief Program](#). HOST, which stands for Helping Others Support Topeka, is a small business emergency resource fund designed to provide immediate aid. Announced on March 23, the intention of the effort was to generate up to \$2M in economic stimulus for businesses and displaced workers affected by COVID-19.

“For weeks now we have been fielding calls from small businesses in the area. Anxiety is high right now, and many are struggling to meet day-to-day expenses. So, you can imagine what these additional funds will mean to the small businesses in our community,” says Glenda Washington, senior vice president of Women & Minority Business Development, a program of GO

Topeka. "It affords them not only monetary relief but also additional confidence that they will be able to make it through this crisis."

Applications for publicly funded HOST Relief Grants are found at SupportTopeka.com/HOST. Small businesses will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in grant money through this program.

Businesses selected for private HOST Relief support will be notified. Gift cards will be distributed to displaced workers in Shawnee County, who have been impacted by COVID-19. Employers who have had to temporarily or permanently reduce staffing are encouraged to apply at SupportTopeka.com/HOST for gift card relief for their employees who were released from work. Each person is eligible to receive \$250 in aid.

"In a time of need, Topeka always comes together, even from 6-feet away. I am amazed at the outpouring of support from local and regional businesses," says Scott Hunsicker, owner and president, [Kansas Financial Resources](#), and lead organizer of the HOST Relief effort. "Topeka is a survivor; from the '66 Tornado to the current COVID-19 crisis. Local and regional businesses are the life blood of our community. It is important that we assist them during this time. We lose alone and win together."

"These grants will provide aid to those most affected by the challenges brought by COVID-19," says Molly Howey, president of GO Topeka. "It is GO Topeka's hope that the HOST Relief Program can give small businesses and displaced workers in Shawnee County some hope for the future. We are committed to giving this community the support it needs to make it through these hardships."

"When this community decides to take action into it's own hands, they don't hesitate. I am extremely proud of this," said Matt Pivarnik, CEO of the Greater Topeka Partnership. "As a community we should really celebrate this extraordinary show of strength and unity and recognize that not many other communities throughout the U.S. can claim to have provided the same kind of support."

About HOST Relief Program

The HOST Relief Program is a small business emergency resource fund that was developed by private sector leaders and is being facilitated by GO Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership.

Special thanks to our donors:

Alma Creamery

Capital City Oil

Capital Federal

Creative One

Ed Eller Inc.

Edward Jones Associates of Shawnee County

Federal Home Loan Bank

Gary Woodland

Mark and Lisa Heitz

Innovation Design Group

Kansas City Life

Kansas Financial Resources

Kansas Secured Title

Magellan Financial

Market Synergy

McBuild

McElroy's

Mark & Sandy Ruelle

Schendel Lawn and Landscape

Security Benefit Group

Silver Lake Bank

Lance Sparks Trust

Vision Bank

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 Host Relief Committee.

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/>

#

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Bob Ross at Bob.Ross@TopekaPartnership.com.

If you have questions regarding small business support, or what aid is available to you, you may call the following:

English – 785.246.6246

Spanish – 785.246.6227