



CITY OF OAKLAND

Available Business Resources – April 3, 2020

Dear Business Owner,

Thank you for sharing how COVID-19 has impacted your business through the City's Business Impact Survey. These unprecedented times have temporarily changed how we Oaklanders live, work, learn and shop.

The City wants to **share a variety of resources to support small businesses and workers** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City has **launched a [web page](#) to serve as a portal for all the local, state and federal resources** available to support small businesses and workers during this crisis.

The **following are a sampling of resources and information available** on the [web page](#):

Help with Capital for Small Businesses

The U.S. Small Business Administration's low-interest [Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#) provides Small businesses, independent contractors, cooperatives and private nonprofits with working capital loans of up to \$2 million that may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid due to the disaster. All are encouraged to apply. Online applications may be done in less than 15 minutes and include an option for a three-day up to \$10,000 cash advance grant that does not need to be repaid, even if the loan is not approved.

The [Paycheck Protection Program](#) will offer cash-flow assistance with a 100% federally guaranteed loan to employers, self-employed and independent contractors who maintain their payroll during this emergency. These loans may be forgiven if borrowers maintain or restore payroll. SBA guidelines are pending publication, but the program will be available through SBA's 7(a) lenders. The Paycheck Protection Program will be available through June 30, 2020.

[KIVA.org](#), a City of Oakland partner, offers zero interest loans via crowdsourcing to entrepreneurs and small business owners. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, KIVA has raised its maximum loan amount to \$15,000, expanded eligibility for loans, and has extended the repayment grace period up to six months post-loan disbursement for greater financial flexibility.

There are other local business providers who offer loans and technical assistance specifically to Oakland small businesses, including [Main Street Launch](#), [Working Solutions](#) and [Pacific Community Ventures](#), among others. [AnewAmerica](#) is offering counseling sessions with telephone appointments, including support for SBA loans.

Finally, the State of California's Small Business Finance Center provides loan guarantees and direct loans for small businesses that experience capital access barriers through its [Disaster Relief Loan Guarantee Program](#).

Information About State Unemployment & Disability Insurance Benefits –Waiting Periods Waived

Governor Newsom's [Executive Order](#) on March 12, 2020, waives the one-week waiting period for people who are unemployed and/or disabled as a result of COVID-19 to seek unemployment and disability benefits. Please direct affected workers to the [California Labor & Workforce Development Agency's website](#) to review what benefits are available including sick leave, paid family leave and workers' compensation benefits. Additional information and resources can be found at [Ca.Gov/Coronavirus2019](#).

Self-employed workers, including independent contractors, may be eligible for benefits and are encouraged to apply for unemployment insurance. https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

Other Measures to Preserve Cash Flow

Employers experiencing a hardship as a result of COVID-19 **may request up to a 60-day extension** of time from the State of California's Employment Development Department (EDD) to file their state payroll reports and/or deposit state payroll taxes without penalty or interest. A written request for an extension must be received within 60 days from the original delinquent date of the payment or return. For questions, employers may call the EDD Taxpayer Assistance Center. Toll-free from the U.S. or Canada: 1-888-745-3886 Hearing-impaired (TTY): 1-800-547-9565

The State Franchise Tax Board has [postponed until July 15, 2020](#) the filing and payment deadline for most business entities.

The U.S. Treasury Department, IRS, and the U.S. Department of Labor (Labor) announced that small and midsize employers can begin taking advantage of [two new refundable payroll tax credits](#), designed to immediately and fully reimburse them, dollar-for-dollar, for the cost of providing Coronavirus-related leave to their employees. For COVID-19 related reasons, employees receive up to 80 hours of paid sick leave and expanded paid child care leave when employees' children's schools are closed or child care providers are unavailable. Employers with fewer than 50 employees are eligible for an exemption from the requirements to provide leave to care for a child whose school is closed, or child care is unavailable in cases where the viability of the business is threatened. Employers receive 100% reimbursement for paid leave pursuant to the Act. Health insurance costs are also included in the credit. Self-employed individuals receive an equivalent credit. Reimbursement will be quick and easy to obtain. An immediate dollar-for-dollar tax offset against payroll taxes will be provided.

City of Oakland's Paid Sick Leave Requirement for Workers

The City is reminding all employers and workers of Oakland's voter-approved sick leave benefits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that workers have the ability to take paid time off when they are sick. [Measure FF](#), voter-approved in November 2014, requires the accrual of paid sick leave for any individuals employed in Oakland. The minimum rate of accrual is one hour paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked. Employers with less than 10 employees must allow employees to accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick leave at a time and larger employers with 10 or more employees must allow employees to accrue at least 72 hours of paid sick leave. If you as an employer have any questions, please reach out to minwageinfo@oaklandca.gov.

Resources to Support Workforce Reductions

If you're reducing your workforce, please consider the state's [Work Sharing Program](#) that helps employers minimize or eliminate the need for layoffs, keep trained employees and quickly prepare when business conditions improve. The program helps employees whose hours and wages have been reduced to receive Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.

Engaging the City's [Rapid Response team](#) to meet with affected workers before the layoff will allow your employees access to services and programs to help them through this difficult time. Rapid Response is carried out in partnership with Oakland's American Job Center. To access these Rapid Response services, contact Tamara Walker at twalker@oaklandca.gov or (510) 238-3630.

Help with Mounting Housing Costs and Residential Displacement

Through the [Keep Oakland Housed](#) program, services are available to all Oakland residents who are at risk of losing their housing. In addition to emergency financial assistance to help with rent, utility payments, and other housing-related costs, the program offers supportive services and legal representation for tenants with an active eviction lawsuit. If you or any of your employees are at-risk for residential displacement, please connect with Keep Oakland Housed.

On Friday, March 27, 2020, the Oakland City Council passed an [eviction moratorium](#) for residential renters, nonprofit organization renters, and small business renters (generally those with fewer than 100 employees). This moratorium will prohibit most evictions, effective immediately and continuing through May 31, 2020, unless the City Council extends that date. The full text of the ordinance is available at: <https://bit.ly/2UQI52b> Commercial tenants and property owners with questions about the eviction moratorium should send an e-mail to busdev@oaklandca.gov.

Direct Technical Help for Small Businesses

Finally, the City's business development staff will contact survey respondents that requested one-on-one follow-up shortly. They can connect you with Oakland's many business support organizations that offer financial products, technical assistance and other services to help local small businesses during this pandemic.

Thank you for your investment in Oakland. Businesses like yours are essential to the vitality of the city we call home.