

#stillbudaful stimulus plan



For Immediate Release

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CITY OF BUDA SMALL BUSINESS TASK FORCE DEVELOPS “STILL BUDAFUL” STIMULUS PROGRAM

BUDA, TX – April 8, 2020 - In response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the Buda City Council authorized the Still Budaful Stimulus Program to assist businesses negatively affected by the pandemic. The Still Budaful Stimulus is a local economic development program authorized under Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code to help reduce the resulting economic strain on local businesses. On March 20, Buda City Council declared a local state of disaster. As a result, the pandemic caused closures and limitations on local businesses in Buda. At that same meeting, Council appointed a Small Business Task Force to research ways to assist businesses during this time of need.

On April 6, 2020 members of the Buda Economic Development Corporation (Buda EDC) approved an Agreement for Funding of the Still Budaful Stimulus Program. On April 7, 2020 the Buda City Council also committed funds to this program. The total contributions between the City of Buda and Buda EDC amount to \$380,000, allowing eligible businesses to apply for the following assistance programs:

- Still Budaful Stimulus Grant
- Hotel Occupancy Tax Payment Emergency Deferral + Forgiveness Program
- Buda Emergency Co-Marketing Grant

About the Still Budaful Stimulus Grant:

The program funded between the City of Buda and the Buda EDC provides limited financial assistance to businesses severely impacted as a result of the ‘Stay at Home, Work Safe’ Order implemented by Hays County and the City of Buda to reduce the spread and impact of COVID-19. It provides \$380,000 in government-funded grants for eligible small businesses that are

independently owned and operated with a maximum of 50 employees. Eligible industries may include retail (storefront), food and beverage; personal care (barber shop, nail salons, spas, etc.), automobile maintenance, education training, health/wellness, art galleries and small manufacturing businesses. National chains, home-based businesses, non-profit organizations and permanent business closures are not eligible for the grant. Additionally, businesses must meet the following criteria to receive up to \$5,000 in grant funding.

- Physical and publicly accessible location within the City of Buda city limits (no home-based businesses).
- Experienced or projected to experience a decline in revenue and/or employment starting March 1, 2020 and ending at which time the government has allowed citizens to return to normal activity.
- In good standing with the City of Buda regarding licensing and permits.
- Must be registered with the Texas Comptroller's Office as a sales tax revenue generating business for the City of Buda.
- Engaged in activities that are legal under city and state law.

About the Hotel Occupancy Tax Payment Emergency Deferral + Forgiveness Program:

The program provides limited financial assistance to City of Buda hotels through the deferral and forgiveness of hotel occupancy tax payments to hotels severely impacted as a result of the 'Stay at Home, Work Safe' Order. The Program provides a 60-day deferral of hotel occupancy tax payments for March 20, 2020 and April 20, 2020, with an additional offering of forgiving up to \$5,000 of deferred hotel occupancy tax payments. This program has an aggregate of \$45,000 available for hotel occupancy tax forgiveness. Hotels must apply to be eligible. In addition, hotels must meet the following criteria:

- Collects hotel occupancy tax for the City of Buda.
- Experienced or projected to experience a decline in revenue between March 1, 2020 and May 31, 2020 as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Experienced or projected to experience a decline in employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In good standing with the City of Buda with regard to licensing and finance, including being current on sales and use tax payments.
- Engaged in activities that are legal under city and state law.

About the Emergency Co-Marketing Grant Program:

The program, funded through Hotel Occupancy Tax, provides online marketing assistance to tourism-related businesses located within the City of Buda during a time of social distancing. Qualifying small businesses can be reimbursed for 100% of online marketing costs, up to \$50 per month, for a maximum of two months to promote their businesses to new and existing customers inside and outside of Buda city limits. To qualify, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a registered business located within Buda City limits. Businesses located in the ETJ do not qual
- Must be privately owned and must be in a tourism-service related industry to include retail, food, beverage, etc.
- Advertisements must adhere to and support proper social distancing guidelines.
- Qualifying advertisements are limited to social media, web and online marketing efforts.
- Website creation is a qualifying expense and can be reimbursed up to the maximum amount of \$100 at the time of the expense.
- Qualifying advertisements may target potential customers in Buda but must primarily target potential customers from outside of Buda City Limits.
- Advertising must promote tourism and meet the Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Code requirements:
 - The expenditure must directly enhance and promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry
 - Promote tourism in the City of Buda

In addition to the sub-programs available under the Still Budaful Stimulus Program, Buda City Council voted to waive food truck fees for the 2nd quarter. Food trucks must still register with the City of Buda to remain in compliance. City Council also waived credit card transaction fees, utility late fees and utility disconnects for two months.

Applications

The Still Budaful Stimulus Program will officially launch on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 12 noon. Online applications will be available at that time: www.stillbudaful.org

About the Small Business Task Force:

The Task Force consists of: Buda City Council Member Evan Ture; City Manager of the City of Buda Kenneth Williams; Assistant City Manager for the City of Buda Lauren Middleton-Pratt; Finance Director for the City of Buda June Ellis; Director of Tourism for the City of Buda Lysa Gonzalez; Main Street Program Manager for the City of Buda Maggie Gillespie; Buda EDC Board President Jennifer Storm; Buda EDC Executive Director Traci Anderson; Buda Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director J.R. Gonzales; and City Attorney for the City of Buda George Hyde. Unlike the other members of the Task Force, Mr. Hyde reviews applications for legal compliance only.

Quotes from Small Business Task Force Members

“The Buda business community is motivated, resourceful and dedicated to being successful. During this pandemic, local businesses are struggling to stay open and to take care of their employees. This stimulus grant will be crucial in assisting business get through this unforeseen crisis,” said J.R. Gonzales, Buda Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

“The Buda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) is committed to expanding and promoting local business. During this time of social distancing the BEDC Board approved

\$210,000 toward the Still Budaful Stimulus Program which will provide grants to small businesses in Buda. Small business is the backbone of our community. Buda is and will continue to be a business-friendly community and this program proves that through good times and bad, the Buda EDC is here for Buda businesses,” said Jennifer Storm, Buda Economic Development Corporation Board President.

“We applaud the bold leadership exhibited by City Council and our municipal partners during this time of economic uncertainty. We are committed to the citizens of Buda and it is our hope that this program can provide economic relief during this trying time,” said Lauren Middleton-Pratt, Assistant City Manager.