

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Telephone: (716) 286-4310

April 20, 2022

The City Council
Niagara Falls, New York

***RE: Allocation of American Rescue Plan Funding
(Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) Program)***

Council Members:

Small businesses are often regarded as the backbone of the American Economy. However, declining revenues and managing the costs of commercial rent, payroll and other expenses during the coronavirus pandemic have put the existence of many of these businesses at risk. But those challenges are even more acute for businesses owned by people of color and women.

With this in mind, this Administration has proposed the utilization of American Rescue Plan (“ARP”) funding to expand opportunities for Minority and Women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. This program’s goal is to provide an alternative source of funding to benefit new and existing small business enterprises owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals—promoting economic development, job creation, and diversity in the City of Niagara Falls. It is our belief that by providing businesses that otherwise might not have the ability to compete with access to developmental assistance, they will possess a greater chance to flourish in today’s economy.

Under our proposal, the City will provide the N.F.C. Development Corporation (“NFC”), the City’s non-profit banking and lending arm, with \$3,000,000.00 to administer a Minority and Women Business Enterprise (“MWBE”) Grant Program designed to expand access and opportunities for these businesses. NFC, whose mission is to attract new business and retain business and industry within the City, would distribute the funding according to its guidelines. NFC staff and the City’s Economic Development staff will consider cash grants of up to \$50,000.00 for existing New York State certified MWBE businesses located within the City and up to \$25,000 for non-NYS certified MWBE start-ups or existing businesses within the City.

Bax _____ Myles _____ Tompkins _____ Zajac _____ Spanbauer _____

All MWBE Grant applications pursuant to this program must be submitted to NFC on or before April 15, 2024; project costs incurred between the date of application and August 31, 2024 are eligible project costs. Any funding that is not distributed prior to August 31, 2024 shall be repurposed according to ARP guidelines.

Funding for this program is available from American Rescue Plans Funds, expenditure category Section 2.9 Negative Economic Impacts - Small Business Economic Assistance.

Will the Council so approve and authorize the Mayor to execute any documents necessary to implement the same, provided these documents are in form and content acceptable to the Corporation Counsel?

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Restaino
Mayor

Funding Approval:

Daniel Morello, City Controller
City Council Meeting, April 22, 2022