



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2020

For More Information:

Lauren Coakley Vincent, President + CEO
Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District
(203) 908-3622

lauren.dssd@infobridgeport.com

— PRESS RELEASE —

**Bridgeport DSSD's Small Business Pandemic Relaunch Grant Program
OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS**

BRIDGEPORT, CT – June 5, 2020 – The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) is thrilled to announce – thanks to generous leadership gifts from SCG & UI, Part of the AVANGRID Family, PSEG, the City of Bridgeport, and the People's United Community Foundation – that applications are open for the Small Business Pandemic Relaunch Grant Program.

The purpose of the grant program is to provide independently owned, ground floor small businesses in Downtown Bridgeport with a \$2,500 micro-grant, paired with technical assistance to create a reopening plan that the grant would be used to implement. Pro bono technical assistance in the areas of capital access, accounting, legal, and marketing, will support participant businesses to plan and put into practice the capital management tactics, operational guidance, and strategies to help attract customers new and old back to the business when they relaunch and continue to rebuild.

Applications are open now through mid-June, with notifications to selected participants expected to go out before the end of the month. The program is aimed at small businesses that have had difficulty obtaining funding from federal or state initiatives, with a particular focus on small businesses owned by women and people of color. Additional details on eligibility, timeline, requirements for participation, and the application are accessible on the Colorful Bridgeport website: <https://infobridgeport.com/relaunch-grant-program>.

The DSSD's President + CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent said, "the Bridgeport DSSD represents a commercial area that serves a diverse tapestry of the wider Bridgeport community. The independently owned restaurants, shops, and services that populate the street-level spaces in our neighborhood create connection points that foster the sense of community so special to the Downtown and the city. The Relaunch Grant program will be a point of hope as our neighborhood, and the city, rebuilds from the COVID-19 pandemic."

Natalie Pryce, Director of Business Development for Led by Us said, "Led By Us, is very excited to be a key partner in this collaboration with the DSSD & BEDCO in providing technical support for Downtown Bridgeport businesses and grow our new hyper-local economy & community. When Lauren and I sat down to figure out how both our organizations could not only work together but bring major stakeholders to the table to contribute to the small businesses during these unprecedented times, we knew that structuring a mini-grant program to meet or at least relieve some of the needs of our small business owners would go along way. The support from UI & PSEG is greatly appreciated, and we continue to look for more community stakeholders to help us reach our goal of \$75,000."

"Small businesses are a critical part of the economic engine that will repower the economy and restart job growth as Connecticut reopens," said Tony Marone, President and CEO of Avangrid Networks, UI and SCG's parent company. "We are pleased to have this opportunity to help small businesses in Bridgeport adapt to new business realities in the wake of the pandemic."

“PSEG is proud to support Downtown Bridgeport businesses as they reopen and overcome the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that Downtown Bridgeport will be able to re-emerge as a positive, welcoming, and vibrant community at the intersection of commerce and culture,” said Vinny Fiumidini, Plant Manager for, PSEG Power Connecticut.

Mayor Ganim stated, “DSSD has stepped up by offering to assist Downtown businesses in developing a successful plan to reopen and providing the grant money to do it. We are all working hard to bounce back from the effects of COVID-19 and DSSD will play a critical role in the success of the reopening of doors in our business community.”

Edward Lavernoch, President of the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation said, “the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation is always willing to help our community partners pursue worthy objectives. We are pleased to support the Downtown Special Services District in its timely and much-needed Pandemic Relaunch Grant Program.”

Learn more about the program and review full details on eligibility, timeline, requirements for participation, and the application on the Colorful Bridgeport website: <https://infobridgeport.com/relaunch-grant-program>.



About Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District

As the Business Improvement District for the Park City, the mission of the Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) is to “promote the preservation and development of the downtown business district; make the area more attractive and accessible; and enhance the public perception of downtown Bridgeport through overseeing and managing its appearance, security, and cleanliness.” The DSSD is operated under the direction of a nine member Board of Commissioners representing property owners in downtown Bridgeport. www.colorfulbridgeport.com.



About Led by Us

Led by Us is a movement working towards responsible urban revitalization. Our work is focused on three building blocks: Community Development, Business Growth, and Real Estate Development. We look to inspire community doers and stakeholders with the necessary tools, resources, and confidence to build, design, and execute. Together we will empower the next wave of job creators and entrepreneurs. More information is available at <https://www.ledbyusct.com/>.

#