

Ontario County Economic Development Corp., Finger Lakes Visitors Connection team on new Covid relief program

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CANANDAIGUA — The Ontario County Economic Development Corp. and Finger Lakes Visitors Connection are establishing the Visit Ontario County COVID Relief Program to provide grants to small businesses within Ontario County’s tourism and hospitality industry that were negatively impacted by Covid-19.



Knoblauch



Manikowski

The funds are available to create new jobs, restore jobs, or retain jobs that are at risk of being lost. Applications for funding are now being accepted by on a rolling basis. Information about the Program is available at www.ontariocountyny.gov/1985/Hospitality-and-Tourism-COVID-19-Relief-.

In accordance with the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, more widely known as the CARES Act, Ontario County received \$1,000,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

To help small businesses access the available funding, OCEDC and FLVC have partnered with Ostrander’s Consulting. The firm will assist small businesses in understanding their eligibility, applying,

and filling out paperwork. Furthermore, December meetings have been set up across Ontario County communities — Victor, Naples, Geneva, Phelps, and Canandaigua — for small businesses to meet with OCEDC, FLVC, and Ostrander’s Consulting and learn about the program as well as other funding opportunities currently available through Empire State Development and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Registration for these informational meetings is requested and can be done by calling the Finger Lakes Visitors Connection office at (585) 394-3915 and asking for Valerie or Julie.

“Tourism and hospitality has been one of the hardest-hit industries by the Cpvind-19 pandemic,” said FLVC President and CEO Valerie Knoblauch in a press release. “From the beginning, Finger Lakes Visitors Connection looked for opportunities to support Ontario County’s small businesses. The Visit Ontario County COVID Relief Program is another way we can help our residents and businesses get back on their feet and provide the high-quality experience Ontario County visitors have come to know and love.”

“Tourism and hospitality businesses are an important part of Ontario County’s economy,” said OCEDC Executive Director Michael Manikowski in a press release. “Pre-pandemic, the industry supported 4,829 full-time jobs and generated \$207 million in traveler spending annually. Now, they need our help in restoring and creating new jobs to get back to — and hopefully exceed — these numbers. That’s why we created this fund. And we are proud being one of the first counties in New York State to do so.”

In 2020, FLVC and OCEDC partnered to create the Visit Confidently Resource Center, which provided personal protective equipment, signage, and cleaning supplies to Ontario County businesses, in addition to educating business owners on new and evolving reopening guidelines set by New York state.