

Disaster Emergency Grant Program FAQs



Below find the answers to frequently asked questions regarding our Disaster Emergency Grant Program.

1. How do I determine if my business is in a highly distressed area?

First, you will need to determine your Census Tract number by following these steps:

Go to Census Geocoder: <https://geocoding.geo.census.gov/geocoder/geographies/address?form>

- a. Enter address example: 123 Main St, Anywhere, NY 12345 (no unit or apartment numbers).
- b. Click Find.
- c. Scroll down the page to the section labeled 2010 Census Blocks to get the TRACT code

NOTE: The census tract codes consist of six digits with an implied decimal between the fourth and fifth digit corresponding to the basic census tract number but with leading zeroes and trailing zeroes for census tracts without a suffix. (Example Census Tract 002400 = Tract 24 and Census Tract 004001 = Tract 40.01).

Once you have your Census Tract, view the map <https://www.ecidany.com/documents/HighlyDistressedAreaMap7-2-2013.pdf>. After opening the map (pdf), use the tool bar to zoom in and navigate the map to look for your location. Look for the Census Tract number on the map to match the Tract number you identified for your address using the Census Geocoder above. Qualifying census tracts are noted on the map as Empire Zone (pink), Highly Distressed (orange), or Adjacent to Highly Distressed (gold). If you are still unable to determine if your business is located in a highly distressed area, please contact Laurie Hendrix at 362-8366 for assistance.

2. Why is the Grant Program limited to the shaded areas on the highly distressed area map (<https://www.ecidany.com/documents/HighlyDistressedAreaMap7-2-2013.pdf>)? Isn't the entire region considered highly distressed?

No. Please view the Program Guidelines for the New York State General Municipal Law definition of a "highly distressed area."

3. Does a Minority-Owned, Women- Owned or Veteran-Owned Business need to also be in a highly distressed area to be eligible to apply?

No – however your business must be located in Erie County (excluding Amherst, Clarence, Concord, Lancaster, Hamburg) to be eligible to apply for the ECIDA's Disaster Emergency Grant Program.

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4. What qualifies a business as minority owned, women owned or veteran owned?

Minority owned - business must be at least 51% owned and controlled by an individual or individuals who belong to one or more of the following:

- African Americans,
- Hispanic Americans,
- Asian Pacific Americans,
- Subcontinent Asian Americans, and.
- Native Americans

Woman owned - business must be at least 51% owned and controlled by an individual or individuals who are women

Veteran owned - businesses must be 51% or more owned and controlled by an individual or individuals in one or more of the following groups:

- Veterans (other than dishonorably discharged);
- Service-Disabled Veterans;
- Active Duty Military service member participating in the military's Transition Assistance Program (TAP);
- Reservists and National Guard Members; or
- Current spouse of any Veteran, Active Duty service member, or any Reservist or National Guard member; or widowed spouse of a service member who died while in service or of a service-connected disability.

5. Why are businesses and not-for-profits located in the Towns of Amherst, Clarence, Concord, Lancaster, and Hamburg ineligible to apply for funding assistance through the ECIDA?

The **Towns of Amherst, Clarence, Concord, Lancaster, and Hamburg** are represented by their own municipal IDA that works to attract, retain and expand business within their jurisdiction through the provision of financial incentives. New York State's temporary amendment to the general municipal law allows all IDA to develop a program to provide grants to eligible small businesses and not-for-profits to assist with the purchase of personal protective equipment. If your business is located in Amherst, Clarence Concord, Lancaster or Hamburg, please contact your local IDA for information about their COVID related programs.

6. Does the “not more than 50 employees” qualification apply to the specific location or the total number of employees at all of the business locations?

The number of employees a business/not-for-profit has is based on the total existing full-time equivalent jobs the entity employs. A business/not-for-profit with an aggregate of more than 50 employees is not eligible even though the jobs at any of the various locations may be less than 50.

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7. Will my application be a matter of public record?

Yes. The legislation authorizing IDAs to establish a state disaster emergency grant program requires the IDA Board to review any application in a public meeting and allow for public comment. Should your Project be recommended for funding, your signed application, excluding attachments, would be available for public view on the ECIDA's website prior to the Board meeting. Your loan application will be included in the Board Agenda, and therefore, part of the permanent record.

8. I don't have access to a computer, can I get a copy of the grant application and guidelines?

Yes. Please contact Laurie Hendrix at 716-362-8366 and request that the grant materials be mailed to you.

9. Do these funds need to be repaid?

No, these grants do not need to be repaid. Should the grant funds be used for purposes other than the authorized and agreed upon purposes stated in the grant application and subsequent contract, they would be subject to recapture by the ECIDA. Also of note, all taxes associated with the acceptance and/or uses of cash awarded are the sole responsibility of the individual grantee. Cash awarded will be reported by the ECIDA to the IRS as the ECIDA deems necessary according to applicable law. It is further the policy of the ECIDA that all grantees be advised to consult with their own tax professionals and/or legal counsel to ascertain the tax impact of the cash awards. The ECIDA will issue a Form 1099 for any grant of \$600 or more.

10. Once my application has been approved, what are the next steps?

Once selected to receive a grant, you will receive written notification of approval as well as a formal Grant Agreement that outlines the terms and conditions of the award. The Grant Agreement also contains specific instructions for the disbursement of allocated funds. To accept the grant offer, you will be required to sign and return the Grant Agreement to the ECIDA by U.S. Mail within 30 days of receipt.

11. How do receive the grant funds from the ECIDA?

The Erie County COVID-19 Disaster Emergency Grant is a reimbursement grant, which provides funding to the grant recipient, up to the grant amount approved, after expenses have been incurred. The grantee may choose one of the following payment options:

1. **One-time payment:** no sooner than at the conclusion of the Project, upon ECIDA approval of the documents required to be submitted as identified within the section entitled "Disbursement Conditions" as described in the Grant Agreement.

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2. **Two Payments:** after each of the following Project milestones, upon ECIDA approval of the documents required to be submitted as identified within the “Disbursement Conditions” as described in the Grant Agreement:

- **Actual Expenditure** identified in the Grant Budget made between March 7, 2020 and the Contract Start Date
- **Future Purchases** identified in the Grant Budget made after the Contract Start Date and before the Contract End Date

12. What will the ECIDA accept as valid proof of payment with regard to initiating disbursement?

Acceptable proof of payment for eligible grant expenditures includes the following:

- Paid receipt
- Online order form that shows the applicable amount has been paid and indicates the method of payment
- Invoice with copy of cancelled check for payment
- Invoice and credit/debit card statement showing payment
- Invoice or bill showing that the applicable amount has been paid or that no remaining balance exists

I have a question not covered above. How can I get an answer?

Call the ECIDA at (716) 856-6525 x. 126