
Concord Carlisle Community Chest, Concord Together partner to support local small businesses

By **Rob Fucci**

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There have been layoffs. There have been furloughs. Rent and other bills are piling up with no sign of revenue for months. Storefronts have been shuttered and many shops in the downtown are in danger of collapse.

The coronavirus pandemic has decimated hundreds of businesses in Concord over the past three months after national and statewide advisories were put into place to help slow the spread of the virus.

But two local organizations are trying to give Concord business owners hope.

In a show of solidarity, a group of residents formed an initiative called Concord Together to rally additional support to help businesses re-open safely and successfully in the coming weeks and months. The group has met weekly via Zoom for the past 10 weeks.

Concord is applying for a Community Development Block Grant from the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which could bring as much as \$300,000 to the aid of micro-businesses (fewer than five employees) if it is successful.

Concord Together established a special fund with the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest to provide a forum for residents to help. They hope to raise an additional \$300,000 from the community to help boost small businesses on the verge of collapse.

“It is so inspirational to see such a public/private initiative come together to help save our small business community,” Executive Director of Concord-Carlisle Community Chest Jennifer Ubaldino said in a statement. “Being a part of a collaborative effort with Concord Together is exactly what we are all about – neighbors helping neighbors.”

The Concord Together fund at the Community Chest launched with a match goal for its first \$15,000, meaning donations from the community could help raise \$30,000 (10% of the goal). Grant applications will be available in the coming weeks.

To donate

People who want to donate any amount will be doubled up to the first \$15,000. Donations are tax-deductible. Donations can be made at www.cccommunitychest.org/how-you-can-help/targeted-giving/.

Want to volunteer?

Concord Together is looking for additional members. For more information, visit www.concordtogether.com, or email John Boynton at jb@firehousecapital.com, Jane Obbagy at director@concordchamberofcommerce.org, Jennifer Schünemann at jennifer@voyager-publishing.com, or Sharon Spaulding at ses@spauldingco.com.

“Just knowing that so many in our amazing community are rallying around us during this crisis means so much,” Helen Halloran of the Concord Flower Shop said in a statement. “I am lucky in that we were able to continue to deliver flowers even while our shop was closed – but so many of our friends had to completely close their doors for months. They

will need real help to get back up and running – and it’s so good to see both the Town and private citizens coming together to help make that happen.”

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