

CEDR coordinates \$119,342 in state grants

CLATSOP COUNTY — CEDR awarded State of Oregon Small Business Relief funding to 37 Clatsop County businesses totaling \$119,342. The dollars available were \$120,000 for round one from Business Oregon.

There were 42 initial applications, and 37 qualified, CEDR announced on July 20.

Every corner of Clatsop County was represented with qualified awardees. Disadvantaged and under-served businesses are the focus of this grant program. Women-owned businesses totaled 25, or 68% of the total. Latinx businesses were a total of 9, or 24%.

Businesses that were awarded any CARES Act Funding were not eligible to apply, and the business had to have 10 or fewer employees. Non-profits were also eligible to apply.

The dollar amounts ranged from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per business. Checks are in the process of being mailed now.

"CEDR was proud to bring forward and deliver this State of Oregon grant funding program to Clatsop County businesses in partnership with the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District," CEDR Executive Director Kevin Leahy said. "We have heard from several of the businesses the importance of what this grant program means for their business. We continue to be inspired by the entrepreneurs in Clatsop County."

CEDR (and Col-PAC EDD) have also applied for round 2 and round 3 funding for the State of Oregon Small Business Relief Funds. A follow-up public notification with dollar amounts available will be issued once the award dollars have been set by Business Oregon, expected by the end of July.

For more information on this and future programs, email CEDR@clatsopcc.edu

Can passion save small business?

CCC's Small Business Development Center helps business owners

By Jessica Newhall

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Over the past five months we at the Small Business Development Center have had the unique vantage point of seeing "inside" over 150 local small businesses navigating the tumultuous waves of this pandemic.

As we have been teaching business owners critical business skills such as "cash flow forecasting" and "how to pivot your business model," I have also found myself thinking and analyzing what other characteristics seem to be separating those who might survive and those who will thrive in the future. This has led me to the question, "is passion the differentiator?"

If you asked me 6 months ago what I thought of the idea of "follow your passion" as business advice, you likely would have witnessed an eye roll. Too many times I have met with prospective small business owners who had, upon hearing this advice, proceeded from "I have an idea" straight into business at warp speed — investing significant resources, time and energy into something that in many cases had a very slim chance of viability. At the time, it seemed like their "passion" for the idea gave them permission and confidence to skip the critical steps of market research, financial forecasting and business planning. Unfortunately, the consequences of this rashness often led to their finding out the hard way that the market did not have enough potential customers, the profit margins were slim or they lacked critical business management skills. It was heartbreaking to watch these business owners have their dreams shredded and investments lost — and as a result, I found myself resentful of those who had doled out that "follow your passion" advice.

During this pandemic we have seen many small business owners in our community who, despite facing an endless stream of challenges and incredible uncertainty, show up every day at their shops, restaurants, and client appointments —



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masked up and ready to serve with a smile (under their required PPE, of course!). What you might not see as a customer is the incredible fragility of their business. My colleagues and I have

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been given the honor to be a trusted confidant to these owners, providing knowledge, insight and emotional support as they battle their fear of failure, attempt to overcome worries of not being

able to provide for their families, stay up late at night filling out endless and complex applications for federal, state and local assistance, and become utterly exhausted "pivoting" to keep up with ever-changing customer tastes and preferences.

Through all of this, I have come to discover that a common denominator exists in the business owners who keep showing up every day. It is passion. Passion to serve, passion for their products and services, passion for their community and ultimately the passion to provide for themselves and their families. It is this passion that feeds the tenacity required to keep fighting, innovating, and pushing forward in the face of incredible challenge.

The unfortunate reality is that some of our business community will not make it through this pandemic. Complex issues like tightening cash flow, shrinking margins, disrupted supply chains, fickle customers and employee shortages will leave some business owners with no other choice but to shut their doors. For others, it may simply be exhaustion and feeling ready to throw in the towel.

To those who find yourself with waning energy to keep up the fight to keep the lights on, this is the time to take a step back and think about what drove you to start your business? Was it independence and the ability to be your own boss? Did you want to harness your creativity and build something of your own design? Did you want to provide a greater life for you and your family? Likely it started with a strong desire and now is the time to tap into that. If you need to, give a name to that passion, write it down and post it somewhere where you can see it each morning. Rekindle that fire that gives you the energy to lean into the fight. It just may make all the difference in ensuring your business not only survives but thrives.

Jessica Newhall is the associate director and Small Business Management program manager for the Clatsop Community College Small Business Development Center. She can be reached at jnewhall@clatsopcc.edu.



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