



For Immediate Release: November 9, 2020

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Transylvania Tomorrow Relief Fund Opens Applications For Second Round Of Winter Funding

Brevard, NC – In three months over the summer of 2020, the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund raised and distributed \$166,500 to 93 businesses throughout Transylvania County. Now, with the pandemic continuing and concern about local businesses weathering the winter, Transylvania Tomorrow is announcing a second series of funding. That funding, distributed via grants of up to \$3,000, will take place in December, January, and February.

“Applications are being accepted now, with the first deadline being December 1,” said Heart of Brevard Executive Director Nicole Bentley. “Small businesses are the heartbeat of our community and it is our goal to provide critical financial resources and a sense of stability at this time of uncertainty.”

Any small business based in Transylvania County is eligible to apply and the application and more information can be found at brevardnc.org/transylvaniamorrow. Previous funding was awarded to restaurants, art galleries, retail shops, hair salons, outfitters, daycares, health and wellness, accommodations, business services and more as a way to provide relief from the impact of COVID-19 on their operations.

“Because of the seasonality of the local economy, winter is always a challenging time for our business community,” states Brevard/Transylvania Chamber and Transylvania County Tourism Executive Director Clark Lovelace. “With revenues down this year due to the pandemic, many business owners are questioning how they’re going to make it through the slowdown without their normal stockpile.”

Transylvania Tomorrow is one of the initiatives created by the Transylvania Business Support Task Force, a collaboration between the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), Heart of Brevard (HOB), Transylvania Economic Alliance (TEA), Transylvania County Tourism (TCT), and Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center (BRCC-SBC). This group formed soon after the impact of COVID-19 began to be felt locally as an effort to provide support to the business community, which drives the local economy. Other task force efforts have included providing comprehensive information, printed resources, impact surveys, town hall meetings, and industry specific gatherings.

The relief fund is made possible through a partnership with the Community Focus Foundation of Transylvania County, a 501(c)(3) that serves as a vehicle for a wide-range of community development needs. The foundation was created in 2001 and has supported dozens of important initiatives since then.

Businesses who have been awarded grants have reported the funds as truly making a difference in their ability to get through the hardest of times. “During this pandemic, I was terrified of losing the shop that I have worked so hard for. I’m very blessed to hear that I received a grant from Transylvania Tomorrow. I cried when I got the email,” said Nicole McCoy from The Main Street Beauty Company. McCoy was just one of 93 businesses that felt the initial round of grant funding supported them in 2020.

John and Carol Dodson of Mud Dabber’s Pottery of Brevard shared similar thoughts. “We are humbled and grateful to be recipients of a Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund grant, which has provided funding for our employee’s wages,” said the Dodsons. “We appreciate the Transylvania Business Support Task Force for developing this program, which has been a lifeline to businesses like ours that experienced almost complete loss of revenues overnight.”

In the summer’s round of funding, donations by Comporium, the City of Brevard, Historic Toxaway Foundation, and Duke Energy, joined funds from task force members Heart of Brevard, Transylvania Economic Alliance, Transylvania County Tourism, and the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber to fund the first cycle of grants. Hundreds of individual donations were received, Oskar Blues held “Makin’ A Difference Mondays” virtual music series, and local artists and musicians supported the effort with music videos and in-kind donations.

“We are so appreciative of all who came together to make our initial drive so successful,” shares Lovelace. “More than 90 small local businesses were helped during their time of need because of that work. Special kudos and thanks to the City of Brevard, who has already stepped up with an additional \$30,000 to support the relaunch.”

In addition to the City of Brevard, other organizations like Heart of Brevard, Transylvania Economic Alliance, and Transylvania County Tourism have provided large donations for the second series of funding. Individuals, businesses, and organizations are encouraged to make a difference in their community by making a donation right now. For information on how to support the program, visit brevardnc.org/transylvaniatomorrow.

Business owners/operators who want to learn more about the program and submit an application should visit brevardnc.org/transylvaniatomorrow or reach out directly to leadership of the task force organizations.

About the Transylvania Business Support Task Force:

The task force was formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the mission of working together to support the business community as they work through and recover from times of crisis. The task force is made up of the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Heart of Brevard, Transylvania Economic Alliance, Transylvania County Tourism, and Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center.

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