



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Brad Stephens, Business & Development Manager,
Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge

TELEPHONE: (540) 988-3937

EMAIL: bstephens@vcwblueridge.com

Covid-19 Business Assistance Funds Available To Prevent Layoffs

Roanoke, VA – Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge will be awarding grant funding to a limited number of small businesses in our region to help prevent layoffs during the COVID-19 emergency. Small businesses of less than 250 employees in the counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin and Roanoke and the cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem are eligible to apply.

The application for funds will be open on the Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge website from Monday, March 30th through 5 PM on Friday, April 3rd. Then decisions will be made about which businesses will receive funding. As part of the application, businesses will be asked for information about how they will use the funds to save jobs, including the number of jobs saved, estimated amount of annual wages saved, and other project-specific outcomes. Then, once the grants have been awarded, the small businesses will be reimbursed for their expenses after documentation is submitted. A contract between the business and Virginia Career Works MUST be in place prior to any reimbursed purchases.

Eligible small business projects should focus on layoff aversion strategies and activities that are designed to prevent, or minimize the duration of, unemployment resulting from layoffs due to COVID-19. Examples of these projects could include, but are not limited to:

- A small business that needs their employees to be at work, on site, but cannot afford frequent deep cleaning to help prevent potential exposure to COVID-19. Layoff aversion funds could be used to pay for cleaning supplies, protective equipment and/or a cleaning/sanitation service;
- A small business whose employees use specific software or computer applications and will need to work from home/remotely in order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19. Layoff aversion funding could be used to purchase the software/programs that the employee would need to use from home to support their work;
- A small business needs to have their employees work from home/remotely in order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19. Layoff aversion funding could be used to purchase remote access supplies, including laptop computers and/or smart phones, which the employee would need to use from home to support their work; and/or
- Other needs as identified and reviewed to stop the spread of COVID-19.

For more information about eligibility and to start the application process, please visit <https://vcwblueridge.com/covid-19-funding/>. Businesses at risk for lay-offs or closure are encouraged to reach out to Brad Stephens, Business & Development Manager with Virginia Career Works, at bstephens@vcwblueridge.com or (540) 988-3937.

ABOUT VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS – BLUE RIDGE

Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge is the regional workforce agency tasked with being the vital link between meaningful employment and growing businesses. It provides training assistance, consulting services, job placement services and

much more to individuals and businesses. Further, it is the regional coordinator of workforce development efforts as a whole. Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge is funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and other federal, state and local grants.