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Area business groups announce launch of REOPEN Downtown Dayton Grant Program to help struggling downtown businesses

CareSource Foundation pledges lead donation of \$500,000 and issues challenge for additional support

DAYTON, Ohio – The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Dayton Partnership have partnered to launch REOPEN Downtown Dayton, a grant program designed to provide immediate relief to downtown Dayton businesses harmed by the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Many of the businesses in the core of our region have been forced to close their doors to customers as we take the steps necessary to combat the COVID-19 health crisis. It’s vital that we do what we can to help them reopen responsibly and bring vibrancy back to our city. That’s what this grant program aims to do,” said Chris Kershner, executive vice president, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.

“Downtown’s \$1.55 billion revitalization is thanks, in part, to the success of our community of small businesses,” said Sandra Gudorf, president of the Downtown Dayton Partnership. “Our service industry businesses alone represent thousands of jobs, not to mention the fact that having such a unique collection of locally owned businesses makes downtown Dayton a desirable place to live and work. These small businesses are crucial to the long-term success of our city.”

The grant program will award between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to downtown Dayton businesses as a form of gap funding. The awards are intended to help businesses keep their doors open and lights on until their revenue sources recover.

The CareSource Foundation kick-started the REOPEN Downtown Dayton Grant program this week with a generous donation of \$500,000. The Downtown Dayton Partnership has also contributed \$200,000 to the fund.

CareSource’s corporate headquarters is located in the heart of downtown Dayton, and the healthcare company reinforced its dedication to the area in 2019 with the opening of its second downtown office building, the Pamela Morris Center. The company also has employees working in three additional downtown buildings.

“Dayton is CareSource’s hometown and it’s difficult to see our local businesses hurting right now. Many of our members are employed in the service industry and we see this investment in the community as an extension of our mission to provide a safety net for our members and for those in need,” said Erhardt Preitauer, president & chief executive officer, CareSource.

Preitauer said he intends to extend a challenge to CareSource leadership to further support the REOPEN Downtown Dayton effort. He also encourages other companies who are in a position to donate to the fund to do so.

“Dayton is an ecosystem and we need to work together to help businesses get back on their feet,” said Preitauer. “Dayton has always been there for CareSource, and as we grow we will continue to be there for Dayton.”

The application for the REOPEN Downtown Dayton Grant program is simple and streamlined, keeping the needs of business owners in mind. The turnaround on requests and approvals will be quick, with a goal of awarding and distributing funds within a few weeks of the closure of the application window.

“Our goal is to put cash in the hands of our local business owners to get them to the other side of this crisis. We’re talking about our neighbors – the people who provide a unique flavor to our local economy. We’re honored to do what we can to help them get through,” Kershner said.

Applications can be submitted at ReOpenDayton.com starting Thursday, May 14. The deadline to apply is Friday, May 22 at 5pm EDT.

REOPEN Downtown Dayton Grant applications will be considered by a panel of Dayton area business leaders, and the number of grants awarded will be based on the number of applications received. Award decisions will be made based on the merit of the applicant. It is not a first-come, first-served process.

REOPEN Dayton is still looking for additional funders. If you’d like to contribute to the REOPEN Dayton Grant Program, visit ReopenDayton.com or contact the [Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce](http://DaytonAreaChamberofCommerce.org).

The **Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce** brings together more than 2,200 businesses and organizations in a nine county area surrounding Dayton, Ohio. The chamber strives to improve the region’s business climate and overall standard of living through public policy advocacy, economic development initiatives and providing networking and training opportunities for its members. Nationally awarded with “5-Star Accreditation” from the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Dayton Area Chamber is widely recognized for its innovative programs and outstanding contribution to positive change in the region. DaytonChamber.org

The **Downtown Dayton Partnership (DDP)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making downtown Dayton a better place to live, work, and visit. Working with downtown property owners, businesses and residents, the DDP provides strategic planning, business development and marketing services to grow and strengthen our downtown. The DDP focuses its efforts in seven key areas: strategic planning, business services, advocacy for downtown, marketing & communications, downtown housing, amenities and events, and clean and safe services. More information on the organization and its efforts can be found at <https://www.downtowndayton.org>.

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