



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2021**

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**CITY OF BERKELEY Replenishes COVID-19 BUSINESS DAMAGE MITIGATION with \$50,000
Downtown Berkeley Association to administer more grants up to \$2,500 for impacted businesses**

(Berkeley, CA) — in November 2020 The City of Berkeley in conjunction with the Downtown Berkeley Association announced the commencement of the Business Damage Mitigation Fund to reimburse Berkeley businesses for physical damage repairs and cleanup costs since the COVID-19 Shelter in Place Order established on March 16, 2020. Council approved the \$25,000 Mitigation Fund on June 2, 2020 to respond the needs and hardships faced by Berkeley small businesses. The fund was exhausted in June 2020 with grants made to 17 businesses that have incurred damage during the pandemic.

On September 28, 2021 Mayor Arreguin introduced an Urgent Item to Berkeley’s City Council to approve a supplemental \$50,000 for the COVID-19 Berkeley Damage Mitigation Fund, from the Berkeley Relief Fund administered by the East Bay Community Foundation. The urgent item was approved unanimously by the City Council.

Regretfully Berkeley businesses have continued to incur vandalism and other damage during this challenging time with COVID. As the Mayor states in his item to Council:

During this COVID-19 emergency, City staff have received numerous complaints from local businesses regarding problematic and violent behavior, including assault of employees and property damage. As a result of increased criminal activity, the Berkeley Police Department have deployed overtime shifts in Telegraph and the Downtown to increase police patrols to respond more quickly to calls for service and to increase police presence to deter crime. While the deployment of the Downtown Task Force has provided additional presence and support for businesses, crime is still occurring. Businesses have specifically requested that the City establish a Damage Mitigation Fund to provide one-time funding for repairs to local businesses occurring as a result of vandalism and other problematic behavior during this COVID-19 State of Emergency.

The Downtown Berkeley Association will continue to administer the COVID-19 Berkeley Damage Mitigation Fund with no fee or other cost to City or grantor. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, and grants will be made until the fund is exhausted or until the COVID State of Emergency is lifted.

Berkeley businesses can apply for a grant of up to \$2,500 per year to cover cost of repairs and/or cleaning due to vandalism or other property damage sustained since the Shelter in Place Order was established on March 16, 2020.

Berkeley Damage Mitigation Fund Eligibility

1. **COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund** Program is available for any small business in the city that has experienced documented vandalism and/ or property damage from the date that the initial local Shelter-In-Place order went into effect (March 16, 2020) until the local declaration of emergency is rescinded by the City Council of the City of Berkeley.
2. Maximum grant amount available per year to any small business located in the City: \$2,500
3. List of items that qualify for a grant under the COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation includes, but is not limited to:
 - Removing graffiti
 - Repairing and/or replacing broken windows, doors, and furniture
 - Cleaning and / or Sanitization of business site or property
4. Eligible claims with proper documentation will processed, and payment made, on first come first serve basis, until the fund is exhausted, or Emergency Order is lifted.

Grant applications must be submitted to the DBA at [**damage@downtownberkeley.com**](mailto:damage@downtownberkeley.com) with the following information:

1. Applicants of grant funds shall submit description and photos and documenting vandalism / property damage; receipts, invoices or other proof of payment; and spreadsheet or other tabulation itemizing individual and total eligible documented expenses.

2. Recipients of any amount of COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Funds shall attest that third-party funds (i.e. insurance reimbursement or any other grant) have not been used to repair the vandalism and/or property damage subject to reimbursement.
3. Any Recipient of a grant from the COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund shall retain records for 5 years.
4. The DBA goal is to make payment within 14 days of submittal of eligible claim with proper documentation, and no later than 30 days.

For any questions or concerns please email damage@downtownberkeley.com.

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