

Downtown authority OKs grants for business hit by virus, damage

BY GABRIEL POBLETE

Miami's Downtown Development Authority has approved two grants totaling \$100,000 to help small businesses in its boundaries that have been financially burdened by Covid-19 and property damage.

The authority board voted Friday in favor of the Downtown Small Business Reopening Micro Grant and the Emergency Storefront Recovery Grant Program.

The Small Business Reopening Microgrant will offer up to \$1,250 per business to help deal with the impact of the virus and help with new expenses associated with a safe reopening that occurred May 20 or later, coinciding with the reopening of the city.

Eligible expenses include businesses' rent or mortgage, utility bills, personal protection equipment, cleaning and disinfectant supplies, and interior alterations required to comply with social distancing rules or recommendations.

To be eligible, businesses must have a brick-and-mortar location, be for-profit with a valid tax receipt, and have at least one employee and no more than 15 on the payroll.



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The Emergency Storefront Recovery Grant will offer up to \$2,500 to eligible businesses that sustained damages to their storefronts since May 29. Some businesses experi-

enced property damage during the recent wave of protests calling for an end to police violence.

Julia Grachova, business and regulatory affairs head for the authority, explained the money would go to the affected businesses' insurance deductibles. She also mentioned the authority teamed up with the Dade Bar Association to provide legal assistance to businesses to help file insurance claims.

To be eligible, businesses must be on the ground floor within the authority's boundaries, provide proof of damage and insurance, estimate the cost of damages to their property, and show an invoice for the cost of repair from a local licensed vendor. Similar to the reopening microgrant, businesses must have one to 15 employees.

Board member Alicia Cervera said it was essential to set a timeline for the businesses to make the repairs. Board member Philippe Houdard agreed, saying, "One of the key drivers of this is to make that sure we don't have businesses that have broken windows or visible disrepair that further depresses the environment downtown from an economic standpoint."