



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

County of San Mateo Announces Relief Program for Struggling Brick and Mortar Food and Beverage Industry

Board of Supervisors matches \$1 million from Chan Zuckerberg Initiative; Pool of \$2.3 million now available for small businesses hit by COVID-19

Redwood City – The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors today matched a \$1 million commitment from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative to help local businesses hit by the pandemic.

The matching grants bring the total pledged to more than \$2.3 million to the new [Restaurant, Brewery and Winery Relief Program](#). The applications period for grants of up to \$10,000 will open as soon as mid-February.

“This program is a financial lifeline to help our great San Mateo County restaurants, breweries and wineries stay afloat while we await a more stable health and business environment,” said Supervisor Don Horsley, who co-sponsored the proposal with Supervisor Warren Slocum. “I look forward to the return of our crucial hospitality industry.”

“Restaurants are often minority and women owned and they employ immigrant residents. We have to help them until the surges subside and vaccination efforts make it safer to reopen,” said David J. Canepa, president of the Board of Supervisors. “We understand the devastating financial impact on the business community due to the pandemic and restaurants are among the hardest hit.”

As COVID-19 health and safety restrictions shuttered indoor and outdoor dining, local leaders late last year launched an effort to create a relief fund that would help these small businesses with payroll, rent, operating expenses, health and safety modifications and other business needs.

Businesses must meet a variety of eligibility requirements that include a “brick and mortar” location in San Mateo County.

The [Chan Zuckerberg Initiative](#) pledged \$1 million to assist small, independently owned restaurants in southern San Mateo County and Palo Alto.

"Local restaurants are a vital part of any neighborhood — they feed us, employ many , and are places for gathering and building community — but they are struggling to stay afloat amidst the challenges of the pandemic," said Andrea Jones, director of Community Affairs, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. "As neighbors and community members, we are committed to doing our part to support these local businesses during an incredibly difficult time."

The [San Mateo Credit Union Community Fund](#) and [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#) joined the effort, identifying \$384,000 in funding sources that can be used countywide. The Board's pledge of \$1 million in countywide relief brings the total to \$2.384 million.

"It says a lot about our community that during these tough times so many community organizations are stepping up and coming together to help our small businesses," said Supervisor Slocum. "Together, we can bring some sunshine to these small, locally owned businesses during these dark days."

"Now more than ever the small businesses we love need our help and our support," said Rosanne Foust, president and CEO of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association ([SAMCEDA](#)), which helped to organize the effort.

"This is especially true of our neighborhood restaurants and our local breweries and wineries," Foust said. "That's why it's so vital that we work together to provide them with some financial relief."

Application and Eligibility

The County and Community Fund will develop and publish an application process in mid-February on the San Mateo County Strong website: www.SMCStrong.org. (San Mateo County Strong was established by the Board of Supervisors in March 2020 to assist individuals, families, non-profits and small businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.)

Applications submitted within a set timeframe will be reviewed to confirm basic eligibility, and each establishment will be placed in a pool of other restaurants located in the same city, town, or unincorporated area. Eligible establishments in each locality pool will be selected at random for grant award until all grants appropriated for that area are exhausted.

Outreach for the Program will be comprehensive and involve both County and partner agencies, to include SAMCEDA, local chambers of commerce, and restaurant, brewery, and winery trade organizations.

The effort will also include minority- and equity-focused organizations such as the North Fair Oaks Community Council, Pescadero Community Council, Peninsula Chinese Business Association, Latino Leadership Council of San Mateo County as well as diverse local print, television and social media outlets.

Since the pandemic began, the Board of Supervisors has provided funds to numerous efforts that provide emergency relief for individuals, families, small businesses, child care providers and others who have been hit financially. [Learn more about these efforts.](#)

Opportunities to Help

Donations to the San Mateo County Strong Fund can be directed to help individuals/families, small businesses, non-profits or wherever the need is greatest. Go to www.smcstrong.org.

The SMCU Community Fund supports financial wellness in the community. Donations assist small businesses and child care providers, among other vital sectors. <https://www.smcucommunityfund.org/>

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