

September 23, 2020

Governor Ron DeSantis Activates Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program for Small Businesses Damaged by Hurricane Sally

Tallahassee, Fla. — Today, Governor Ron DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan program to support small businesses impacted by Hurricane Sally. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) administers the Emergency Bridge Loan program that provides short-term, zero-interest loans to small businesses that experienced physical damage or economic injury during Hurricane Sally. The application period opened today and runs through November 14, 2020, or until the available funds are expended.

“The intense wind, rain and flooding from Hurricane Sally has led to extensive damage in Northwest Florida,” **said Governor DeSantis**. “We are working diligently to help these communities recover and I encourage affected small business owners to apply for the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan to assist them with necessary funding to rebuild.”

DEO administers the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan program in partnership with the Florida Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) Network and Florida First Capital Finance Corporation to provide cash flow to businesses damaged by a disaster. The short-term, zero-interest loans help bridge the gap between the time damage is incurred and when long-term funding is secured, including Small Business Administration or commercially available loans, insurance claims or other resources. Up to \$5 million has been allocated for the program.

“We want to do all we can to help the families, businesses, and communities affected by Hurricane Sally recover quickly and be resilient for the future,” **said Dane Eagle, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity**. “Hurricane Sally has brought destructive coastal area flooding to Northwest Florida, and DEO will continue to work with these businesses and communities during the recovery process.”

“Getting employees back to work and providing businesses the support they need is integral to helping communities recover after a disaster,” **said Dr. Cheryl Kirby, Chief Operating Officer for the Florida SBDC Network**. “Small businesses are the backbone of our state's economy and we want them to know we are here to help them through the recovery process.”

“We are ready to assist the Governor and state of Florida to deliver this vital assistance to the small business community we serve, as we have 24 times since 1992,” said Florida First Capital Finance Corporation President and CEO, Todd Kocourek.

Small business owners with two to 100 employees located in Escambia, Okaloosa and Santa Rosa counties affected by Hurricane Sally can apply for short-term loans up to \$50,000, or in special cases \$100,000, if warranted by the needs of the business.

DEO is currently surveying businesses in the affected counties through the Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey. To access the survey, please visit www.FloridaDisaster.biz and select “Hurricane Sally” from the dropdown menu. Response to the damage assessment is not an application for the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan.

To apply or to learn more about the eligibility requirements for the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan, visit www.FloridaJobs.org/EBL.

For questions regarding the Emergency Bridge Loan program, contact DEO at 833-832-4494 or email EmergencyBridgeLoan@deo.myflorida.com.