



For Immediate Release

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San Joaquin County Announces the LIFT Initiative to Support Small Businesses
Eligible businesses can qualify for utility cost reimbursement incurred during pandemic

Stockton, CA – The San Joaquin County Employment and Economic Development Department (EEDD) recently introduced the Local Investment for Financial Thrive (LIFT) Initiative which is designed to help small businesses recover from the lasting economic effects of COVID-19.

Approved by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors on December 10, 2024, the LIFT Initiative is funded by \$1.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. A key component of this initiative is the Spark Relief Grant which offers qualifying small businesses up to \$5,000 in reimbursement for utility costs incurred between January 1, 2022, and the date of application. Eligible utility costs include electricity, natural gas, water, sewer, garbage, phone, and internet costs.

To be eligible, business must:

- Have fewer than 50 employees;
- Operate a commercial storefront in San Joaquin County;
- Be in operation since at least January 1, 2020;
- Hold an active business license;
- Be in good standing with no outstanding violations or delinquent taxes at the federal, state, or local level; and
- Have experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19.

"San Joaquin County remains committed to supporting small businesses that form the backbone of our local economy," said Patricia Virgen, Executive Director of EEDD. "The LIFT Initiative and the Spark Relief Grant are critical steps in helping businesses recover, grow, and thrive."

This initiative reflects San Joaquin County and EEDD's ongoing commitment to economic development and revitalization. By assisting small businesses with financial relief, LIFT aims to foster long-term economic growth and a more prosperous business community.

For more information on eligibility, application details, and program elements, visit [San Joaquin LIFT Spark Grant](#) or contact sparkgrant@sjcworknet.org.

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