



GLOUCESTER COUNTY
Economic Development
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Gift Certificate Stimulus Program Launched in Gloucester

Gloucester County's Economic Development department has been working diligently alongside local businesses to help them address recent challenges in their operations and finances. Economic Development staff members have been in regular communication with local businesses to help them get the word out about their COVID-adjusted scope of active operations and educating them on how to report their financial losses for potential Federal reimbursements.

Most recently, Gloucester County and the Gloucester County Economic Development Authority (EDA), working in tandem with the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce, have embarked on a gift certificate initiative entitled "Rethink. Rebound. Revitalize." to benefit independently owned, local small business owners and the public alike. Just last week, the EDA approved \$5,000 for the Gloucester Gift Certificate Community Stimulus Program, designed to help Gloucester's independently owned, local small businesses mitigate losses during the COVID-19 crisis. "Most businesses are struggling while enduring limited operations or have needed to completely close as a result of the shutdown orders," said Sherry Spring, Gloucester's Economic Development Director. "Our businesses and our residents, together, are the backbone of our economy and with your help, we can give our community a boost to get our local economy moving again."

According to Spring, when one purchases a gift certificate through the program to use at a participating local independent business, the EDA will add 25 percent to the purchase (up to \$25) for as long as the matching funds last. "That gives you a super deal and it gives our businesses instant cashflow in a time when they so desperately need it." Gift certificates are available in \$20, \$40, \$60, \$80 and \$100 units. "So, when you buy a \$20 gift certificate through the program, you receive a gift certificate with \$25 in value, or when you purchase a \$100 gift card, you receive a gift certificate with \$125 in value," Spring

said. The business receives funds immediately and gift certificates can be used within six months of the date of purchase.

The Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce is facilitating program implementation by processing transactions when consumers make their gift certificate purchases. “The EDA is pleased to provide this small financial support to our independently owned, small business community in partnership with the Chamber,” Spring said. “We are hoping this initiative will get more dollars into the pockets of our businesses when they so desperately need them.” The Chamber will provide monthly reports on the gift certificate program and return unused funds (if any) when the program closes. The gift certificate program will continue until funds are exhausted, Spring said. To purchase gift certificates through the program, visit www.gloucestervachamber.org.

Once purchasing a gift certificate, you will receive a receipt generated from PayPal. This receipt will then be used to take to the retailer and the Chamber will have a certificate for the businesses so that they can keep a record of all purchases made through the program.

Gloucester County Administrator Brent Fedors named Spring the County’s Business Recovery Coordinator the day that the Federal government issued its National Disaster Declaration. Spring immediately set up a task force to help address the needs of Gloucester’s business community. The task force includes representatives from the Chamber, Main Street Preservation Trust, Main Street Association, the EDA and others. Task force members have communicated and collaborated almost daily since mid-March.

“We have constantly communicated the most current information and resources available from FEMA, the Small Business Administration and the EDA’s Advertisement and E-Commerce grant programs,” Spring said. These programs and grants have also been publicized through various County publications, local media and online.

Spring said the County also has an annual contract with the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center. The County’s consultant within this organization has been available for one-on-one consulting sessions with local businesses via telephone to navigate their current economic challenges.

For information on these and other resources available to local businesses, contact Ms. Spring or Elizabeth Ripley, Economic Development Coordinator, at 804-693-1415 or eripley@gloucesterva.info. Comprehensive information is also available on the Economic Development department’s website at <https://www.gloucesterva.info/217/Economic-Development>.

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