

*City of Taunton
Office of the Mayor*



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**MAYOR O'CONNELL SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESSES
WITH GRANT PROGRAM**

*Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development
Re-launches Small Business Grant Program*

Taunton, MA...Today Mayor O'Connell announced the reopening of the City of Taunton's Small Business STEP UP Grant Program.

In 2021, the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) created and piloted the Sales Technology & Efficiency Professional Upgrade Program (STEP UP), an innovative grant program that assists small businesses with critical upgrades to their digital technology and cyber presence to better meet the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the initial round, the grant was available to women, minority, and veteran-owned small businesses. Now, it is being offered to all businesses with a physical location in Taunton who have less than 10 employees.

"The small businesses in our community have been hit especially hard by the pandemic. Our priority is to help them succeed so that we continue to build a vibrant economy in Taunton," said Mayor O'Connell. "Last year we helped 19 businesses in the trial run of our unique STEP UP Program, and I am pleased to announce we are now making it available to many more Taunton businesses. I am grateful to the staff at our OECD for their creativity in creating this program and their hard work in implementing its expansion."

Businesses interested in a STEP UP grant may request assistance with unmet needs in the following categories:

- Purchase of digital point-of-sale system (hardware only)
- Website design
- Logo graphic design
- Social media setup and coaching

These key upgrades have a dual purpose, aiming to mitigate the challenges caused by Covid-19 in the short term while also providing long term sustainable improvements to business operations.

Applications are now available on the City's website, taunton-ma.gov, and will be accepted on a rolling basis until program funding is expended. For more information, please contact OECD at 508-821-1030.

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