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\$1.4 million in grants available for Fayette County hospitality businesses

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Vincent Vicites



Dave Lohr



Scott Dunn

Businesses in the hospitality industry in Fayette County can soon apply for \$1.4 million available in COVID-19 grants.

During Tuesday's agenda meeting, the commissioners unanimously voted to place on Thursday's voting meeting agenda the ratification for applying to the state's COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program.

The program is allocating \$145 million in funding assistance to the hospitality industry businesses throughout the state adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.



The program is available to all Pennsylvania counties, which must appoint a certified economic development agency to administer the funds.

Arthur Cappella, the county's chief community development specialist, said that Fay-Penn Economic Development Council has already sent a proposal to administer the funds, but no decisions have been made by the county as of yet.

Whichever economic development agency is selected, the eligible businesses in the hospitality industry would apply through them and could receive grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

Cappella said if any applications come to the county, they can either redirect or forward the application to the appropriate entity.

Commissioner Vincent Vicites said the county applied last week, was approved and will be receiving \$1,464,205 to distribute.

"Local businesses in the hospitality industry should apply for this," Vicites said.

Cappella said the county has to have the money distributed by this summer.

In other business, the commissioners will vote to approve that all solicitations for bids can be sealed by any method other than the current requirement of clear tape.

Commissioner Dave Lohr said there has been a lot of confusion in the past over the county's clear-tape requirement policy, which led to a loss of potentially good bids for county projects because of overly-cautious requirements.

Before, if bidders didn't seal the envelopes with clear tape, their submission is considered defective and not opened.

"We're going into this building program with the new jail, we don't want to hinder any possible good contractors out there because of a technicality like that," Lohr said.

"The industry standard is a sealed envelope," said Commissioner Scott Dunn. "That should eliminate a lot of confusion."

County Solicitor Jack Purcell agreed, stating that he has represented around 20 municipal bodies in his career and no other one had such a requirement.

"Most contractors are not used to this, and they would often overlook it," Purcell said. "We did lose bids because of it."