

Nearly 9,000 Small Business Jobs Saved By Maryland's COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund

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ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Governor Larry Hogan today announced that more than \$10 million has been awarded to 445 small businesses through the Maryland Department of Labor's COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund, saving more than 8,800 jobs. One of several relief programs introduced by the governor in March, the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund quickly provided crucial financial assistance to Maryland's small businesses and helped them to forego layoffs and closures.

"The COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund is a critical part of our comprehensive relief efforts to help small businesses retain their employees and get through this difficult period," said Governor Hogan. "We remain committed to doing everything we can to help hard-pressed Marylanders and small businesses weather this storm and come back stronger than ever."

Maryland has gained more than 156,000 jobs during the COVID recovery, and the unemployment rate decreased to 7.6 percent.

Recipients represent nearly 20 diverse industry sectors, ranging from health care to retail, and are located in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Grantees used the average award size of \$22,738 per business for such things as purchasing remote access equipment and software to promote teleworking, assisting with employee training and education, purchasing cleaning supplies and services to maintain an onsite workforce, and taking advantage of Labor's Work Sharing Unemployment Insurance Program by supplementing employee income.

"From the onset of Maryland's response to the pandemic, our administration has delivered solutions-oriented programs designed to support Maryland's small businesses and workers undergoing financial stress," said Labor Secretary Tiffany P. Robinson. "In just a matter of days, Labor created the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund, reviewed applications, and delivered essential financial relief directly to hundreds of small businesses, saving the jobs of nearly 9,000 Marylanders."

Some of the Maryland small businesses that received assistance include:

MiY Home, Baltimore City

MiY Home, a furniture store located in Baltimore City, was awarded approximately \$47,000 from the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund and saved five jobs. MiY Home used the funds to purchase laptops for employees to use while working remotely and virtually communicating with customers. They installed a new door for their store with a high-tech entry system that allowed customers to book appointments and shop alone to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition to adding a live chat feature, MiY Home's website will soon feature a 360 degree virtual showroom, so customers can view their inventory real time and shop on their website.

"When the state closed non-essential businesses due to the pandemic, we panicked. Our small business operates a furniture store in Fells Point that we live above, so losing the business would have meant losing our home," said Michael Ryan Wright, CEO of MiY Home. "When I read about the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund, the ability to 'adopt other creative approaches and strategies to reduce or eliminate the need for layoffs' stood out and we immediately applied. After quickly being approved, we used the funds to reinvent our business model to create an entirely new way of shopping for our customers, so our sales and delivery team are still working no matter what phase of the re-opening we are in."

Bayside Community Network, Inc., Cecil County

Bayside Community Network, Inc. is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in Cecil County that has been providing programs and services to adults with developmental disabilities since 1979. With an award of approximately \$50,000, Bayside Community Network was able to save 165 jobs.

"During this unprecedented time, our organization found comfort in the support that was offered through the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund. As with all nonprofits, every dollar is essential to help the daily operations of the organization. An event as paramount as COVID-19 is not something that nonprofits have the financial flexibility to put dollars aside to cover," said Executive Director Mary E. Falkenstein. "Through the generosity of the grant, funds were utilized to purchase much needed technology that kept our staff employed, our consumers engaged and socially interactive, and ensured that health needs were met through telehealth communications. Additionally, the funds helped to bridge the financial gaps in providing PPE, disinfecting supplies, and staff and consumer education. The COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund helped to ensure that our organization could continue to provide quality services that our consumers desperately needed while ensuring health and safety standards were met."

Maryland Print House, Carroll County

Maryland Print House, a full service screen printing, embroidery, and branding business located in Carroll County, was awarded approximately \$48,000 and saved seven jobs. Founded by a group of young entrepreneurs in early 2018, Maryland Print House used the funding to purchase new computers and software to allow their employees to work remotely. By avoiding layoffs for these valuable employees, this small business has stayed afloat by changing their business model to manufacturing and selling branded PPE to businesses. Since being awarded the funding, Maryland Print House has hired three additional employees to keep up with the demand.

"The funds not only provided us with materials to be able to work remotely, but also provided the motivation to keep our employees employed and find a way to survive COVID-19 as a business," said Andrew Boone, Vice President of Maryland Print House. "We would like to thank the State of Maryland for giving us this opportunity to keep our staff on board, so we can maintain the great team that we have built."

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