“We Care RVA Rebuild Project” to Help Small Businesses Manage Recovery and Address Social Justice Issues in Richmond, VA

Thursday, August 27, 2020 - RICHMOND, Va. — The We Care RVA Rebuild Project is a community-led initiative providing support to small, women and minority owned businesses in Richmond, VA as they manage coronavirus impacts and engage in community rebuilding.

In Richmond, the nearly $1M fund will be administered by the Metropolitan Business League (MBL) in partnership with Venture Richmond, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Virginia, Virginia Community Capital, and ChamberRVA. The project partners are grateful to Dominion Energy, Altria, Capital One, Robins Foundation and the Community Foundation who have generously seeded the fund as part of their racial equity and social justice response efforts in the community.

Small businesses dealing with financial difficulties due to the coronavirus pandemic or disruptions in business continuity will be eligible to apply for grants, ranging from $2,500 to $10,000. Funds will support a range of emergency needs and crisis resources, including clean-up, such as graffiti removal and other beautification efforts, bill support, business coaching, and professional counseling, among other services.

“The We Care RVA Rebuild Project is truly a community effort toward helping small, women and minority-owned businesses,” said Floyd Miller, President and CEO of the Metropolitan Business League.

“With the unique challenges facing business owners today, we want to ensure they have the resources for success. Our goal is for funds to give a boost to more than 100 businesses in the Richmond area this year.”

Eligibility requirements can be found at https://thembl.org/we-care-rva-rebuild/ for Richmond. Applications will be available on the website, from Monday, September 21st to Monday, October 5th (11:59pm EST). A second application period is expected later this year. Following review, applicants will receive notice of the funding determination by Oct. 15, with disbursements immediately following.

Sponsorship for the We Care RVA Rebuild Project is part of Dominion Energy and Altria’s commitment to equity, social justice and reconciliation. Additional sponsorship was also provided by Capital One, the Robins Foundation and the Community Foundation, in an effort to reach a $1 million dollar goal for the fund.

“Dominion Energy is committed to providing support where we can, during what has been a very difficult year for our communities,” said Ed Baine, Senior Vice-President of Power Delivery for Dominion Energy. “We’re grateful to the Metropolitan Business League and all of the other partners for their dedicated efforts to reach small businesses during these unprecedented times and provide both the temporary and ongoing assistance needed to help our communities thrive.”

“At a time when small businesses are facing unprecedented challenges and black business owners are experiencing the highest levels of financial stress, Altria is pleased to join with MBL and its partners to provide this essential support. This contribution is part of our commitment to address systemic racism and
help advance equity in our headquarters region,” said Jennifer Hunter, Altria’s Senior Vice President, Corporate Citizenship.

About Metropolitan Business League
The Metropolitan Business League (MBL) is a non-profit, membership-based business association that creates business connections in Central Virginia. For over 50 years it has fostered business development and expansion, as well as promoted economic prosperity in Virginia through leadership, education, training and advocacy for small, women- and minority-owned businesses. Visit thembl.org for more information.

About Venture Richmond
Venture Richmond, Inc., is a non-profit organization formed to engage business and community leaders in partnering with the City to enhance the vitality of the community, particularly Downtown, through economic development, marketing, promotion, advocacy and events. For more information visit www.venturerichmond.com.

About LISC Virginia
LISC Virginia works with residents and partners to revitalize underserved neighborhoods across Central Virginia. LISC supports community development organizations with grants, loans, and expertise to invest in the interconnected areas of housing, health, education, safety, and employment. For more information, visit www.virginialisc.org.

About Virginia Community Capital
Virginia Community Capital (VCC) is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) with a mission to create jobs, energize places, and promote an enhanced quality of life in our communities. With offices in Christiansburg, Norfolk, and Richmond, we offer innovative and flexible financing tools and professional advisory services to individuals and organizations in low-to-moderate income and underserved communities. VCC’s subsidiary bank, VCC Bank, is an FDIC-insured, certified bank offering products tailored to socially conscious investors, along with personal and business checking, savings, and certificate of deposit accounts. VCC is also a certified B Corp. Learn more: vacommunitycapital.org.

About ChamberRVA
ChamberRVA is the chamber of commerce representing the entire greater Richmond region – one city, seven counties and one town – since 1867. The chamber’s mission is to build a thriving regional community by supporting the success of members, providing a strong business voice and developing RVA’s future leaders. Learn more about ChamberRVA at chambrava.com.

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