

Mayor Andre Dickens Announces Launch of \$5.7 Million Small Business Loan Program

ATLANTA, June 14, 2022 – Today, Mayor Andre Dickens announced a new low-interest loan program to help small businesses in the city of Atlanta. The Atlanta Recovery Loan Program (ARLP) is the first of four initiatives United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA), in collaboration with Invest Atlanta, will roll out as a part of the Atlanta Open for Business Fund supported by Wells Fargo. Mayor Dickens and Wells Fargo announced Atlanta’s Open for Business Fund award earlier this year alongside Congresswoman Nikema Williams and United Way of Greater Atlanta.

The ARLP is a \$5.7 million program offering low-cost loans to help small businesses grow ownership of tangible assets — a major challenge for diverse-owned small businesses — to help them build wealth and avoid displacement due to changing economic conditions.

“The Atlanta Recovery Loan program is timely funding for our small businesses’ continued need for financial relief and access to capital for growth,” said Mayor Andre Dickens “Without adequate financing to survive disruptions like the pandemic, most small businesses struggle to maintain their companies, let alone attain assets to grow them. This program will serve as yet another invaluable asset to help Atlantans build a resilient foundation for their companies.”

The Atlanta Open for Business Fund is made possible through a \$20 million donation from Wells Fargo to help Atlanta small business owners own more of their businesses’ assets, including property and equipment, and to enable physical upgrades to their facilities. UWGA and Invest Atlanta will distribute the Atlanta Open for Business Fund as a mix of grants and loan programs with a focus on diverse-owned businesses.

The maximum ARLP direct loan amount is \$25,000 - \$100,000 at an interest rate not to exceed 3 percent repaid monthly over a term not to exceed seven years, providing businesses access to lower-cost, fixed-rate capital in a market where interest rates are rising.

Eligible businesses include existing businesses with less than 500 employees, partnerships or sole proprietorships, and non-profits with a focus on diverse-led or supporting diverse communities. Businesses in all commercial areas in the city of Atlanta, including those operating on City of Atlanta-owned property are eligible.

“This resource is a strategy to help small businesses purchase commercial property and assets for growth so they can develop generational wealth and increase economic mobility that enhances their communities,” said Dr. Eloisa Klementich, president and CEO of Invest Atlanta. “Federal Reserve statistics show that about 40% of Americans held some sort of business equity in the past few years, but we know that those figures shifted to some degree with the pandemic. This loan program will help more businesses recover quickly and open a pathway to growth for all.”

“The Atlanta Recovery Loan program will help advance a more equitable recovery from the pandemic by lifting the barriers of race and zip code that can impede many entrepreneurs from converting increased income into wealth,” said Milton Little, President and CEO of United Way of Greater Atlanta.

ARLP dollars are available for the following uses:

- Purchase of commercial property and land;
- Building office/store renovations;
- Acquisition of office/store equipment and other fixed assets;
- Working capital related to expansion of business;
- Inventory, i.e., products and materials.

The ARLP and other Atlanta Open for Business Fund programs support the City of Atlanta and partners' ongoing equitable economic development goals in the city and create opportunities for more minority-owned small businesses to build wealth and prosper. Additional Atlanta Open for Business Fund programs will launch later in 2022.

To learn more about the Atlanta Recovery Loan Program and to apply, businesses should visit www.investatlanta.com/atlantarecovery.

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