



MISSOULA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION

April 24, 2020
Missoula Media

**MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION CREATES
DOWNTOWN MISSOULA BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND AND
PIVOTS SPRING FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR
BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

With unanimous support from the Board of Directors, the Missoula Downtown Foundation (MDF) has established a Downtown Missoula Business Support Fund and will use its annual spring campaign to raise funds that can support businesses and organizations negatively impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

As the fundraising arm of the Downtown Missoula Partnership, the Missoula Downtown Foundation has the mission to support and promote the spirit and heritage of Missoula through cultural, historical and economic enhancement of Downtown Missoula, now and for future generations. In an effort to help rebuild the economy and vibrancy of Downtown, the MDF will seek support from individuals, grantors, businesses not impacted by the crisis, partner organizations, and government agencies to raise and distribute a minimum of \$100,000 in 2020.

The Foundation will roll out an online fundraising campaign in conjunction with the Missoula Gives (<https://www.missoulagives.org/>) annual fundraising campaign next week: April 30-May 1, 2020. With the original intent of raising funds for Downtown holiday décor and wayfinding, the Foundation's spring campaign will instead provide the opportunity for any and all individuals or entities to support Downtown businesses and organizations through the Missoula Downtown Business Support Fund.

"A vibrant and healthy city is built upon the tenacity and dedication of business owners who give their time, talent and treasure to many different projects and programs that make Missoula such a special space," said Jared Kuehn, President of the MDF Board of Directors and commercial lender at First Security Bank. "The COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on the health of the Downtown business community, and the Foundation believes this is the time for us to do all we can to support those businesses that could use a lift."

Small, locally-owned businesses and organizations are the heart of Missoula and are the first ones to support community initiatives, non-profit organizations, and individuals in need. The world-wide COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly impactful on small downtown businesses. Businesses have been shuttered, jobs have been lost, and the supply chain has been compromised.

The Downtown Foundation has allocated \$25,000, and will pivot its spring fundraising campaign from street décor to the business support fund. The Downtown Business Improvement District contributed \$10,000 from its business development budget to the fund. As of April 23, Clearwater Credit Union, First Interstate Bank, First Interstate Bank and TrailWest Bank have each contributed to the fund, which is now at \$65,000 in just three days.

Individuals and businesses interested in contributing to the Downtown Missoula Business Assistance Fund can send a check, payable to the Missoula Downtown Foundation, to 218 East Main Street, Missoula, MT 59802. Donors can also contribute through the Missoula Gives Campaign April 30-May 1, or through the Foundation's GoFundMe Campaign (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/downtown-missoula-business-support-fund>). The MDF is a qualified charitable organization, and all donations are deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

"As neighbors and friends, Missoulians will come together to support our local businesses and organizations, lessen the economic impacts of this crisis, and help build resiliency among our business community," Kuehn said. "The Foundation is grateful for the opportunity to support Downtown recovery during this time of need.

Applicants must have a City of Missoula Business License or an IRS Determination Letter, be located in the Downtown Business Improvement District, or service the community in Downtown Missoula. Downtown businesses and organizations in need of support shall complete a simple online application located at www.missouladowntown.com and scheduled to open on Monday, May 4. Applications will be reviewed by committee, and disbursement of funds shall be one-time checks distributed by the Downtown Missoula Partnership.

For more information, visit www.missouladowntown.com or contact the Downtown Missoula Partnership office via phone (406-543-4238) or email (info@missouladowntown.com).

Downtown: Connecting Our Community!