



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

We strengthen communities

Washington State Safe Start Projects

These projects will help businesses restart, rebuild and become more resilient

A new \$15 million federal grant will support a package of statewide Safe Start projects to safely restart businesses, equitably rebuild our economy and strengthen our resilience against future downturns.

The Safe Start projects, supported by grant funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, build on collaborations with numerous partners in the private, public and philanthropic sectors. The projects focus on statewide recovery and build on numerous programs helping small business owners, including several that have a special focus on underserved or underrepresented businesses.

Restart Projects

Resources for underrepresented and underserved businesses

Commerce will enlist trusted community partners to provide hard-to-reach and underserved business owners with information about Safe Start resources, data, toolkits and technical assistance.

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"COVID has resulted in tremendous uncertainty and anxiety in Washington. People are worried about their businesses and their jobs. We need all hands on deck to help business owners safely restart, keep Washington workers employed and strengthen our state's economy to be more equitable and more resilient."

- Gov. Jay Inslee.

**WASHINGTON STATE
SAFE START PROJECTS**

High-risk industries contact tracing pilot and scale-up

Working with world-class health modeling experts, this project will create a first-in-the-nation program to predict and prevent COVID-19 infections so essential food processors, meat packers and fisheries businesses can open and stay open safely.

Rebuild Projects

ScaleUp: The COVID-19 Edition

This program will be offered free to 2,400 small businesses to help owners improve strategic thinking and decision-making, create operational efficiencies and strengthen their bottom line.

Entrepreneurship Master Class

This class will be offered free to small businesses that need to re-engineer their existing business model or start over entirely.

Washington Equitable Innovation Accelerator

The information, communications and technology sector has weathered recent downturns better than most. Women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ and certain racial and ethnic minorities continue to face barriers to entry into this exceptionally strong sector. This is a four-month class for 10 diverse entrepreneurs and will include start-up programming, access to mentors, coaches, funders and investor, and a global platform of technology companies. Project partners will provide private funds for operating grants.

Mask Up education campaign

This campaign will support existing and ongoing efforts to identify trusted messengers in Washington's non-English speaking and hard-to-reach communities who can share culturally and linguistically appropriate messaging and information about the importance of wearing a face mask.

Resilience Projects

Commerce Innovation Cluster Development Program

Maritime Blue is an example of how we can reimagine an entire industry cluster and spark innovation in a way that builds partnerships and opportunities for everyone. Following a similar model, this project will kick-start the strategic reinvention of 6-8 clusters or sub-clusters that promote sustainability and quality job creation.

Grassroots support & data

This project will support local economic development leaders as they develop data-driven processes and systems to track economic recovery. This data can inform community and regional strategies related to business retention, expansion and growth opportunities.

Leveraging private funding

Small businesses are eligible for a wide variety of financing and funding but often don't know what they need, who provides it, or how to connect with them. This provides technical assistance and education for both the businesses and the investors, cohort coordination, matchmaking and one-on-one financial deal development.

Grant Sub-Recipients

This grant will be carried out through an extensive partnership of public, private and philanthropic organizations across the state. Sub-recipients include:

- Washington State University's Small Business Development Center
- Restart Partners
- Washington State Maritime Blue
- Association of Washington Business
- University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
- Impact Washington
- Thurston County Economic Development Council
- National Development Council

More information coming soon

Some programs are already underway while others are still being developed. If you're a small business owner and would like information about the various programs supporting small businesses, visit <http://bit.ly/wa-covid19>.

