

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **Governor McKee, U.S. Small Business Administration Open Business Recovery Center in East Providence as Part of Washington Bridge Response**

**EAST PROVIDENCE, RI** – Today, Governor Dan McKee, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Rhode Island's Congressional Delegation and municipal leaders gathered to open the SBA's Business Recovery Center located at the Weaver Memorial Library in East Providence as part of the state's ongoing Washington Bridge response.

"Getting our small businesses back on track and delivering the help they need is vital," **said Governor Dan McKee**. "I'm thankful to the SBA, District Director Mark Hayward, our congressional delegation and our mayors for their partnership and commitment to supporting Rhode Island's small businesses. It's important that we all do our part to shop local and dine local this holiday season."

"Rhode Island small businesses deserve prompt access to the resources and information they need to deal with the challenge of the Bridge closure," **said Congressman Seth Magaziner**. "This Business Resource Center will support impacted small businesses, helping Rhode Islanders make the best financial decisions for themselves and their businesses."

"The past week has been incredibly challenging for so many small businesses in Providence and East Providence," **said Congressman Gabe Amo**. "In Rhode Island, when things get tough, we stick together and help one another. I want to applaud the work of the Small Business Administration and all levels of government who have continued to respond to the Washington Bridge closure and its impacts. I want to encourage all local business owners to stop by the Weaver Library and learn about the resources that SBA is offering to help business leaders to keep their businesses on track."

"This time of year is vital for our local businesses, which is why we're administering aid in response to last week's traffic disruptions with the same urgency as we would for a fire, flood, or any other natural disaster," **said Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos**. "I encourage every affected business to take advantage of every resource available by meeting the SBA experts at the business recovery center in East Providence and by calling RI Commerce at (401) 521-4357."

"Now more than ever, it is important to shop local and shop small," **said Providence Mayor Brett P. Smiley**. "The holiday season is a critical period of time for our small businesses and I am thankful that our local, state and federal partners have stepped up to help us ensure that we are doing everything we can to provide relief for businesses that have been impacted by this closure. I encourage our residents and visitors to come to Providence to support the unique local businesses and world-renowned restaurants that are the backbone of our economy."

"Taking care of our small businesses that were impacted by the closure of the Washington Bridge is a priority of my administration," **said East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva**.

"While no amount of business preparedness could have seen something like this coming, we are happy to have been able to get this Economic Injury Disaster declaration so quickly," **said SBA District Director Mark S. Hayward**. "I want to thank Governor McKee, Mayors DaSilva and Smiley and our congressional delegation for their hard work and quick response to this situation that allowed us to ensure local small businesses will now be able to access EIDL funds and ensure they continue to thrive during this holiday season," he continued.

Last week, at the request of Governor McKee, the SBA issued a declaration of Economic Injury Disaster for the State of Rhode Island for the recent sudden closure of the Washington Bridge and the impact this has had on local small businesses. This declaration allows for small businesses to apply for long-term, sub-market rate, working capital loans, intended to assist businesses with cash flow and lost revenues due to the impact of the bridge closure.

Small businesses in Providence, Kent, and Bristol counties in Rhode Island, as well as the contiguous counties of Bristol, Norfolk, and Worcester in Massachusetts, and Windham County in Connecticut affected by this event may apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) beginning immediately.

These working capital loans will carry a 4% interest rate (3.25% for non-profits) with a term of up to 30 years to help minimize the impact on the business' cash flow. Applications for loans of up to \$2,000,000 may be submitted online using the MySBA Loan Portal at <https://lending.sba.gov> [[lending.sba.gov](https://lending.sba.gov)] [[r20.rs6.net](https://r20.rs6.net)] or locally at the Business Recovery Center located at **Weaver Memorial Library, 41 Grove Avenue in East Providence.**

The center will be open Mondays through Thursdays from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm; Fridays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Saturdays, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

The center will be closed Friday, December 22 beginning at 12:00 PM through Monday, December 25 for the holiday.

It will be open on Friday, December 29 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, and closed from Saturday, December 30 through Monday, January 1, 2024 for the holiday.

“The opening of this SBA business recovery center is the foundation in providing impacted businesses access to capital,” **said RI Commerce Secretary Liz Tanner.** “I applaud the SBA for working diligently with state, local, and federal leaders to help our communities in this time of need. We look forward to working with businesses in the coming weeks and I continue to encourage everyone to shop local, buy local, and dine local.”

In addition to SBA disaster specialists being on-site, any businesses needing further assistance will be able to meet with the local SBA Resource Partners: the Rhode Island Small Business Development Center, SCORE Rhode Island, and the Center for Women & Enterprise. These experts will be able to assist with whatever questions individuals may have pertaining to their business.

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