



## **News Release**

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### **City Launches Rockford Hospitality Grant Program**

**ROCKFORD, III.** – The City of Rockford has launched the Hospitality Grant Program. This \$900,000 grant program is targeted towards Rockford’s restaurants and bars that continue to face significant challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis. Opening for applications this week, the grant program will reallocate CARES Act funding to supplement state and federal relief programs with grants of up to \$7,500 to independent bars and restaurants throughout the City that have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 and the State’s mitigation measures. Restaurants and bars will receive an application from the City with grant funding being awarded in mid-December.

“We understand that the pandemic and related mitigation efforts have had a devastating impact on our hospitality industry,” says Mayor Tom McNamara. “This new grant program is one way to help lessen the pain, but we know it is not enough. We all need to our part to bring down cases by wearing a mask, social distancing, avoiding gatherings and washing hands frequently.”

Other ways the City has helped local businesses during the pandemic:

- We’re rebating 50% of annual liquor license fees for bars and restaurants.
- Earlier this year, we provided more than \$820,000 in grants to local small businesses,
- We waived permit fees associated with establishment of outdoor seating areas for restaurants on public and private property.
- We allowed temporary outdoor seating areas in private parking lots, sidewalks, public lots and alleys
- We suspended the liquor license approval process for existing restaurant license holders to expand or create outdoor seating areas.
- We allowed for mixed drinks/cocktails to-go to support carryout/curbside pickup.
- We deferred collection of our Food and Beverage and Hotel-Motel taxes.

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**Note to Media: Karl Franzen, Community and Economic Development Director, and Mayor McNamara are both available for interviews via Zoom today.**