

\$1 Million Grant Program to Aid Women's Businesses Hurt by COVID-19

March 26, 2020 — DENTON — Women-owned small businesses in Texas suffering financial losses associated with the coronavirus pandemic were thrown a lifeline today after the [Center for Women Entrepreneurs](#) at Texas Woman's University announced a million-dollar grant program to help get them back on their feet.

Texas Woman's University Chancellor Carine M. Feyten announced that the Center for Women Entrepreneurs is launching the AssistHER grant program, which will provide 100 \$10,000 grants to women-owned small businesses in Texas that have been impacted adversely by the coronavirus pandemic. Grant funds can be used for operating expenses (excluding payment of sales tax and payroll, advertising, purchase of food for consumption, penalties and fees, and charitable donations), technology upgrades or help adapting to a new business model.

To be eligible for the grants, businesses must be at least 51% owned by a woman, have a demonstrated need due directly to COVID-19, and be owned and operated in Texas. Awardees will be required to complete online training on how to maintain business operations in the current environment and report all expenditures of grant funds. Eligible businesses must be up to date on payroll, sales and other taxes and be properly permitted. "Unprecedented times call for unprecedented action," Feyten said. "Servant leadership runs deep at Texas Woman's and this grant program exemplifies that philosophy."

The grant program is modeled after existing programs already administered by the center that help women entrepreneurs in Texas start and grow their businesses. The AssistHER grants are open to established businesses only.

The program was developed by the center's director, Shannon Mantaro, and the executive team at TWU's Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership, headed by Mary Anne Alhadeff. The center aims to grow the number of women-owned businesses in Texas and hold onto the state's ranking as number one for women entrepreneurs.

"Operating a small business is challenging during the best of times," Mantaro said. "These grants should help women entrepreneurs keep their doors open and their businesses viable during this temporary lag in economic activity."

Feyten expressed appreciation for the hard work and forward thinking of the executive teams at TWU's Center for Women Entrepreneurs and the Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership, and to state leadership for its help.

"When Shannon and Mary Anne brought this idea to me, my immediate reaction was, 'Yes, let's make it happen!'" Feyten said. "I would also like to thank our state leadership for their help. In particular, Governor and First Lady Abbott, Senate Finance Chair Nelson, and House Appropriations Chair Capriglione were all immediately supportive and really helped us speed up approval of this program."

Response from Texas leadership was swift and supportive.

"Small businesses are the heart of our communities and of this great state," First Lady Cecilia Abbott said. "In these challenging times, we especially need to encourage women to continue investing in their small businesses to help sustain local jobs and to help provide more financial security for more Texas families. By supporting our small businesses, we will overcome this challenge — we are #TexasStrong."

Senate Finance Chairwoman Jane Nelson added, in regard to this announcement, "All businesses are hurting right now, and we are working on many fronts to mitigate the negative impact this pandemic will have on our economy. Helping women-owned businesses navigate this time of uncertainty is a wise investment. Texas women are strong and resilient — and this assistance will go a long way to helping female entrepreneurs through the tough times ahead."

To apply for the program, visit the [Center for Women Entrepreneurs](#) website.

The Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership at Texas Woman's University is dedicated to preparing more women to take on successful roles in business and public service. Through the institute's three specialized centers—Center for Student Leadership, Center for Women Entrepreneurs and Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy—we ensure women have the education to establish careers as successful C-suite executives, the skills for building entrepreneurial businesses and the framework needed to run for public office.