

COACHELLA VALLEY



The California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program will award eligible businesses grants of up to \$25,000.
OMAR ORNELAS/USA TODAY NETWORK

Small business grant program to open Feb. 2

Melissa Daniels

Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Small businesses that took financial hits brought on by the coronavirus pandemic will soon be able to apply for more state grant money as part of a \$475 million program.

The California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program will award eligible businesses grants of up to \$25,000. Applications will be accepted Feb. 2-8, with award notifications going

out Feb. 11-18.

Application information can be found online at CAREliefGrant.com, but they must be submitted through one of many partner organizations.

To help local businesses navigate the process, the city of Palm Springs on Thursday announced a new hotline to provide assistance. The hotline is (760) 323-8273 or can be reached via email at PSAdvisor@palmspringsca.gov.

And the Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting a webinar on multiple state and federal small busi-

ness programs on Jan. 27 at 9 p.m. Attendees can learn more and register at pdacc.org.

More on the grant program

The \$475 million grant program is under the umbrella of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate, with a private third-party called Lendistry handling the application process.

See GRANTS, Page 4A

Oldman to receive honors at film awards

Brian Blueskye

Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

British actor and filmmaker Gary Oldman will receive the Chairman's Award, Actor at the 2021 Palm Springs International Film Awards for his performance in "Mank."

Festival organizers in November canceled the 32nd annual Palm Springs International Film Festival planned for Feb. 25 to March 8. The Film Awards Gala will not be an in-person event this year, but honorees from this year's films still will be recognized.

Media partner Entertainment Tonight will highlight all the individual honoree announcements for a tribute segment during the week of Feb. 8, followed by film clips that will re-air on Entertainment Tonight Weekend on Feb. 13 or Feb. 20.

The week of Feb. 22, Entertainment Tonight will air a segment that includes exclusive interviews from the honorees with their awards.

"Mank" is a biographical drama about screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz and his struggle to finish the script for Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane" while recovering from a broken leg in Victorville, Calif. The film was directed by David Fincher ("Fight Club" and "The Social Network") and released by Netflix in December.

See OLDMAN, Page 9A

BIGHORN

A COMMUNITY LIKE NO OTHER

638 PINNACLE CREST
BIGHORNGOLF.COM/638PINNACLECREST

1013 MOUNTAIN SPRINGS
BIGHORNGOLF.COM/1013MOUNTAINSPRINGS

154 KIVA DRIVE
BIGHORNGOLF.COM/154KIVADRIVE

702 SUMMIT COVE
BIGHORNGOLF.COM/702SUMMITCOVE

RESIDENCES STARTING FROM \$1,580,000
800.551.5578 BIGHORNGOLF.COM
DRE ID#01302989

REFINISHING YOUR PATIO FURNITURE

Patio Furniture Doctors Inc.
Refinishing Specialists

Before After

patiofurnituredoctors.com

Make your outdoor furniture look brand new for a FRACTION OF THE COST!

Pickup & Delivery • 5 Year warranty • Over 40 years of experience

Before After

Sling Fabric Replacement

Before After

Vinyl Strap Replacement

Before After

New Powder Coat Paint Custom Sunbrella Cushions

Our call lines are open. Zero-Contact Pickup & Delivery available

All work is done by trained technicians in our factory
We refinish all brands: Brown Jordan, Tropitone, Woodard and more...

CALL NOW FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

760.512.7761

DS-TDS0011129-05

Vaccine

Continued from Page 1A

medicine.

The county expects the distribution rate to stay the same for at least the next few months, Leung said, but it should pick up once more manufacturers receive approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

“We do expect the supply to ramp up with, hopefully, new vaccines being approved in the future as well as potentially more support going into the supplies that are needed to make vaccines happen,” Leung said.

A big reason for supply issues is the way that data flows between the state and local health providers doling out the vaccine, Perez said. In addition to some providers not inputting data, others are not inputting it correctly — plus, the system is taking up to 48 hours to record it, he said.

“There’s a combination of things here,” Perez said. “As a result of that, the numbers seem to be less as to how many folks were actually vaccinated, which means it doesn’t justify the need for more vaccines.”

Perez, whose district encompasses the Coachella Valley, said he and Supervisor Chuck Washington were on a call with state officials who are trying to address the issue.

“We are receiving less vaccine than we should be receiving,” Perez said.

Meanwhile, Perez said the county is receiving calls from all kinds of communities — grocery workers, child care workers, elderly populations — on the need for more vaccine eligibility. “We’re trying to balance it all,” Perez said.

More than 60 local leaders joined Perez’s Zoom call, and many had questions or comments about vaccine prioritization. Some wanted to see the vaccine availability rolled back to those who are age 75 and older, and limit eligibility until more supply is available. Others raised concerns about the digital divide leaving out vulnerable populations, or how a disproportionate number of Black and Latino individuals are not getting the vaccine compared to white individuals.

Juan Perez, the county’s interim CEO, said four new vaccination sites are planned to launch in the next two weeks, including one at the Palm Springs Convention Center. The county is also prepping a mobile unit to help address equity concerns, which will be used in the eastern Coachella Valley’s farmworking communities and head to Blythe.

“The goal for this mobile operation is to be able to get out to those areas that don’t have access to the vaccination clinics,” Perez said.

Right now, around 80% of vaccine shipments are going to providers while the rest are held back for county clinics. Riverside County Public Health Director Dr. Kim Saruwatari said that number could shift as the county increases its number of clinics.

The county is working with the state to develop an equity metric, Saruwatari added.

“We are trying to be consistent,” Saruwatari added. “We are trying to make vaccine available to people.”

Timeline for second doses?

Saruwatari said the goal of vaccine distribution is to get as many doses into people’s arms “the quickest and safest way possible.”

The faster the vaccine doses wind up in people’s arms, the faster the county will be able to get more doses, she said. If the state can prove that it is quickly using vaccine — a goal of getting it into arms within four or five days of receipt — the state has an argument for more doses to get from the federal government, she said.

But some have voiced concern about receiving a second dose in a timely manner. Patients need to wait four weeks between doses if receiving the Moderna vaccine and three weeks for the Pfizer version.

“A lot of people are worried that if they do not receive their second dose right at three weeks or four weeks, depending on the type of vaccine they got,



Abraham Reisin receives the COVID-19 vaccine administered by Irene Plaza at the Riverside County Fairgrounds in Indio. Reisin was the first person to receive the vaccine after getting in line at 6:30 a.m. Sunday and said he did not even feel the shot. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN

Coachella Valley: Cases so far

Health officials on Friday reported 484 new cases and five additional virus-related deaths in the Coachella Valley since Thursday. Here are the city and community breakdowns, with the numbers in parentheses showing increases since the previous day:

- Cathedral City: 6,201 cases (+78), 74 deaths (+1) and 4,369 recoveries
- Coachella: 7,139 cases (+51), 59 deaths, and 5,426 recoveries
- Desert Hot Springs: 3,594 cases (+58), 48 deaths, and 2,532 recoveries
- Indian Wells: 169 cases, 6 deaths, and 125 recoveries
- Indio: 10,932 cases (+122), 157 deaths (+2) and 7,852 recoveries
- La Quinta: 2,924 cases (+24), 44 deaths, and 2,019 recoveries
- Palm Desert: 3,412 cases (+45), 85 deaths (+1), and 2,318 recoveries
- Palm Springs: 3,248 cases (+25), 89 deaths, and 2,280 recoveries
- Rancho Mirage: 922 cases (+20), 28 deaths, and 571 recoveries
- Unincorporated communities: Bermuda Dunes: 568 cases (+9), 6 deaths, and 390 recoveries; Desert Edge: 303 cases (+2), 12 deaths, and 183 recoveries; Desert Palms: 225 cases, 14 deaths, and 145 recoveries; Garnet: 787 cases (+14), 14 deaths(+1), and 554 recoveries; Mecca: 1,053 cases (+14), 16 deaths, and 819 recoveries; North Shore: 318 cases (+1), 2 deaths, and 268 recoveries; Oasis:784 cases (+2), 6 deaths, and 618 recoveries; Sky Valley: 178 cases(+1), 2 deaths, and 120 recoveries; Thermal: 419 cases (+7), 4 deaths, and 327 recoveries; Thousand Palms: 882 cases (+12), 5 deaths, and 623recoveries; Vista Santa Rosa: 278 cases(+2), 2 deaths, and 200 recoveries
- Vaccines: As of Friday, 168,575 Riverside County residents have received COVID-19 vaccine doses. The county has allocated 133,610 doses to community providers and 34,965 for public health clinics. Overall, the county has been allocated 247,775 doses. More than 700,000 county residents are currently eligible to receive a vaccination, according to county health officials.
- California: 3,062,068 cases (+23,024), and 35,768 deaths (+764)

that they’re going to be in trouble,” Leung said during a county update Thursday. “That’s actually not true.”

Leung said it is safe for people to receive their second dose “anytime” after the three- or four-week period following their first dose. “It’s safe even at two, three, four months out” Leung said.

But not all public health experts agree.

“Every first shot is a promissory note on the second shot,” Andrew Noymer, an associate professor of public health at the University of California, Irvine, previously told the Desert Sun. “Immunization means getting both of the shots at the proper interval.”

It can take roughly 10 days after the first dose is administered until the body builds up its immune response. At that point, clinical trials suggest most people have a relatively high level of immunity to the virus for a period of time. But, in the trials, patients received the second dose in a timely manner, so it’s unknown how long that protection from a single dose will last.

The trials weren’t intended to see what would happen if thousands of people only got one of two required doses or got a second dose at a sporadic interval, so Noymer said public health officials need to follow the limited science that is available.

Noymer went as far as labeling it a “betrayal” to promise people a vaccine without having a concrete timeline for when they would receive that second dose. As he sees it, patients should leave the vaccination site with an already

booked appointment for several weeks down the line to get that shot.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its guidelines regarding vaccine intervals on Thursday, saying that if it isn’t feasible to adhere to recommended dose intervals, that the second doses for both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines may be scheduled for up to six weeks, or 42 days, after the first dose.

In addressing concerns that those who already received one shot may not get a second dose, Saruwatari said that orders for second doses are made separately.

A number of Riverside County residents have already received them, Saruwatari said.

More Riverside County clinics announced

Riverside County has announced several new clinic dates for next week. Appointment scheduling will open at noon on Saturday.

Approximately 10,000 appointments will be available for health care workers in all tiers of Phase 1A; essential workers in Phase 1B Tier 1; and individuals 65 years of age or older, officials said. All clinics on Mondays and Fridays will be reserved only for seniors.

Clinics will be located in Corona, Menifee, Beaumont and Indio.

“This is welcome news for so many of our residents who are extremely eager to get the vaccine,” Riverside County Board of Supervisors Chair Karen Spie-

gel said in a release on Friday. “We are just as eager to get our weekly shipments of vaccine so we can offer more appointments. The county team is doing a tremendous job vaccinating thousands of people at these public health clinics within just a few days of receiving the vaccine.”

Complaints about scheduling, though have been common as residents, including many seniors, struggle with a finicky website and busy phone lines. The county acknowledged the problems Thursday and later changed the website link.

County officials said there was a technical issue in the website code, which was found at the same time the website opened the 3,900 appointment slots on Thursday.

The following locations will have vaccine clinics starting Monday, Jan. 25 through Friday, Jan. 29. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Appointments are required at all sites, on all days. On Mondays and Fridays, the locations will be open for seniors only. Tuesday through Thursday, the clinics will be open to all who are eligible — with an appointment, proof of eligibility, a valid ID and, if a part-time resident, proof of residency.

- **Corona:** Corona High School, 1150 W. 10th St.
 - **Menifee:** Heritage High School, 26-001 Briggs Rd.
 - **Beaumont:** San Gorgonio Middle School, 1591 Cherry Ave.
 - **Indio:** Indio Fairgrounds (Fullenwider Auditorium), 46-350 Arabia St.
- “If an individual cannot show proof of eligibility or does not have an appointment they will be turned away,” the county said in the release. Medical insurance information will be requested but is not required, according to the county.
- The new website address is rivcoph.org/COVID-19-Vaccine.
- The county is advising residents age 65 or older who need help registering for an appointment to call 2-1-1, though residents have reported issues with the phone lines.
- Perez, the county’s interim CEO, said the county’s Office of Aging is taking names from people who call asking for help getting an appointment so it can follow up with them.

Public information officer Brooke Federico said the 2-1-1 system is working on adding additional call-takers, who speak English and Spanish, to handle an anticipated surge in calls for the next round of appointments.

Thursday’s website issues sent an influx of people calling the county hotline, which also then crashed, she said.

Once you click the button to sign-up for an appointment, the subsequent portal is run by the state.

If all appointments are booked when completing the state’s registration, users will not be able to secure a time.

Desert Sun reporter Mark Olalde and intern Estefania Moreira contributed to this report.

Grants

Continued from Page 3A

The grant program opened up earlier this month, with more than 300,000 applications coming in.

Eligible businesses from that round will receive notifications of their awards through Friday.

Any businesses that applied in the first round and did not receive any award will automatically be considered in the second round.

The program has numerous eligibility requirements and will involve submitting properly scanned documentation online. Grants are only available for businesses with up to \$2.5 million in annual revenue.

Partner agencies that can accept applications include:

- American Indian Chamber of Commerce
- AmPac Business Capital
- Asian Business Association of Los Angeles
- California Association of Nonprofits
- California Manufacturing Technology Consulting
- California Small Business Development Center
- California Women’s Business Center Network
- Economic Resources Corporation
- Southern California Black Chamber of Commerce

At least two of the organizations have local outposts where people can submit applications: the Coachella Valley

Women’s Business Center and the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center.

Those who receive the funds must put them toward specific uses, which could be payroll, health care costs, overhead like rent and utility payments, costs of reopening and complying with COVID-19 protocols like face masks and Plexiglass barriers, or any other COVID-19 related expenses.

A hard-hit economy

The Palm Springs regional economy is still reeling from the pandemic-induced recession and could be for some time.

In late 2020, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership estimated the shutdown orders in place to prevent the

spread of the virus could lead to the permanent loss of more than 650 local restaurant and accommodation businesses, and 310 retailers.

That translates to the livelihoods of about 16,600 people, or 11% of total jobs in the Coachella Valley.

In the Palm Springs’ 92262 zip code, which is home to the heart of the tourism area with many small shops and businesses, small business revenue has fallen by 80%, while small business revenue in Indian Wells has fallen by 73%, according to a recent study from Opportunity Insights referenced by CVEP.

Melissa Daniels covers economic development, hospitality and local business in the Coachella Valley. She can be reached at (760)-567-8458, melissa.daniels@desertsun.com, or on Twitter @melissamdaniels.