



**For Immediate Release**

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## **County creates Outdoor Capacity Relief Fund; assists restaurants, bars in reopening**

Sherburne County has established the Outdoor Dining Capacity Relief Fund to help hospitality businesses cover costs to expand capacity while complying with public safety rules and best practices. The charitable purpose is to help encourage economic vitality in one of the hardest-hit sectors in our region, while re-employing as many workers as possible.

Qualifying businesses are eligible for up to \$1,000 a month in reimbursement for rental costs incurred for tent, canopy and patio equipment such as tables and chairs. The County is partnering with the Elk River-based Three Rivers Community Foundation and the Little Falls-based Initiative Foundation to provide the relief grants for local hospitality businesses.

"We are faced with a unique challenge; we must find ways to help Main Street, without making them jeopardize their state licenses, without making them a target for punitive state fines and without putting undue burden on the rest of our taxpayers," said Commissioner Tim Dolan. "This program is a step in the right direction. It allows us all to contribute together, leveraging our partnerships while giving our pubs and restaurants one more tool in their fight for survival."

"I am pleased that Sherburne County and the Initiative Foundation have partnered together to provide these local businesses with a bit of help during these extremely tough times," said Commissioner Chair Felix Schmiesing. "It just makes sense to assist our local restaurants and pubs with some of the costs to rent tents, tables and chairs, so that they might be able to quickly and safely open back up."

Businesses that qualify are locally owned and operated Sherburne County restaurants and bars.

"I want our Sherburne County business community to know that your County Board is listening," Dolan said. "The majority of your Commissioners are small business owners ourselves. We get it. We feel it. We hear you. These businesses are the first to step up when we need them; supporting youth activities, hosting fundraisers and charity events, feeding first responders during crisis, or helping provide for families struggling to make ends meet. Our hospitality businesses always step-up. Now it's our turn to be there for them, because that's what successful communities do."

"While this by no means addresses all of the economic issues facing these establishments, we hope this program helps show our commitment and support for our Main Street businesses," Schmiesing said.

Corporate-owned restaurants are not eligible for this program. Ineligible rental expenses that will not be reimbursed by this fund are food and beverage costs, cooking equipment, personnel expenses and taxes. All rentals purchases require a receipt in order to qualify for reimbursement.

The program will be available starting at noon on June 1. Grants will be dispersed on a first-come, first-served basis and are retroactive to May 20. Receipts must be provided before grants can be dispersed. The following application link will be active starting at noon on June 1:

<https://tinyurl.com/SherburneHospitality>

To support this relief fund with a tax-deductible donation, visit

<https://www.givemn.org/story/SherburneHospitality>

Please contact Dan Weber at [dan.weber@co.sherburne.mn.us](mailto:dan.weber@co.sherburne.mn.us) or 763-765-3007 with any questions regarding the program.

### **About the Initiative Foundation**

The [Initiative Foundation](#) exists to improve the quality of life and to build stronger communities within its 14-county region of Central Minnesota by offering business loans, grants, leadership training and donor services through its Partner Funds programs. Since 1986, the Initiative Foundation and its Partner Funds—including the Three Rivers Community Foundation—have [invested multiple millions](#) in the region through targeted grants and business financing investments.