Overview:
Small businesses provide local amenities that enrich our lives, anchor our communities and serve as a critical source of income for their owners and employees. However, small businesses are also less likely to be equipped to bear the unprecedented economic fallout caused by economic downturns, like one COVID-19 has created.

In New Mexico, small businesses offer significant contributions to our state’s economy:
- More than 154,000 small businesses operate in New Mexico.
- They constitute 99% of all businesses in the state.
- Small businesses employ more than half (53.3%) of New Mexico’s workers – nearly 335,000 New Mexicans.
- More than half (54%) of these businesses – nearly 85,000 – are owned by people of color or women.

During the COVID-19 crisis, it is estimated that fewer than 5% of New Mexico’s small businesses have received a federal loan, and preliminary estimates suggest that these businesses only received enough funds to cover 49% of the state’s eligible payroll.

These numbers are exacerbated when considering the number of small businesses affected by COVID-19 that operate in our state’s more rural areas – where access to technology and broadband, limited population density and remote working opportunities are severely limited. With businesses closing in these regions, the path to future economic revitalization for rural New Mexico is marred with unprecedented financial challenges.

Grant Opportunity:
The New Mexico Oil & Gas Association (NMOGA) is a statewide coalition of oil and natural gas stakeholders, individuals, and companies dedicated to promoting the safe and environmentally responsible development of New Mexico’s oil and natural gas resources. In partnership with the Albuquerque Community Foundation (ACF), NMOGA is launching a statewide grant program to invest philanthropic dollars into New Mexico’s rural communities and nonprofits to ignite economic (re)development in light of COVID-19.

The focus of this grant program is to:
- Infuse philanthropic funding into New Mexico’s historically under-invested, rural regions and communities;
- Support and stabilize small businesses and entrepreneurs that make up the economic ecosystem of their local communities;
- Support educational, mentoring and training opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs and facilitate connections to financial institutions;
- Support and identify new ways for rural communities to spark economic revitalization during COVID-19.
Through an open RFP process, NMOGA and ACF will be soliciting grant proposals from 501c3 nonprofit organizations throughout the state that are focusing on rural economic revitalization. Grants will range in size from $5,000 - $10,000. While organizations with operating budgets of all sizes are eligible to apply, preference will be given to organizations with operating budgets less than $500,000, that are located in low-population, high poverty, rural areas.

For-profit businesses are not eligible for grant funding; however, we strongly encourage, nonprofit entrepreneurial support organizations to apply. This may include, but is not limited to: economic development centers, community development corps, mainstreet organizations, chambers of commerce or other nonprofits serving as local community/economic drivers during the COVID-19 crisis.

Eligible organizations must be:
- exempt from U.S. federal income tax pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the “Code”) and classified as a public charity under section 509(a)(1) or section 509(a)(2) of the Code; and/or an educational institution or governmental entity;
- located anywhere in the United States, however a local partner supporting New Mexico is required;
- in compliance with the IRS Guidestar Charity Check Report, NM Attorney General’s COROS filing and the NM Secretary of State.

Organizations that have already applied for a Brighter Future Fund grant are eligible to reapply through this application process. Organizations that have received a Brighter Future Fund grant, are also eligible to reapply.

Requirements:
- Proposal Narrative/Questions
- A detailed project budget relating to this request
- Most recent financial statements
  - Audited financial statements are required if your organization has an operating budget of $500,000 or more
- Listing of current members of the Board of Directors

Narrative:
While the Brighter Future Fund grant application will be online via the Albuquerque Community Foundation’s website starting October 1, 2020, the following bullets indicate information which will be required in various questions in the online application.

- Your organization and/or program’s mission and goals.
- Description of program for which you are applying for funds:
  - This should include the need for the program, the economic challenges COVID-19 has created in your community and the population who will benefit.
- How your organization or program is supporting and/or creating economic revitalization in your community:
  - This should include the ways your organization/program is addressing the economic fallout from COVID-19 and new approaches to economic development as a result of this crisis.
- A set of qualitative outcomes.
Outcomes serve as qualitative indicators to monitor and report on during your grant period. Put simply, outcomes seek to measure “who benefits and to what extent.”

- Description of how you would define success for economic revitalization in your community during and beyond COVID-19 and what role your organization/program plays in realizing this vision.
- How you are collaborating – sharing talent and resources with other organizations in your community.
- Primary county/ies served.

Applicants that do not meet the requirements or that submit an application that fails to address every one of these bullets will not be considered.

**Proposals must be received by 5pm MT on Friday, October 30, 2020**

No exceptions can be made for late proposals.