For immediate release

For more information, contact Water Bureau Public Information at 503-823-8064.

July 7, 2020

**Applications Open Tomorrow for $1 Million in One-Time Utility Bill Credits for Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19**

PORTLAND, OR – **Applications open Wednesday, July 8,** for the Small Business Program for Utility Relief (SPUR), designed to help small businesses with their City of Portland sewer, stormwater, and water bill during the ongoing public health and economic crisis.

**PLEASE NOTE: The application deadline is July 22. No applications will be accepted after this date.**

SPUR: **S**mall Business **P**rogram for **U**tility **R**elief

The Portland Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services have pledged $1 million in financial support for small businesses impacted by the pandemic. Credits for City of Portland utility bills are expected to assist between 200 and 300 small businesses and will range between $1,000 and $10,000. The City of Portland utility bureaus partnered with Prosper Portland, the city’s economic development agency, to develop for a program for providing relief to impacted businesses. SPUR builds on the work done for Prosper Portland’s Small Business Relief Fund which provides relief for small businesses affected by the pandemic economic and public health emergency.

Small businesses are invited to apply beginning Wednesday, July 8, through July 22 at [**portlandoregon.gov/water/smallbiz**](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/index.cfm?&c=80822).

* The application is simple.
* Applications will be prioritized using a racial equity and vulnerability lens.
* Applications will not be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis, but the July 22 closing date is a hard deadline for application submission.
* Applications are available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian. Interpreters are available for those who would like support in other languages. Call 503-823-7770 to request an interpreter.

The City of Portland utility bureaus are prioritizing businesses owned by Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color (BIPOC) and women to direct dollars to traditionally underserved businesses. Recognizing that the BIPOC community is disproportionally affected by the pandemic, the City of Portland is dedicating SPUR resources toward these small business owners.

A selection committee is made up of representatives from the following: Council for Economic and Racial Equity; Portland Utility Board; Oregon Native American Chamber; Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon; Black American Chamber; Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Oregon; Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce; Bureau of Environmental Services; and Commissioner Fritz's office.

“The SPUR program invests in our beloved small businesses that embody the very character of our city, so they can recover and continue to serve the community,” said Water Bureau Director Mike Stuhr. “By investing in small businesses today, the utilities are also helping to ensure that these ratepayers can continue to invest in our sewer, stormwater and water infrastructure for decades to come.”

The City of Portland utility bureaus continue to offer all customers no-interest flexible payment schedules. In response to the crisis, the utility bureaus have suspended late fees, collections and water shut-offs on accounts with past-due balances.

The SPUR application is available at portlandoregon.gov/water/smallbiz. If you have questions about the program or the application, email SmallBiz@portlandoregon.gov or contact City Customer Service staff at 503-823-7770. Limited staffing may result in longer response time.

A representative from the Water Bureau is available for Skype interviews. To schedule, please call the PIO Phone at 503-823-8064.

**ABOUT THE PORTLAND WATER BUREAU**

*The Portland Water Bureau serves water to almost a million people in the Portland area. Portland’s water system includes two great water sources, 53 tanks and reservoirs, and 2,200 miles of pipes. With 600 employees working on everything from water treatment to customer service, the Water Bureau is committed to serving excellent water every minute of every day.* Find us on Twitter @PortlandWater and visit us at [portlandoregon.gov/water](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/index.cfm?).

**About the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services**

*The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services - your sewer and stormwater utility - provides Portland residents with programs to protect water quality and public health, including wastewater collection and treatment, sewer construction and maintenance, stormwater management, and stream and watershed restoration. Follow on Twitter - @BESPortland. On the web:* [*portlandoregon.gov/bes/news*](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/46634)*.*

**About PROSPER PORTLAND**

*Prosper Portland creates economic growth and opportunity for Portland. Our vision is to make Portland one of the most globally competitive, healthy, and equitable cities in the world by investing in job creation, encouraging broad economic prosperity, and fostering great places throughout the city. We aspire to be a workplace of choice with passionate staff excelling in an open and empowering environment and sharing a commitment to our collective success. Follow us on Twitter @prosperportland or visit us at* [*prosperportland.us*](https://prosperportland.us/)*.*