



# Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

## NEWS RELEASE # 056

### City of Valdez Launches COVID-19 Economic Recovery Initiative

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**Valdez, AK** – The City of Valdez began rolling out the first programs for the Valdez COVID-19 Economic Recovery Initiative this month.

In addition to mitigating the health impacts of COVID-19 in Valdez, our community has been working diligently to address the economic impacts from the pandemic felt by residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations. The local approach to economic relief and recovery was split into three phases, consisting of immediate emergency assistance thru waivers of fees and penalties, direct assistance thru the May 2020 distribution of approximately \$3M in relief funds to Valdez businesses and residents, and ongoing economic recovery efforts.

Between May and November 2020, the Mayor's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force partnered with the business community and local non-profits to define successful economic recovery; determine needed relief, education, and support; and provide recommendations to Valdez City Council for programs which might assist in this effort.

The Task Force presented its findings and recommendations to the Valdez City Council during a joint work session on Nov. 11. Please visit [www.valdezak.gov/agendas](http://www.valdezak.gov/agendas) to watch the video recording of this session.

The Valdez City Council approved Task Force recommendations during their regular meeting on Nov. 17, which include:

- Creating and implementing a local business economic recovery grant program, which will award up to \$10,000 per business negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- Incremental community marketing efforts: Creating and implementing an advertising & marketing grant program for local tourism-related businesses; support for funding Valdez Convention & Visitors' Bureau to typical annual bed tax levels; funding incremental tourism marketing in 2021; coordinating a community marketing plan; travel trade program expansion; and creating a 2021 travel incentive program for visitors.
- Safety and consumer confidence efforts: Continued support for COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, safe community event implementation, and expansion of the COVID Conscious Business Program.
- Ongoing and expanded business support, education, and communications.
- Supporting air services and Alaska Marine Highway System travel to Valdez.

The first Economic Recovery Initiative programs rolled out to the community in early December. The *Considerations for Event Organizers and COVID-19 Mitigation Plans Guide* is now available. The guide provides detailed considerations to assist in planning safe, COVID conscious events in our community. Mitigation plan review and assistance is available at no cost to event organizers. Download the guide on the city website or request a paper copy from the city events coordinator by emailing [events@valdezak.gov](mailto:events@valdezak.gov) or calling (907) 834-3404.

The City also launched the Valdez Advertising & Marketing Matching Grant Program, which provides a matching grant up to \$5,000 to assist local tourism-related small businesses market their company and our community to visitors. A wide variety of advertising efforts are eligible under the program. If you are unsure if you qualify for the grant, please email [mbarberio@valdezak.gov](mailto:mbarberio@valdezak.gov) for guidance. Grant applications are available on the city website or at City Hall and due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Jan. 15.

To view the full Economic Recovery Task Force Report, read additional information, or to download applications for the current Valdez Economic Recovery Initiative programs, visit: <http://www.valdezak.gov/557/Valdez-COVID-19-Economic-Relief-Recovery>. Please check the website regularly for announcements on additional Economic Recovery Initiative programs in 2021.

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