

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Governor Murphy Announces NJEDA Grant Program to Support Small Businesses Affected by the Route 80 Shutdown

Posted on - 04/4/2025

New Jersey to Also Receive Economic Injury Disaster Loan Assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration

TRENTON, N.J. (April 4, 2025) – Governor Phil Murphy today announced that the [New Jersey Economic Development Authority \(NJEDA\)](https://www.njeda.gov/) plans to create a \$5 million grant program aimed at supporting small businesses in Morris County that have experienced a decline in revenue due to the lane closures on Route 80 caused by the ongoing sinkhole repairs. The Route 80 Business Assistance Grant Program will provide grants to for businesses and non-profits located in close proximity to Route 80's Exit 34. The grant program will go to the NJEDA Board next week for approval.

Additionally, the Governor announced that the U.S. Small Business Administration this week approved Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), capped at \$2 million, for Morris County and the contiguous counties of Hunterdon, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren. The EIDLs are a working capital loans to help small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private, non-profit organizations of all sizes meet their ordinary and necessary financial obligations that cannot be met as a direct result of the disaster. These loans are intended to assist through the disaster recovery period.

"It's been a grueling several weeks for Morris County business owners located off the Route 80 corridor. From Wharton to Roxbury, small businesses have had fewer customers, resulting in a decline in sales and revenue. I'm happy to announce today that help is on the way," **said Governor Murphy**. "The NJEDA's planned grant program, paired with the U.S. Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loans, will inject much-needed capital into small businesses. We are committed to doing this as swiftly as possible to ease the burden on local businesses."

"From natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy and tropical storms Henri and Ida, to a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic like COVID-19, the NJEDA is committed to supporting small business owners during dire times," **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "The NJEDA shares Governor Murphy's sense of urgency as we work to get critical funds to businesses most impacted by the Route 80 detours. We look forward to launching the program, which will help relieve the financial burden on small businesses, allowing them to stay open and continue serving communities in Morris County."

The Route 80 Business Assistance Grant Program will provide grants to small businesses and non-profits that have up to 50 full-time employees. Applicants must certify a negative financial impact of at least \$1,000 for the first quarter of 2025. Pending the NJEDA Board's approval, the Authority is expected to open applications for the grant program by the end of the month. Additional program details and eligibility requirements will be available once the Board approves. Interested parties can check the NJEDA's [website](https://www.njeda.gov/) and social media pages for updates.

"Small businesses along the Route 80 corridor are suffering the economic aftereffects of the sinkholes and traffic diversions caused by repair work," **said Senate President Nick Scutari**. "They need help and they need it as quickly as possible. These EDA grants will be a financial lifeline that will help small businesses and service organizations keep their doors open and continue to serve the residents of their communities."

"The ongoing lane closures on Route 80 have severely impacted small businesses in Morris County, causing a sharp decline in revenue for many that depend on steady customer traffic," **said Senate Republican Leader Anthony M. Bucco**. "These businesses are not just the backbone of our local economy—they are owned and staffed by our families, friends, and neighbors. Now, through no fault of their own, they are struggling to stay afloat. Thank you Governor Murphy and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority for working with us, recognizing this hardship, and taking swift action by implementing the Route 80 Business Assistance Grant Program. This \$5 million initiative will provide much-needed relief to affected businesses, helping them weather the financial challenges caused by these prolonged repairs. I look forward to the NJEDA Board's approval next week and will continue fighting to ensure our small businesses receive the support they deserve."

"For many business owners, a sudden lapse in revenue can mean the difference between keeping their doors open and closing for good, and the Route 80 closures have placed an undue burden on these surrounding communities," **said Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. "Supporting our local businesses is how we keep our communities strong and our economy moving. I commend the Governor and the NJEDA for acting on this matter quickly and decisively."

"Small businesses are the heart of our Morris County communities, and they have borne the brunt of the Route 80 shutdown. I am grateful to the NJEDA and Governor Murphy for responding to our calls for help and launching this grant program," **said Assemblywoman Aura Dunn**. "This critical support will provide real relief to business owners and working families as they fight to stay afloat. I look forward to continuing our bipartisan work to get these dollars out the door swiftly."

"We want to thank the Governor's Office, Senator Bucco, Assemblywoman Dunn, Assemblyman Barranco, the County Commissioners, and the NJEDA for their responsiveness to the needs of our business owners," **said Wharton Mayor William Chegwidan**. "These businesses have been severely impacted by the decline of revenues resulting from the closure of Rt. 80 and we appreciate their swift action in creating this program that offers them real relief. This is government at its best- State, County, and Local all working as a team."

"I'm thrilled and grateful for our business community that grants are becoming available to support their loss of revenue during this unpredicted transportation emergency," **said Mine Hill Mayor Sam Morris**. "Thank you to everyone who made this possible."

"This is a welcome and timely relief for our local businesses, who have been facing significant challenges since the closure of Route 80. The loss of customer traffic has taken a toll on our community's small businesses, and this grant program will provide crucial support for businesses in the area," **said Mount Arlington Mayor Michael Stanzilis**. "I want to thank Governor Murphy and the Economic Development Authority for taking this action and their continued commitment to helping our small businesses stay afloat during these difficult times. I'm confident this initiative will make a real difference for our local economy and help businesses in Mount Arlington and beyond recover and thrive."

About the NJEDA

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the State's principal agency for driving economic growth. The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey's long-term

economic competitiveness.

To learn more about NJEDA resources for businesses, call NJEDA Customer Care at 844-965-1125 or visit <https://www.njeda.gov>
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Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000