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# COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

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## Onorato Announces Business Revitalization Program

*Effort targets 16 traditional business districts and small businesses throughout Allegheny County*

**SWISSVALE** — Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato today launched “Allegheny Together,” a business revitalization program that will encourage well-planned, well-designed and geographically-focused investment in established urban commercial districts. The Chief Executive also announced grants, tax abatements and no-interest loans for small businesses throughout the County.

“Some of our communities are struggling to survive on their own, but with the County’s new programs, we can help bring our business districts back and help small businesses thrive,” said Onorato. “By helping small businesses and our 43 business districts succeed, we can attract additional investment and jobs to Allegheny County.”

The goal of Allegheny Together is to assist and encourage property owners and businesses to reinvest in traditional business districts by providing matching grants and low-cost financing. Eligible interior activities include: corrections of code deficiencies; compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry standards; modifications to provide disabled accessibility; improvements to provide energy efficiency; physical improvements to accommodate existing or potential business; and life safety code compliance. Eligible exterior activities include: façade improvements; streetscaping; business identification signage; awnings; and lighting that highlight architectural features and/or business signage.

Swissvale, Stowe Township, Elizabeth Borough and Tarentum were selected for the initial phase of the Allegheny Together program. For businesses in these four communities, up to 60 percent of total project costs or \$50,000, whichever is less, will be considered for financial assistance. Fifty percent of the funding will be in the form of a grant, and 50 percent will be in the form of a no-interest loan with a seven-year maximum term.

“We are so grateful to be selected for Allegheny Together because this is what we have been working toward for several years,” said Swissvale Mayor Deneen Swartzwelder. “We have lost a

number of key businesses, yet we have others that have been loyal to Swissvale for six decades. We need to take care of our businesses and with their success, we all succeed.”

The four communities will work with a consulting team made up of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and Town Center Associates, which were hired by the County.

“Through Allegheny Together, these communities will establish a business revitalization group that will develop a community vision for their business district,” said Economic Development Director Dennis Davin. “With this program, we will be able to help many more communities bring their business districts back and help them make their visions become reality.”

Allegheny County has committed \$660,000 in Community Development Block Grants for Allegheny Together over the next three years, and the foundation community has contributed nearly \$530,000 to the program.

Twelve communities that were severely flooded during Hurricane Ivan in 2004 are also eligible for façade grant and loan programs. They include: Bridgeville, Carnegie, Etna, Findlay, Heidelberg, McKees Rocks, Millvale, Oakdale, Shaler, Sharpsburg, South Fayette and Hampton.

“We want to continue to assist these communities through the recovery process,” added Onorato. “This is an exciting opportunity to really help our traditional, pedestrian-based business districts that helped to build Allegheny County and make it a great place to live, work and play.”

In communities that are not part of the Allegheny Together Program, 40 percent of total project costs up to \$50,000, whichever is less, per building will be considered for up to a 50-percent no-interest loan with a seven-year maximum term.

In addition, the Chief Executive announced a tax abatement program on improvements made to small businesses located in Allegheny County. Grants are also available for certain improvements to deteriorated business properties and new construction projects in designated areas.

The County will also provide funding to projects through the Allegheny Small Business Loan Program, which is available to small businesses throughout Allegheny County. The program can also be used in conjunction with the Allegheny Together Program. Eligible activities include: site acquisition; machinery and equipment; working capital; infrastructure; and construction and rehabilitation.

For additional information, businesses can contact the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development at 412-350-1000 or [economic.alleghenycounty.us](http://economic.alleghenycounty.us).

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*There are 43 business districts in Allegheny County outside of the City of Pittsburgh. Small businesses represent 99 percent of the economic enterprises in Allegheny County and employ more than 265,000 residents.*