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CHARLOTTE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Small-business assistance fund launched

Charlotte Business Journal

Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton has announced the creation of the **Small Business Assistance Fund**, which will provide low-interest loans to help small businesses struggling to access capital.

The new revolving loan fund received \$3 million in funding in the budget passed by the **N.C. Senate** last week.

The state money will be further leveraged through funding from The **Golden Leaf Foundation**, which administers funds from North Carolina's settlement with cigarette manufacturers.

"During this economic crisis, we've watched as big business received massive bailouts, but not enough attention has been paid to small businesses, which really are the foundation of our economy," Dalton says in a written statement. "As I have talked with small business owners, I have heard loud and clear that more help is needed and providing these loans is a powerful step. I look forward to working with members of the **General Assembly** to make sure this funding stays in the final budget plan."

The fund is modeled after the disaster loan programs the state implemented following natural disasters such as Hurricanes Fran and Floyd. It will provide loans to small businesses, those with fewer than 100 employees or annual receipts of less than \$1 million. Loans may be used to guarantee commercial loans, as emergency bridge loans and for other purposes related to small-business job preservation. As a revolving loan fund, the interest and loan repayments will go back into the fund, providing capital for additional loans.

The Golden Leaf Foundation has set aside \$5 million for creative ways, such as the Small Business Assistance Fund, to provide capital to help N.C. businesses create and retain jobs.

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