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PRESS RELEASE

GOB Launches Phase Two of the COVID-19 Unemployment Relief and MSME Program

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The Government of Belize, through a collaborative effort led by the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Commerce, the Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development, and BELTRAIDE, hereby announces the launch of phase two of Government's COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Program, incorporating the previously announced MSME Support Program.

The launch of the MSME Program commences today, August 1, 2020, with the rolling out of the program's website which provides information on the program, frequently asked questions and instructions on how to apply, prior to the official opening of the application portal. The online application portal will open to receive applications on Monday, August 3, 2020.

The online application portal for unemployment relief will also reopen on August 3, 2020. Workers who have been laid off because of COVID-19 and self-employed persons who have lost their income as a result of COVID-19 may apply. Applications and approvals from phase one will not be carried over into the second phase, since some persons who were unemployed have gone back to work and new persons have become unemployed. This program will run for a three-month period.

Under this program, \$14 million is allocated for unemployment relief and \$14.5 million is allocated for grants, loans and wage subsidies for the MSME Support Program which aims to assist micro, small and medium enterprises that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.

Both the MSME and the Unemployment Relief portals are available on the Government of Belize COVID-19 website, www.covid19.bz.

For further information on the MSME Support Program, applicants can call 0-800-CALL-MSP or email belizemsp@covid19.bz during normal working hours (Monday to Thursday 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. and Friday 8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.).

To request further information on the Unemployment Relief Program, please send an email to unemployment@covid19.bz or a text to 613-0095.

Ends