



May 20, 2020

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Supporting Chambers of Commerce Support Local Business and Community

Reopening and recovery is a welcome opportunity to begin a 'new normal' in our personal and professional lives while following thoughtful guidelines put in place to keep us safe and healthy. Even with these guidelines, we continue to navigate uncharted waters, as businesses are forced to make difficult choices on when, how and where to deliver services and meet the needs of their customers- and customers are making difficult choices of how and where to support local businesses.

The one constant that is always there for businesses to rely upon in times of need are Chambers of Commerce in the Seacoast: the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce, The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth, and The Falls Chamber of Commerce.

A Chamber of Commerce is a unique thing. Many people think we are funded by the towns and taxes. Not true. Many people think we are a marketing agency. Not true (although we do provide marketing services). We are customer service professionals, whose mission is to support business and build community by serving our members, residents and visitors to our communities.

We have been and will continue to be a dependable lifeline for local businesses fighting to keep their doors open. We have developed essential resources for businesses and community members, offered programming and provided opportunities to meet with key stakeholders, and

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The Seacoast Chamber Alliance represents over 2500 businesses who are members in one of the 6 Chambers of Commerce in the Seacoast: Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce, The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth, and The Falls Chamber of Commerce.



have advocated on the state and national level to ensure businesses have the resources they need through the CARES Act.

While Chambers are front and center serving our communities through this crisis and assisting our local businesses, we have been left out of federal funding programs through the CARES Act. Other nonprofits are eligible, but Chambers of Commerce are registered with the IRS as 501(c)(6) groups – and are deemed ineligible.

This puts us in a precarious position. Like many businesses, we want to meet the needs of our customers, but are forced to make difficult decisions. While providing critical support to our communities in the fight against COVID-19, we face business-threatening financial impacts of our own due to loss of membership revenue and canceled events that have cleared calendars and undermined critical sources of income – essentially leaving us without funding options or relief.

Chambers across the Granite State are imploring New Hampshire's state and congressional leaders to include chambers and other nonprofit 501(c)(6) organizations as they allocate federal stimulus dollars.

Chambers are catalysts, conveners and champions for our members and the communities we proudly serve. We want to continue our missions supporting businesses and building community and need your support.

How can you support your local Chamber of Commerce?

- Reach out to the Governor's Office for Economic Relief and Recovery <https://www.goferr.nh.gov/> and ask them to allocate funding from the CARES Act support funding for Chambers of Commerce and 501c6 organizations.

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- Become a Social Media Champion for your local Chamber of Commerce – like them, comment on their posts, share their content, and leave a review!
- Join, sponsor or donate to your local Chamber of Commerce (every little bit helps)!
- Encourage local businesses and organizations to join their Chamber of Commerce.

When a business or community member reaches out- we want to be able to answer the call. Your support will ensure that- together- we can keep the communities in the Seacoast and across the Granite State a great place to live, work and play.

Signed,

Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce- Jennifer Wheeler, President  
Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce- Margaret Joyce, President  
Greater Rochester Chamber of of Commerce- Laura Ring, President  
Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce- John Nyhan, President  
The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth- Valerie Rochon, President  
The Falls Chamber of Commerce- Allison St Laurent, Executive Director

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