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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SUBJECT: Small Grants for the Towns in Shelburne Falls Region

CONTACT: Whit Sanford, GSFABA or David Christopolis 413-296-4536

Small Grants for Businesses, Nonprofits, Artists and Farmers in West County

Shelburne Falls – Four Franklin County institutions are pleased to announce that businesses, nonprofits, artists, and farmers in the Village of Shelburne Falls and the hilltowns in Franklin and Hampshire Counties may apply for small grants of \$2,500 to \$15,000.

The grants are being made to help qualified entities and individuals (see grant criteria) to survive the pandemic, enabling them to cover expenses such as payroll, rent, inventory, equipment, working capital and COVID related losses. Grant applications and criteria can be accessed on the internet at <https://forms.gle/rTkBbZXQsKtRxYGs8> or be sent to you via email.

The small grants are for businesses, nonprofits, artists, and farmers in Western Franklin County and Hampshire County. In “West County,” a total of \$145,000 is available to those in the 10 towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Hawley, Heath, Monroe, Rowe, and Shelburne. In Hampshire County \$150,000 is available in 15 towns: Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Granville, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Peru, Plainfield, Russell, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

Before you contact anyone about the grants, please read the application criteria. Then, Whit Sanford at info@shelburnefalls.com or 413-522-9329 or David Christopolis at info@hilltownCDC.org or 413-296-4536 will be glad to answer questions you might have.

BACKGROUND

West County has something to celebrate this winter even as COVID 19 keeps us apart and has our neighbors, friends, and communities struggling with the pandemic. Four Franklin County institutions

pulled together to raise and manage \$295,000 in small grants for businesses, nonprofits, artists, and farmers in Shelburne Falls and the hilltowns in Franklin and Hampshire Counties.

In February, the Board of the Business Association (GSFABA) decided to seek a Commonwealth Places Grant for its new “Shelburne Falls Initiative,” half of which (\$30,000) could be used to support village businesses and nonprofits with small grants. GSFABA raised an additional match for its matching funds campaign for individual of \$24,160 and the Community Foundation of Western MA of an initial grant of \$5,000 and another \$10,000 from its Groundwater Fund. The Franklin County CDC (FCCDC) agreed to help GSFABA by managing the awards and the match that was required to be raised to receive the State monies.

Also, Senator Adam Hinds worked to secure \$250,000 in the State budget to provide more support for our part of rural Massachusetts in Franklin and Hampshire Counties. Ultimately, the State agreed to budget \$250,000 for the Hilltown CDC (HCDC) and GSFABA.

Once GSFABA, FCCDC, and HCDC learned of the awards, they asked the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to aid them in drafting a grant application that would be easy and straightforward to complete for the many entities and individuals hoping to qualify for financial assistance and to weather the COVID-19 storm.

For more information, on the application in Shelburne Falls and West County contact Whit Sanford at info@shelburnefalls.com or 413-522-9329.

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