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These businesses could include sole proprietorships and those that do not have a payroll system, or businesses that were declined support under existing federal relief programs for other reasons.

The RRRF will be administered by FedDev Ontario in partnership with Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) across the region including — in the Kawarthas — Community Futures Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes CFDC, Northumberland CFDC, Haliburton County CFDC, and CFDC of North & Central Hastings & South Algonquin.

“We have shared the messages from our small businesses that many just don’t fit into the programs the government has rolled out thus far,” says Gail Moorhouse, executive director of Community Futures Peterborough. “The Regional Relief and Recovery Fund will address the needs of the sole proprietor and main street businesses that are vital to renewing our local economy.”

Of the \$252.4 million in the RRRF, \$213 million will be available for small and medium-sized businesses facing financial pressure because of COVID-19, and \$39.4 million will be available for rural businesses that need access to capital and technical support.

The \$213 million in funding will be delivered by FedDev Ontario and is available for Canadian or provincially incorporated businesses, co-operatives, or indigenous-owned businesses located in southern Ontario with 1 to 499 full-time equivalent employees. The businesses must have been viable before the COVID-19 pandemic and plan to continue to operate their business or resume operations, but face funding pressures with fixed operating costs as a result of COVID-19.

Two funding options are available through FedDev Ontario. The first is an interest-free loan of up to \$40,000, with no payments required until December 31, 2020. Up to 25 per cent (up to \$10,000) of the loan will be forgiven if 75 per cent (up to \$30,000) is paid back by December 31, 2022. If 75 per cent is not repaid by December 31, 2022, the balance of the loan will be converted to a three-year loan with a fixed repayment schedule, with full payment required no later than December 31, 2025.

The second funding option available exclusively through FedDev Ontario is a fully repayable interest-free loan of up to \$500,000, with no payments required until December 31, 2022.

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The \$39.4 million in funding for rural businesses will be delivered by local CFDCs, and will be focused on “main street” businesses such as retail shops, restaurants, corner stores and other businesses of strategic importance to their communities.