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**For Immediate Release**

**PFC Black Chamber Launches the COVID-19 Open Door Fund, Sponsored by Prince George's County Council Member At-Large Mel Franklin, to Assist Small Businesses in Prince George's County Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Upper Marlboro, MD** – In response to the devastating impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on small and minority-owned businesses in Prince George's County, the PFC Black Chamber and Council Member At-Large Mel Franklin announced today the establishment of the COVID-19 Open Door Fund. This fund, launching on Thursday, December 3rd, will provide on a rolling basis \$1,000-\$3,000 in short-term relief grants to small businesses located in Prince George's County with 1-10 employees, less than \$250,000 in annual revenues, and a demonstrated impact on business revenues by COVID-19. Black-owned businesses are especially encouraged to apply. The PFC Black Chamber will host a Zoom meeting on Wednesday, December 2nd, 7pm-8pm, to discuss the new fund. Today, Council Member Franklin, issued the following statement:

“So many of our smallest businesses, particularly owned by residents of color, have been devastated by the COVID-19 global pandemic. These entrepreneurs need our help. They are the life blood of our economy and essential to job and wealth creation for our communities. The COVID-19 Open Door Fund will serve as a new source of assistance to help our smallest businesses keep their doors open and prepare for recovery in 2021. Thank you to the PFC Black Chamber for its leadership in establishing this fund and I am honored to have the opportunity to sponsor it.”

Today, PFC Black Chamber President Jerry McLaurin issued the following statement:

"As we navigate thru this pandemic, it's important we focus our small black businesses and provide them with some relief. The Open Door Fund aligns with the mission of the PFC Black Chamber as we strengthen the capacity of black businesses to serve their communities by providing a collective voice, fair access to capital, and leadership support."

Interested businesses and residents are encouraged to participate in the PFC Black Chamber's Zoom meeting to discuss the COVID-19 Open Door Fund by registering here: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ygcYfGnASceYJwy-ESlhgA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ygcYfGnASceYJwy-ESlhgA). Council Member Franklin will join the PFC Black Chamber for the Zoom meeting.

Beginning on Thursday, December 3, 2020, qualified small businesses may apply for the COVID-19 Open Door Fund here: <http://www.pfcblackchamber.org/OpenDoorFund.html>.

The PFC Black Chamber is also encouraging donations by large companies, organizations, agencies, and individuals to the COVID-19 Open Door Fund to expand the number of small businesses that can be assisted. To donate to the fund, please go here: <http://www.pfcblackchamber.org/DonateOpenDoorFund.html>.

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About the PFC Black Chamber:

PFC Black Chamber is a 501(c)(3) membership-based organization representing black-owned businesses and firms in Prince George's County.

About Council Member At-Large Mel Franklin:

Council Member Mel Franklin is a 3-term County Council Member on the Prince George's County Council, currently serving as an At-Large Member and representing all of the more than 900,000 residents that call Prince George's County home.