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**URA and Citizens Bank Partner to Donate \$15,000 to
Cocoapreneur's Pittsburgh Black Business Relief Fund Campaign**

URA will contribute \$10,000 with Citizens Bank providing a \$5,000 grant

PITTSBURGH, PA (June 11, 2020) – The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) announced that its Board of Directors will vote at this afternoon's meeting to authorize sponsorship of Cocoapreneur's Pittsburgh Black Business Relief Fund for \$15,000. The URA will contribute \$10,000 with Citizens Bank providing a \$5,000 grant.

Councilman and URA Board member R. Daniel Lavelle requested the donation on behalf of the URA.

"First and foremost, I want to thank Cocoapreneur for having the foresight to establish this relief fund. Unfortunately, given our local economy, we know it is both harder for Black businesses to become established as well as thrive. This also means it will be harder for them to recover from the damage done to their businesses," said Lavelle. "This is a small but truly meaningful donation that goes a long way toward us demonstrating our commitment to both support and grow the Black business community."

In addition to this grant, Citizens Bank [previously donated \\$200,000](#) to the URA's Small Business Emergency Loan Fund.

"Citizens bankers have been working tirelessly to help business owners across the country by lending nearly \$5 billion to more than 48,000 businesses under the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program and providing \$275,000 in grants here in Pittsburgh to support the Pittsburgh Economic Industrial Development Corporation, in partnership with the URA and the Pittsburgh Foundation's Emergency Action Fund," said Mark Rendulic, Pittsburgh president and retail director, Citizens Bank. "Small businesses are a vital engine of the Pennsylvania economy. This grant continues the work Citizens has been doing and further demonstrates our commitment to helping business owners get back on their feet."

Following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, peaceful protests in Downtown Pittsburgh were interrupted by vigilantes who incited violence and damaged local businesses. Numerous Black-owned businesses were vandalized in the incident.

In response, [Cocoapreneur](#) established the Pittsburgh Black Business Relief Fund to support those businesses in their recovery. All capital raised will go to the repair, inventory replacement and expenses of Black-owned businesses damaged during the protests.

“The URA is committed to supporting Black entrepreneurs and during this time of adversity it is more important than ever to evidence our values as an organization and as a city. We must empower leaders and organizations within the Black business community by supporting solutions they've developed with their own unique needs in mind,” said URA Deputy Executive Director Diamonte Walker.

“I invite other organizations, particularly those who've issued statements of solidarity, to support Cocoapreneur's Inventrify campaign as a definitive step towards turning those good intentions into meaningful action.”

To contribute to the Pittsburgh Black Business Relief Fund Campaign, [click here](#).

Any left over funds will be used for emergency purposes for Black-owned businesses as well as to issue mini grants for businesses in need.

About the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA)

The [URA](#) is the City of Pittsburgh's economic development agency, supporting the City's economic development goals, which are designed to create a city of inclusive opportunity for residents, stakeholders, and communities. The URA is committed to creating more housing that is affordable to the average Pittsburgher; encouraging more entrepreneurship and small business development; promoting inclusive growth and quality job creation; expanding neighborhood and main streets revitalization efforts; and developing a talented workforce that is equipped with the skills of the future.

About Citizens Financial Group, Inc.

Citizens Financial Group, Inc. is one of the nation's oldest and largest financial institutions, with \$176.7 billion in assets as of March 31, 2020. Headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island, Citizens offers a broad range of retail and commercial banking products and services to individuals, small businesses, middle-market companies, large corporations and institutions. Citizens helps its customers reach their potential by listening to them and by understanding their needs in order to offer tailored advice, ideas and solutions. In Consumer Banking, Citizens provides an integrated experience that includes mobile and online banking, a 24/7 customer contact center and the convenience of approximately 2,800 ATMs and approximately 1,000 branches in 11 states in the New England, Mid-Atlantic and Midwest regions. Consumer Banking products and services include a full range of banking, lending, savings, wealth management and small business offerings. In Commercial Banking, Citizens offers a broad complement of financial products and solutions, including lending and leasing, deposit and treasury management services, foreign exchange, interest rate and commodity risk management solutions, as well as loan syndication, corporate finance, merger and acquisition, and debt and equity capital markets capabilities. More information is available at www.citizensbank.com or visit us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#).

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