One Buncombe, COVID-19 Rapid Relief Fund

Public Hearing
September 21, 2021



Request

Background:

- The One Buncombe program was launched in April 2020 to support individuals and small businesses impact by COVID-19.
- At the August 31st meeting, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners allocated \$500,000 of American Rescue Plan Local Fiscal Recovery Funding towards the One Buncombe program.
- As an economic development appropriation, this allocation requires a notice and public hearing.

Request:

Board of Commissioners approval for the following:

- Resolution authorizing the \$500,000 economic development appropriation into the One Buncombe program; and
- Authorization to the County Manager to contract with Mountain BizWorks to administer the program.

One Buncombe Results

- In April 2020, the Community banded together to create the One Buncombe Fund and raised more than \$1.6M for individuals and small businesses.
- One Buncombe results:
 - Phase 1: 1,200+ individuals with housing, utilities, and emergency assistance;
 95 small business loans to support 600+ local jobs
 - Phase 2: 116 grants to local businesses to directly assist 406 living-wage jobs by supporting the retention of 253 employees and rehiring of 153 workers
 - Equitable Support: 62% to women-owned; 31% to people-of-color-owned; 75% to business with less than 5 employees

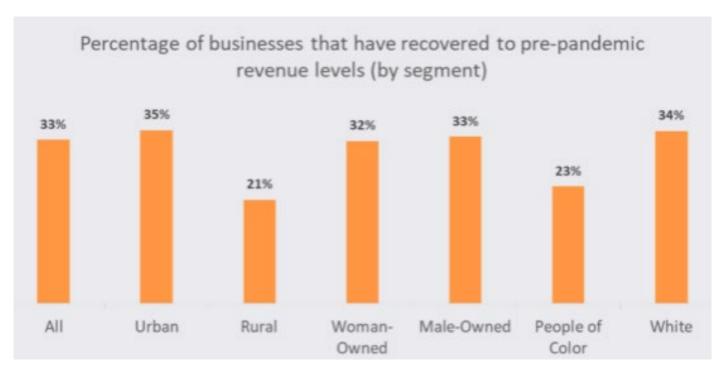


Continued Need

- 60% of small businesses are below pre-pandemic revenue levels and 25% of small businesses consider themselves to financially challenged*.
- Impacts are disproportionate among people of color-owned and rural-based businesses who are recovering to pre-pandemic levels at a slower pace (23% POC, 21% rural, 33% overall)*.
- Our smallest businesses report the most uncertainty as 24% of businesses with less than 5 employees feel financially challenged compared to 7% of businesses with 21-50 employees*.
- Businesses continue to deal with depleted cash reserves, increased debt, and the uncertainty associated with the pandemic.

*Results derived from the Mountain BizWorks' 2021 Local Business Impact Survey, https://www.mountainbizworks.org/2021/08/26/2021-local-businesses-impact-survey.

Recovery by Segment







Small Business Grants – Meeting Unmet Needs

Eligibility:

- Small businesses impacted by COVID-19 (less than 25 employees).
- Ability to demonstrate retention or rehire of employees.
- Ability to retain employees for 6 months from grant award.
- No prior reciept of One Buncombe grant funds

Focus Areas:

- PPP-ineligible
- People of Color-owned businesses
- Woman-owned businesses
- Sole Proprietorships
- Usage of Funds: business operations tied to retainage and rehire of employees at a living wage¹.
- Model: Grants up to \$5,000 (1+ employees retained) or \$2,500 (1 employee retained)
- Administered by: Mountain BizWorks

Note: The Living Wage Rate for 2020 was \$15.50/hour without qualifying employer provided health insurance, or \$14.00/hour with employer provided health insurance.



How Do I learn More?

To Apply/Learn More:

www.mountainbizworks.org/1bf





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Next Steps

- Press and Community Outreach: begins now
- Application Launch: October 1
- Application Close: October 31
- Awardees Receive Funds: end of November







Appendix

