COVID-19 IMPACT SURVEY & ECONOMIC RECOVERY REPORT
Message from The Director

COVID-19 and our local response to the pandemic has impacted our economy and business owners in unprecedented ways. As evidenced by our front line PPE supply distribution, countless surveys, engagement and responsive video webinars on topics such as EIDL and PPP funding, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department (SBED) pledges to you, our local business owners and heroes, to remain adaptive and attuned to your needs in this challenging time.

As we continue to work together to rebuild and rebound, I ask that you please take time to engage this office, review our content and stay apprised of Bexar County’s ongoing efforts to combat these economic challenges, not merely as your government, but as your partner in the recovery effort. Our office is an action-oriented team dedicated to linking SMWBE/DBE/HUB to opportunities that will ensure success in the government marketplace and the private sector.

We believe that our local businesses will ultimately overcome the crisis at hand.

Together we are, #BexarStrong.

Renee Watson, BBA, MPA, ECMCA
Director, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Dept.
Title VI Coordinator & DBE Liaison

In This Issue:

Message from The Director ................................................................. 1
Bexar County and Our COVID-19 Response ....................................... 2
COVID-19 and Small Business .............................................................. 3
Webinars for The Small Business Community ................................. 4
Bexar County Webinar Series .............................................................. 5
2020 Bexar County Business Virtual Conference ............................... 7
DBA Filings ......................................................................................... 9
About the COVID-19 Impact Survey ................................................ 11
COVID-19 Impact Survey ................................................................. 12
Post-Survey Action Plan .................................................................. 22
Recommendations for the Small Business Community .................. 23
Bexar County Small & Micro Business Relief Grant ....................... 25
Assisting Small Businesses to Find Employees ............................... 26
Community Resources .................................................................... 27
Bexar County Plumbing Assistance Program ................................... 28
Departmental Resources .................................................................. 29
In Memory Of .................................................................................. 30
SBED Staff and Contact Information .............................................. 31

Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department | 2021
The economic catastrophe caused by the pandemic has not only hurt business owners, but the workers that depend on them, and ultimately, our communities. Nearly 50% of all Americans work for a small business. Many small businesses were simply not well-prepared for long-term, public health emergencies. Researchers noted that “many small businesses across sectors came in the COVID-19 crisis with low financial resilience” *(Dua et al., 2020). There was still a differential impact across industries.

For instance, traditional street-side businesses reported more losses in sales as compared to larger, online businesses. Some of the industries most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic were accommodation, tourism and travel, arts, entertainment, recreation, food services, especially, restaurants and bars. Small businesses will need to save money on a long-term basis in order to withstand any extreme pressures on the market. In order to help small businesses respond to the pandemic, our department organized distributions of personal protective equipment (PPE) in Bexar County. Over 1,000,000 face masks were distributed.

COVID-19 and Small Business

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a deadly impact on human lives. In addition, the pandemic has caused the greatest economic shock in American society since the turn of the 21st century. The small business community in Bexar County was severely affected by the pandemic, with state-mandated shutdowns and stay-at-home orders issued in March of 2020. This led to persistent losses in revenue, layoffs, reduced availability of workers, major disruptions in the supply chain, and a sudden and sharp decline in consumer activity. On March 3, 2021, the Texas Governor issued an Executive Order that allowed all businesses to open to 100% capacity. However, our recovery is only just beginning, and business activity has not returned to pre-pandemic levels: this is the “new normal.”

Research plays an important role in helping us to understand what businesses are going through. The Small Business Pulse Survey (2021) administered by the United States Census Bureau found that 21% of businesses in Texas have continued to report a decrease in sales, even as recently as April 2021 *(United States Census Bureau, 2021). About 27% of entrepreneurs also said that the pandemic has had a large negative effect on their business. These results indicate that COVID-19 has had a persistent impact on small businesses, even after reopening to full capacity. Only time will dictate the process of a complete economic recovery.

SBED created a series of webinars for small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to provide information and coping strategies for entrepreneurs. The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the small business community raised some important questions:

- Where can you apply for economic relief?
- What can you do to hire more workers?
- How can you prevent COVID-19 in the workplace?

We worked to address these issues by providing resources to the small business community in Bexar County and keeping an open dialogue with SMWBEs. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, our department has organized a series of online webinars with local service providers in order to answer these very questions and guide them into economic recovery.
Bexar County published a Webinar Series for the small business community during May-June 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This online series was organized to help entrepreneurs navigate through resources that were available to them in order to help their business grow. Because Bexar County was closed to the public, we continued to provide valuable information through virtual platforms. Some of the agencies that participated in our series included: Small Business Administration, BiblioTech Public Library, Bexar County Tax Assessor-Collector, Bexar County Purchasing Department, South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency, and LiftFund.
Bexar County Webinar Series

SMWBE XCEL
"Creating Small Business Opportunities for Excellence"
REGISTER TODAY!

Webinar
Bexar County
Small Business
Construction & Professional Services
COVID-19 Supplies

Wednesday, April 8, 2020
Town Melvin Lank
www.bexar.org/smwbexcel

Starting a Business in Bexar County
• How to Obtain your CBA & LUC
• How to get your DBE, E 1 & S 2
• Developing your Business Plan
• Getting Started with Your Business
• Finding Funds & Business Resources

Zoom Webinar Link:
https://bexar.zoom.us/j/177931667
April 15, 2020 | 10:00 AM - 9:00 AM
For more information, please visit:
www.bexar.org/businessmkt.business
Call: 210-335-3479

Becoming a Registered Vendor with Bexar County
• Get listed as a Supplier
• Verify Contract Awards
• Find New Opportunities
• Access SMWBE Directory
• Commodity Code Selection

County Supplier CDMS Workshop
Wednesday, April 8, 2020
For additional information, contact:
Jaime Marquez
jmarquez@bexar.org
330-2317
www.bexar.org/smwbexcel

SBA Economic Relief
April 7th
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
REGISTER HERE:
www.bexar.org/102277467

Contact Us:
rwteonearbexar.org
210.335.2478

Becoming a Registered Vendor with Bexar County
• Get listed as a Supplier
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www.bexar.org/smwbexcel
The 20th Annual Business Conference was scheduled for 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bexar County organized a virtual conference, in place of the traditional, in-person conference format. The conference program provided virtual sessions to registered participants, including sessions on starting a business, building capacity, working with public agencies and general contractors, and having open discussions with business advisors.
2020 Bexar County Pre-Recorded Sessions

Prequalification: Instructions for New Contractors, Construction Division
Jose Castro
San Antonio District
DBE Coordinator

Doing Business with UT Health San Antonio
Rebecca Mendes
Assistant HUB Coordinator

Doing Business with UTSA
Bruce Williams
HUB Program Manager

Starting a Business
Crystal Darby
Senior Business Advisor

Doing Business with VIA
Rod Velez
Director, Sales & Support
Darin Albridge
Director, Sales & Development
Bria Mitchell
Assistant Business Development & Outreach Specialist

Department of Labor Resources
Ellen Glover
Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist

Business Services
Adrian Lopez
Chief Executive Officer

COSA Aviation: How to Do Business with SAAS
Joe Gonzales
Sr. Management Analyst

Doing Business with Alamo Colleges
Toucey White
SMWBE Contracting Coordinator

The Business Plan
Hector A. Ramirez
Certified Business Advisor II

City of San Antonio - Small Business Resources
Hugo Villarreal
Small Business Liaison

Doing Business with the U.S. Department of State
James Josy
Senior Procurement Analyst

HUB Certification Program
Maya Ingram
Statewide HUB Program Manager

Launch SA Resources
Ryan Salis
Director of Launch SA

How to Do Business with H-E-B
Crystal Royal
Manager of Supplier Diversity

QuickBooks Online
Steve Chace
Advanced QuickBooks Online Trainer

Doing Business with CPS Energy
Alyssa Ramos
Supplier Diversity Coordinator

For additional videos, visit our YouTube channel: @SMWBE_Bexar
Research on the history of DBA filings in Bexar County shows that there was a significant drop in the number of DBAs filed in the county in early 2020, especially from January to March of 2020. The number of filings stabilized again only several months later. We believe that the number of DBA filings is a strong indicator of local business activity. The COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact on the business community in terms of its ability to start and to sustain their small business.

However, as shown in the table below, there was an upward trend in DBA filings in late-2020 after Bexar County began reopening, with an ~18% increase in DBA filings from 2019-2020. These findings are based on a report published by the US Census Bureau (2021).

![DBA Filings: Local Statistics in Bexar County](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>Bexar County</td>
<td>17,945</td>
<td>21,167</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
<td>211,969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau (2021)
Bexar County 2020 Business Applications
21,167 (~18.0%)

Note: The Census Bureau’s reference date for geographic entity boundaries in all geographic and statistical data products is January 1 of the reference year (e.g., January 1, 2020).

DBA Filings: State and Federal Statistics

As per the US Census Bureau (2021), “Business Applications for the first quarter of 2020, adjusted for seasonal variation, were 842,614, a decrease of 4.5 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2019.” This was a considerable decrease noted shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. About one year later, “Business Applications for May 2021, adjusted for seasonal variation, were 500,219, an increase of 1.2 percent compared to April 2021.”


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Applications - At a Glance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>842,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Q1 / 2019 Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>366,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Applications as of April 2020, US Census Bureau (2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Applications - At a Glance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 2021 / APR 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Applications as of May 2021, US Census Bureau (2021)
The COVID-19 Impact Survey (2021) is a 17-item survey designed to assess the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses in the Bexar County region. Out of the 15,011 Bexar County businesses that were contacted by the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Department, 504 business owners responded to the COVID-19 Impact Survey, with a response rate of 3.2%. Some of the questions from this survey were derived from a previous edition of the COVID-19 Impact Survey (2020), while other questions were newly added.

The questions in the survey were either multiple-choice or open-ended. Our mixed-question survey design provided respondents with an opportunity to answer a variety of question types in order to provide both quantitative and qualitative information on how COVID-19 has impacted their business. In this publication, results from the survey will be presented along with brief interpretations of the data.

At the end, we will offer a series of recommendations for the small business community. These recommendations will be based on survey results, insights from local business owners, and findings from research on the financial impact of COVID-19 on small businesses.

Other relevant COVID-19 surveys have also been administered by city, state, and federal agencies, such as the Small Business Impulse Survey (United States Census Bureau), the Business Response Survey to the Coronavirus Pandemic (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics), COVID-19 Community Survey (City of San Antonio), and the HHSC 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey (Texas Health and Human Services Commission). Bexar County and the business community should continue to monitor these survey results to help guide their decision-making process during the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
1. What is the name of your business?

We asked business owners the name of their business, physical address, and email in order to effectively respond to their comments and provide them with information.

2. Which of the following areas is your business located in?

About 75% of all businesses reported that they are based out of a Bexar County Municipality, while 25% reported that they are based out of unincorporated areas of Bexar County. Here is a listing of some of the municipalities represented in our sample:

- Alamo Heights
- Balcones Heights
- Castle Hills
- China Grove
- Converse
- Elmendorf
- Helotes
- Hill Country Village
- Hollywood Park
- Kirby
- Leon Valley
- Live Oak
- Olmos Park
- Other
- San Antonio
- Schertz
- Selma
- Shavano Park
- Somerset
- Terrell Hills
- Unincorporated
- Universal City
- Von Ormy
- Windcrest

3. Which of the following best describes your industry?

504 businesses responded to this question. Professional services (112), other services (62), retail (48), and construction (39) were the top 4 industries represented in this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology / Cybersecurity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods and Commodities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucking and Transport</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and Fitness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Profit</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare / Education</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COVID-19 Impact Survey

4. How many employees (full-time and part-time) are currently working for your business?

Of the 504 businesses that responded, 359 companies, or 71% of all respondents, said that they had between 1-20 employees, followed by 116 companies, or 23% of all respondents, who said that they were self-employed. Only 6% of all respondents said they had 21 employees or more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>How many employees (full-time and part-time) are currently working for your business?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Employees</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Employees</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Employees</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 Employees</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-50 Employees</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100 Employees</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-150 Employees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-200 Employees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451-500 Employees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not to Answer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COVID-19 Impact Survey

5. How many full-time and part-time employees were terminated due to the impact of COVID-19?

About 43% of businesses (219) reported that they terminated full-time employees. 57% of businesses (285) reported that they did not terminate full-time employees. Most businesses that terminated employees ultimately terminated anywhere between 1-5 full-time employees due to the impact of COVID-19.

![Full-Time Terminations](image1)

**Full-Time**

- **Terminations Reported:** 43%
- **No Terminations Reported:** 57%

About 35% of businesses (177) reported that they terminated part-time employees. 65% of businesses (327) reported that they did not terminate part-time employees. Most businesses that terminated employees ultimately terminated anywhere between 1-5 part-time employees due to the impact of COVID-19.

![Part-Time Terminations](image2)

**Part-Time**

- **Terminations Reported:** 35%
- **No Terminations Reported:** 65%
COVID-19 Impact Survey

6. How many full-time and part-time employees have you been able to rehire since January 2021?

About 72% of businesses (363) reported that they did not rehire any full-time employees. 28% of businesses (141) reported that they did rehire full-time employees. Most businesses that rehired employees ultimately rehired anywhere between 1-5 full-time employees.

About 67% of businesses (339) reported that they did not rehire any part-time employees. 33% of businesses (165) reported that they did rehire part-time employees. Most businesses that rehired employees ultimately rehired anywhere between 1-5 part-time employees.
COVID-19 Impact Survey

7. Which of the following certifications apply to your business?

Out of the 504 respondents, 73% of businesses reported that they had some type of certification (i.e. Small Business Enterprise or “SBE”, etc.). Only 27% of businesses were not certified.

8. How has your business revenue changed since March 2020?

Out of the 504 respondents, 151 businesses (or 30%) of the overall sample reported a decrease in revenue of 51% or more since March 2020. Overall, 81% of all businesses reported some kind of decrease since that time.
91% of all businesses across industries reported using some kind of protective measure against COVID-19. Overall, 94% reported using face coverings, 89% reported using social distancing, 87% reported using hand sanitizer stations, and 58% reported using temperature checks.

These results suggest that small businesses were generally compliant with the orders issued in Bexar County, and that they took responsible measures at the workplace to ensure the health and safety of their customers.
COVID-19 Impact Survey

10. Is your business offering the same products and services as it did before the COVID-19 pandemic?

19% of businesses reported that they are not offering the same products and services as they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. These results appear to suggest that nearly 1 out of every 5 businesses are pivoting, and readapting their business to meet new customer demands.

11. Have you been approved for any of the following [loans or grants]?

Out of 504 respondents, 75% of businesses reported that they were approved for a loan or grant, while 14% reported that they were not approved, and another 11% did not apply.

12. Did any of the following community agencies assist you with filing your loan or grant application?

15% of businesses reported that they used a community agency to assist them with filing their loan or grant applications. Some of these agencies include: LiftFund, North Chamber of Commerce, Launch SA, SAGE, Southside First, UTSA Minority Business Development Agency, UTSA PTAC, and UTSA SBDC (for details, see page 25).

13. Has your business significantly increased its use of any of the following digital technologies since the COVID-19 pandemic began?

57% of businesses reported that they have increased their use of digital technologies since the pandemic began. Some of the more commonly used applications were Facebook and Zoom. Most business owners reported using more than one software application in their business. This question was important to ask given the ongoing research on the use of digital technologies in the COVID-19 pandemic within healthcare, education, and the general workplace.
14. Please describe the impact of COVID-19 on your business.

Many businesses reported that COVID-19 had a financial impact on their business. Some concerning narratives emerged. For instance, many business owners reported that they experienced a major loss in revenue, invested their own monies for business purposes, terminated employees, invested in technology, and lost contracts and/or customers. Here are some of their testimonies:

“COVID-19 has made operating a business in San Antonio very challenging. We’ve done our best to not only serve our guests but to try to keep them as safe as possible. We will survive as a business but it will not be the same as a pre-COVID world.”

“As the owner, I have taken the financial brunt so that my employees could continue to make Pre-Covid income.”

“Reduced revenue has forced us not to hire new employees.”

“Overhauled how we deliver our primary services; forced us to invest in technology to support remote operations; prevented us from offering in-person services; employees transitioned to work-from-home operations.”

“Clients forced to shut down their operations and cancel contracts resulting in a very substantial loss in business both in contract and adhoc sales.”

“COVID-19 has dramatically decreased my business operations. Hopefully the opening up of Texas & vaccines will restore operations to pre COVID levels.”
15. How would you rate the level of impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on your business?

57% of businesses reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had a large negative effect on their business, followed by another 33% of businesses reporting that it had a moderate negative effect on their business.

16. In your opinion, how much time do you think will pass before your business returns to normal levels of operations?

51% of businesses reported that they think it will take 6 months or more before their business returns to normal levels of operations. This is a higher number than what was recently reported in the US Census Small Business Pulse Survey (2021). Another 15% reported that they think their business will never return to normal levels of operations.
COVID-19 Impact Survey

17. What are the ways in which city, county, and state partners can assist your business during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A total of 504 Bexar County businesses responded to the COVID-19 Impact Survey. Their responses to question 17 were organized into 11 categorical themes. Some responses fit into more than one category, which yielded 532 response types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Keep Business Open / Support Local Businesses</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grants / Loans / Tax Breaks</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve Communication with Local Businesses</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Health-Related Support such as PPE Supplies, Vaccines, Mandates</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Availability of Contracts for Small Businesses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Marketing &amp; Advertising</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. More Workers Needed / End Unemployment Insurance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Application Process</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Not Sure</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. None Needed</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43% of businesses (229) reported that they needed financial assistance from city, county, and state partners, including additional grants, loans, rent relief, or tax breaks.

12% of businesses (61) reported that they needed city, county, and state partners to assist them with keeping their businesses open and in offering support for local small businesses in general.

13% of businesses (71) reported that they needed health-related support such as PPE supplies, vaccines, mandates, air filtration, and more updates on public health safety measures.
Post-Survey Action Plan

Our Action Plan

After analyzing the results of the COVID-19 Impact Survey (2021), the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department developed an action plan to address pandemic-related issues raised by small businesses in Bexar County. We took the following courses of action:

- Businesses received a digital copy of our “Bexar County Small Business Recovery Resources” via email in response to some of their comments and questions.

- Some businesses who had complex needs were also referred to several agencies, including the local office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA), Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC), San Antonio for Growth on the Eastside (SAGE), North San Antonio Chamber, LiftFund, Prosper West, and Southside First Economic Development Council.

- We also held several virtual sessions with business owners on Zoom, and offered question & answer sessions. We later posted these videos as webinars on YouTube for businesses who were unable to join us.

Moving Forward

- Bexar County will continue to work with the small business community, by keeping our doors open for interaction with business owners, by focusing on capacity-building, and by publishing additional conference workshops in order to educate and inform our entrepreneurs.

- Please see our calendar for BID Alerts and special events. www.bexar.org/calendar.aspx
Recommendations for The Small Business Community

Bexar County has identified 6 best practices for small businesses recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic based upon a review of professional and academic literature. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Adaptation: Adapt New Business Models

Small businesses should adapt their business model to changes in the market resulting from COVID-19. For instance, they may add curbside-pickup options to their business establishment, develop e-commerce websites for their products and services, or offer free delivery and other promotions. They should also setup infrastructure for telework and remote operations as an alternative working solution for employees who prefer this option (Dau et al., 2020). Businesses may consider investing more time and money into social media marketing. Some businesses may also consider pivoting, and offer new products and services altogether.

2. Resilience: Save Money for Emergencies

Financial resilience is fundamentally important for businesses to withstand an unpredictable market. Small businesses should have a savings account with 3-6 months of business expenses, automate their savings, continually reevaluate monthly operating expenses, plan for the worst, and take care of their basic needs first, to name a few (Expert Panel, 2020).

3. Symbiosis: Develop Key Partnerships

Small businesses should establish mutually beneficial relationships, or a symbiotic relationship, with other businesses in the community. Establishing such a partnership could benefit both parties that are working together to creatively solve a problem (Sagarin, 2013).

4. Logistics: Reevaluate the Supply Chain

Think of ways you could maintain your business in operation if the supply chain is broken once again by sudden disruptions in the marketspace. For instance, small businesses should have access to multiple and diversified suppliers, identify emergency suppliers, source from local vendors, and use online platforms to give customers another way of ordering products if your physical location is closed (Chowdhury et al., 2021).
5. Technology: Adopt New Technologies

Small businesses should creatively use technology to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic world. COVID-19 will likely drive further advancements and changes in the business world. The small business community should continue to monitor existing and emerging technology and apply changes to their workplace or business operations. For instance, businesses may consider contactless experiences, virtual interactions, digital platforms, and other technological modifications (Vargo et al., 2021).

6. Prevention: Create a Safe Environment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers numerous guidelines for businesses responding to COVID-19, such as symptom screening, incorporating SARS-CoV-2 testing, providing masks or personal protective equipment, introducing flexible sick policies for employees, sanitizers or wipes for hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting, and increasing or improving ventilation. These guidelines are important for preventing another outbreak and keeping your employees and customers safe from infection (CDC, 2021).

Sources


Bexar County then established Bexar County Strong, a multi-agency initiative, in order to employ community agencies, like LiftFund, SAGE, and Maestro Entrepreneur Center, to administer loans and grants to small businesses, and assist small businesses with applying for these grants. The Department of Economic and Community Development issued the Small & Micro Business Relief Grant: a $7M dollar grant program designed for small businesses in Bexar County who needed financial relief due to the impact of COVID-19 on their business.

The Department of Economic and Community Development engaged LiftFund and other community agencies to administer the funds, and these agencies, in turn, distributed funding to qualifying small businesses in Bexar County.

Bexar County received a total of 1,064 grants and loans under Coronavirus Relief Fund, which is part of the CARES Act Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The U.S. treasury distributed these funds to state and local governments. The County received $11,355,847.79 in grants and $5,016,806.10 in loans, totaling $16,372,653.89.
SBED recognizes that as the economy reopens, you may have staffing needs due to labor shortages. Please consider the following resources in your search for employees:

**EmpLOYERS! Are you looking to Hire Workers?**

Thursday, June 10, 2021 | 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Register Here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/153836126997

**Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA)** brings businesses and job seekers together. WSA offers an array of services to help businesses save money, improve productivity and provide a competitive edge.

**Workforce Solutions Alamo**

- COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Programs
- Fidelity Bonding
- Labor Market Information
- Recruitment Assistance
- Reduced Training Costs
- Tax Credits
- Workforce Planning

Contact Us:
210.335.2478
rwatson@bexar.org

www.bexas.org/smwbexar

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**Impacted by COVID-19 Layoffs?**

Project QUEST is part of a collaborative effort offering Workforce Education & Training Programs for those impacted by COVID-19. QUEST provides wrap around services, career coaching, and job readiness. Stipends offered while you train. To Learn more, attend a QUEST Information Session.

**City of San Antonio’s Workforce Recovery & Resiliency Program**

This Program is made possible through funding from both the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and City of San Antonio General Funds.

**Bexar Strong Workforce Recovery Program**

The Bexar Strong Program is made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Bexar County’s General Funds.
Bexar County would like to acknowledge our Community Partners in the COVID-19 recovery efforts:

615 E Houston St #298
San Antonio, TX 78205
(210) 403-5900
https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/tx/san-antonio

501 W César E Chávez Blvd
San Antonio, TX 78207
(210) 458-2460
https://sasbdc.org/

501 W César E Chávez Blvd
San Antonio, TX 78207
(210) 458-3353
https://ptac.iedtexas.org/

220 Chestnut St
San Antonio, TX 78202
(210) 248-9178
https://www.sagesa.org/

12930 Country Pkwy
San Antonio, TX 78216
(210) 344-4848
https://www.northsachamber.com/

2007 W Martin St
San Antonio, TX 78207
(888) 215-2373
https://www.liftfund.com/?location=san-antonio

630 SW 41st St
San Antonio, TX 78237
(210) 501-0192
https://prosperwestsa.org/

3315 Sidney Brooks
San Antonio, TX 78235
(210) 533-1600
https://www.southsidefirst.org/
Bexar County Plumbing Assistance Program

Bexar County launched a $5 million dollar county-wide reimbursement program offering up to $1,500 per household to help pay for plumbing repair costs incurred by local residents who sustained damaged pipes in their home caused by the winter freeze of February 2021.

Reimbursement Requests

Figure. A plotting of Bexar County addresses qualified to receive reimbursement, segmented by precinct. A total of 201 applicants requested reimbursement for plumbing repairs and were awarded monies to help pay for repair costs. Please note, there are more homes that received reimbursement than the ones indicated on this map, due to the fact that the Bexar County Strong Program was initiated about 3 weeks after the winter freeze of February 2021.

Requests for a Plumber

Figure. A plotting of Bexar County addresses that received a home visit from a plumber as part of the Bexar County Strong program. A total of 90 homes were serviced by plumbers contracted by Bexar County to perform repairs relating to the winter freeze of February 2021. $65,762.13 in county funds were paid out to the plumbing company for the services provided.
Departmental Resources

Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department Webpage

See all the resources and information we have to offer for the small business community in Bexar County. We have information on the Small, Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (SMWBE) program, the Disparity and Availability Study, the SMWVBO Conference, Business with Bexar County, the Basics of Business, Capacity & Certifications, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program, HUD Program, African-American Business Initiative, and more. Visit the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department website at: www.bexar.org/sbed

SMWBE Events Calendar

Stay up to date with training, networking events, and more with the Bexar County SMWBE Calendar. The calendar is updated with events from Bexar County offices, resource partners, Chambers of Commerce, and more! Discover opportunities to expand your business, make new connections, and identify resources to help you grow. Visit the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department website for the full calendar at: www.bexar.org/calendar.aspx

Webinars

In addition to valuable live stream and Matchmaking sessions, we also have 60 pre-recorded videos on topics like Starting A Business, Doing Business with Public Agencies, Building Business Capacity and Doing Business with General Contractors. Links to the videos can be found on our 2020 Conference Page: www.bexar.org/130/conference

Follow SMWBE on Social Media

@bexarcountysmwbe @SMWBE @SMWBE_Bexar @SMWBE_Bexar Bexar County SMWBE
Bexar County’s Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department would like to take an opportunity to acknowledge its profound appreciation for Nathaniel Kyle Coleman.

Though an unfamiliar face to most, Kyle Coleman served as the County’s Emergency Management Coordinator with nearly 30 years of experience in emergency and disaster management. Kyle who, tragically, passed away on July 14, 2020 during SBED’s distribution efforts. Kyle spearheaded Bexar County’s public health responses and mitigation efforts, including those organized and executed during the pandemic. On August 18, 2020, Commissioner’s Court voted to rename the Fire Marshal’s Office in Kyle Coleman’s honor.

During the distribution campaigns, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department suffered an additional loss with the passing of its longtime employee and fervent volunteer Clarence West, just two days after the death of Kyle Coleman on July 16, 2020.

Despite leaving Bexar County as an employee, Clarence remained an integral piece of the SBED outreach team with an unmatchable enthusiasm and passion for the small business community. Particularly concerned with providing resources for mental health and wellness as well as job opportunities for the formerly incarcerated, Clarence West devoted his energy through his final days to ensuring that those who needed help knew where to turn.

Clarence and Kyle represent only two of the 3,500+ lives lost in Bexar County since the COVID-19 pandemic. As a department and as members of this community, SBED offers its sincerest condolences to all those stories of loved ones lost during this time that are not shared here.
By scanning the QR code to the right, you can view a video recap of our featured Bexar County COVID-19 Small Business Face Mask Distribution on the grounds of the Freeman Coliseum.

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"Linking Your Business to Opportunities for Acceleration"