

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Alfred D. Lott, ICMA-CM, CPM
City Manager

SUBJECT: ***Status Report***

DATE: October 7, 2021

Status Report

1. Information Technology – Network Managed Services

The City's network and server infrastructures are critical services of the Information Technology Department. With the Police Department, call center and dispatch, these systems must be maintained at the highest level possible with minimal outages. In FY21, the Information Technology Department reached out to Clearpath Solutions Group for a network health monitoring and alerting proposal. This proposal provided twenty-four-hour monitoring, alerting, troubleshooting, and firmware upgrades of the network infrastructure. These managed services provided timely alerting to issues and assistance for quick resolution and we would like to continue these services moving forward. The City can utilize GSA contract GS-35F-0119Y for an annual cost of \$59,400.00. There is funding in the FY22 budget for this project.

As provided by Section 62 of the City Charter, this will serve as the required seven-day notice of intent to issue a purchase order to Clearpath Solutions Group for \$59,400.00.

2. Bowie Business COVID Recovery Final Report

Council authorized a \$200,000 grant to fund a Bowie Business COVID Recovery Assistance Program for FY 2021 via R-49-20. The program ended July 31, 2021. The City's Economic Development Committee received a briefing from the program managers at their September 8 meeting. The attached report is the Final Report. To date \$180,000 has been disbursed. The final \$20,000 payment will be disbursed within the next 10 business days.

ADL: lfr
Attachment



October 1, 2021

Mr. Alfred D. Lott
City Manager
City of Bowie
15901 Fred Robinson Way
Bowie MD 20716

RE: Final Report on Bowie Business COVID-19 Recovery Assistance Program:
Grant R-49-20

Dear Mr. Lott,

The City of Bowie awarded grant funding in the Fall of 2020 to the Bowie Business Innovation Center (Bowie BIC) through the \$200,000 Bowie Business COVID-19 Recovery Assistance Program (BBR) grant R-49-20. The City allocated this funding as part of its commitment to supporting Bowie's small businesses, in response to the economic impact these businesses were experiencing because of COVID-19, and at the recommendation of the City of Bowie Economic Development (EDC) Committee. The BBR program was a collaboration between the Bowie BIC and the Greater Bowie Chamber of Commerce (GBCC). On September 8, 2021, I gave a PowerPoint presentation to report on the BBR Program to the City of Bowie Economic Development Committee. A brief final written report on the grant activities and outcomes follows.

Program Summary

The seven-month online Bowie COVID-19 Business Recovery Assistance (BBR) Program kicked off on January 7, 2021 and delivered a total of 73 online technical business assistance activities through July 30, 2021 to help Bowie businesses meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, build resilience and accelerate their post-pandemic economic recovery.

The content of the BBR program sessions was continually updated during the grant period to incorporate information on new funding opportunities for Bowie businesses. Similarly, our technical business assistance programs aligned with fast-moving changes and best practice in the regional business environment.

The overall BBR program also was carefully designed to combine practical online group training and educational activities each month, with one-on-one business counseling. We created several online program tools under the grant to deliver the BBR Program and extend the use of the program information for businesses after the program concluded.

During the BBR program, 138 Bowie businesses located in the City of Bowie registered to participate. The address for each of these businesses was checked against Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) data. An additional 177 businesses outside the City, but with Bowie mailing addresses, also registered for BBR programs. (See summary on page 6.)

We used the BBR online registration process to collect information on the types, sizes and needs of Bowie businesses, as we developed and delivered the BBR program over the grant period. We also used the BBR program to build a current database of BBR registered businesses impacted by COVID-19 and located within the city. We used this database in the promotion of the BBR program. We continue to connect these companies with on-going technical business assistance through Bowie BIC and its partners.

At the conclusion of the BBR program, we provided this database of BBR program registrants to the City's Office of Economic Development. In addition, we provided the Office of Economic Development with two other databases of businesses with Bowie addresses, which we compiled from Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Prince George's County Supplier Development Diversity Division (SD3) certified contractor lists. While these lists provided contact details, including web addresses that we could use for email promotion, we did not have the specific company information collected through an online registration process, because these companies had not registered for BBR programs.

Program Promotion

We utilized a full range of promotional tools for the BBR Program. We designed a program logo to build visibility and brand the BBR program. We launched the BBR program with a direct mail postcard to a commercially available database of Bowie businesses, announcing the BBR program and directing companies to the BBR website for specifics.

We developed the Bowie Business Recovery Program website (www.bowiebusinessrecovery.com) as a central source of information and activity registration. We promoted the fact that all the group Zoom session recordings were archived on this site. An online Business Resource Center targeting Bowie businesses also was available on the Greater Bowie Chamber website.

We compiled three distribution lists of Bowie businesses through the BBR program. We used these contact lists every week during the program. We also worked with numerous promotional partners to help us market the BBR Program. The City of Bowie cross-promoted our activities each month and produced short videos for the City's YouTube channel, which featured upcoming BBR program speakers. Many BBR speakers were Bowie businesses. We also produced and distributed individual e-flyers for each event, which we distributed multiple times in advance of each event through our promotional networks. We featured the BBR activities each week in the Bowie BIC THIS WEEK e-newsletter. We also utilized social media to promote the BBR program.

Bowie Business Success Stories

During the BBR Program we had many opportunities to connect with Bowie companies formally and informally. We also surveyed the Bowie businesses who registered and participated in the BBR program. These companies overwhelmingly agreed that the program added great value—sometimes in unexpected ways. In several cases, they shared their experiences in more detail. Three of the Bowie businesses we assisted share their stories here.

Meredith Kaunitz, ArtPlayLearn, LLC participated in a BBR Open Door One-on-One session with Stephen Auvil at Maryland TEDCO. Based on that meeting she received a \$100,000 TEDCO Rural and Underserved Business Recovery from COVID-19 (RUBRIC) grant in July 2021. She is using the grant to develop an online registration dashboard for the learning management system she has created. Once this phase of development is complete, she plans to apply for a \$250,000 Phase One Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant.

Miriam Collins, CEO of Major Image Barber Shop participated in online BBR marketing sessions to get specific ideas for improving digital marketing and online customer service for her barber shop. She is implementing initial changes now and believes that her new approach to digital marketing will lead to new customers and services.

Annelle Maldonado, RHA Marketing, expanded her client base for real estate industry services, such as notary public, following participation in BBR events. She picked up new clients worth \$8,000 over the last two months and anticipates her business will continue to increase.

Bowie Company Profiles

We used the BBR registration process to develop a profile of the businesses registering for the BBR Program (type of business, revenues, number of employees, etc.), and to gather information of the specific business needs and interests of these companies. We reviewed this information monthly and used it to develop the calendar of sessions presented each month.

Bowie business registration data from the BBR Program created the following profile:

Nearly 70% of registrants described their companies as one of the following types of companies:

Professional Services	51.3%
Care Providers	10.3%
Education	7.7%

Annual revenues for 56.4 % Bowie registrants were less than \$100,000:

Up to \$49,000	41.0%
\$50,000-\$99,999	15.4%
\$100,000-299,000	2.7%
\$300,000-4,999,999	6.4%
\$500,000-99,999	3.8%
1M-5M	2.6%
\$5M+	3.8%

The Bowie workforce participating in the BBR program was concentrated in small companies, characterized by part- time and 1099 work. The breakdown of the workforce was:

	<u>Full Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>1099</u>
1-9 employees	64.1%	28.2%	54.5%
10-24 employees	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%
25-99	1.3%	3.8%	3.0%
100+	5.1%	0.0%	1.3%

We also consciously selected Bowie-based businesses as resources, panelists and presenters during the BBR program.

Technical Business Assistance Sought by Bowie Businesses during the BBR program:

Training (general and digital marketing)	44.5%
Training (website; e-commerce)	21.9%
Guidance (Business Model Pivot)	18.8%
Guidance (Physical Space Modification)	6.3%

BBR programming was structured to reflect these interests.

When we surveyed Bowie registrants at the conclusion of the BBR program, they ranked the guidance that would be most helpful going forward on a scale of 1 to 5, the as follows:

- Guidance on modifying a business model
- Training on marketing
- Training on website development

Continuing Support for Bowie Businesses

Bowie BIC continues to promote its ongoing business assistance programs and counseling resources to the City of Bowie business identified through the BBR program. We will invite these companies to upcoming Bowie BIC activities this Fall, including an upcoming Open House in October, Global Entrepreneurship Week in November and a series of digital marketing workshops.

A summary of the BBR program engagement and registration totals appears on the following page.



BOWIE BUSINESS COVID RECOVERY ASSISTANCE GRANT

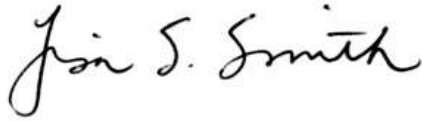
PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT AND EVENT TOTALS (January through July 2021)

	Bowie - Main	Bowie - Other	Prince Georges	Other	Total
January	22	32	120	81	201
February	15	19	84	53	134
March	21	18	59	32	91
April	22	39	54	61	175
May	32	43	70	114	259
June	18	10	31	32	91
July	8	16	84	71	179
Total	138	177	502	444	1130



	BIC Events	GBCC Events	Total # of Events
January	7	5	12
February	5	5	10
March	5	6	11
April	7	5	12
May	6	6	12
June	3	5	8
July	6	2	8
Total	39	34	73

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa S. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a solid black horizontal line.

Lisa S. Smith
Executive Director

CC: John Henry King, Economic Development Director, City of Bowie
Sherman L. Ragland, II, Chair, Bowie BIC Board of Directors