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MARCY.SNITZER@MESACC.EDU**

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# Gilbert approves phase one of business recovery program

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The Gilbert Town Council has approved phase one of the #GilbertTogether Business Recovery Program, giving \$11 million to town businesses.

The three-phase program totaling \$18 million provides relief, recovery and resiliency through grants, business loans and technical assistance, according to an announcement from the Council.

In order to qualify for relief, businesses must have experienced revenue declines of 15% or more due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Businesses can be eligible for a grant up to \$35,000, which is based on their demonstrated positive financial impact to the town of Gilbert.



MIKE SUNNUCKS

The Town of Gilbert is working to help small businesses that have seen a loss of revenue due to Covid-19. The town is using extra funds it has on hand due to the federal CARES Act.

Gilbert, southeast of Phoenix, has about 260,000 residents.

"Gilbert is pleased to offer this grant program to our business community," Gilbert Mayor [Scott Anderson](#) said in a statement. "Through the efforts of elected officials, town staff and the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce, this program will prioritize getting the necessary funding to the businesses who need it most and begin the process of helping our local economy."

At a meeting on Sept. 29, Council also authorized a contract with the Arizona Community Foundation to handle the grant process. It also approved a contract for the \$2 million phase three — business resiliency assistance — where Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Mesa Community College and the Maricopa Corporate College (MCOR) will provide career and technical training opportunities to Covid-19 impacted residents.

Interested businesses can receive up to 200 hours of assistance under the \$150,000 contract.

"CGCC, MCC and MCOR are excited to work collaboratively to provide eligible individuals access to 19 short-term certificates of completion training programs which lead to careers with competitive wages that are in-demand in the East Valley," said [Michael Voss](#), MCC dean of career and technical education, in a statement. "We also look forward to utilizing the expertise of the Maricopa IT Institute (MITI)-East Valley to provide technical assistance to interested Gilbert businesses."

### **CARES Act funding**

Gilbert received \$29.2 million of the \$441 million in CARES Act funds given to the state from the federal government. The funds were allotted to public health and safety expenses, opening up previously devoted funds for the business assistance programs. Council approved the reallocation of these funds in early August which resulted in the creation of the #GilbertTogether Business Recovery Program.

"In partnership with the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce, Gilbert surveyed local businesses to create a program that focuses on their recovery concerns and needs," Gilbert Economic Development Director [Dan Henderson](#) said in a statement. "Our business community provides necessary jobs and positively impacts the quality of life that Gilbert is known for, and we intend for this program to help our businesses in their time of need."

Phase two of the business recovery loan program will be considered by Council in the near future, according to an announcement. The subcommittee has recommended \$5 million be allocated to this program.

Gilbert is not alone in the state in trying to lift struggling businesses, other Arizona cities are creating business recovery programs. Surprise City Council approved \$430,000 for small business owners and residents heavily impacted by Covid-19 — 64% for businesses and 36% for seniors, [The Arizona Republic reported](#). Most of those funds will go to help at least 570 small businesses.

The city of Peoria has a small business relief program and applications closed earlier than anticipated the first week of September "due to overwhelming demand." Through the program, qualifying small businesses can attain up to \$20,000 in expense reimbursement.

The Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry named Gilbert in 2019 the best city in Arizona for business. It's largest employers are Gilbert Unified School District, Banner Health and Go Daddy.

**Jessica Myers**

Editorial intern

*Phoenix Business Journal*

