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News Release

El Paso County announces grant assistance for Chambers of Commerce, Business League and Non-lobbying Organizations

Funds to support long-term, sustainable recovery for local businesses and nonprofits

El Paso County, CO, September 27, 2021 – El Paso County is currently accepting applications for its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help local businesses and nonprofits recover from the economic hardships experienced by COVID-19. El Paso County dedicated ARPA recovery dollars to this initiative to enhance long-term, sustainable recovery in the region. The funding will provide grant assistance to chambers of commerce, business league and non-lobbying organizations supporting local businesses and tourism industries that have experienced financial shortfalls and workforce challenges as a result of the pandemic.

“El Paso County has been walking in step with businesses and nonprofits since the beginning of the pandemic,” said Stan VanderWerf, El Paso County Board Chair. “A healthy and thriving small business and nonprofit sector are vital to the economic recovery of our region. Through the ARPA funding, we are not just offering a lifeline but an investment in their long-term and sustainable economic growth. Businesses, including tourism, drive the economy of our region. We encourage residents and visitors to enjoy everything El Paso County has to offer. With a vibrant economy, we keep the doors open and support our workforce.”

The application process opens today, September 27, 2021, and will remain open through October 15, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

Eligible organizations:

- Chambers of Commerce 501(c)(6)
- Business League Organizations 501(c)(6) focused on regional tourism efforts
- Non-lobbying Organizations 501(c)(4) with an economic development driven mission

Qualifying expenses include:

- Implementation of COVID-19 mitigation and infection prevention measures to enable safe resumption of chamber or business league activities, for example:
 - improvements to ventilation
 - physical barriers or partitions
 - signage to facilitate social distancing
 - provision of masks and personal protective equipment
 - consultation with infection prevention professionals to develop safe reopening plans
- Assistance with business operations expenses to include rent/utilities and employee payroll to the extent of lost revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Increased marketing costs related to economic recovery for the region’s business support services or tourism industries

For more information about ARPA grant assistance and how to apply, please visit

<https://admin.elpasoco.com/arpa/>. Completed applications and required financial documents must be submitted by October 15, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

The COVID-19 recovery dollars to support chambers of commerce, business league and non-lobbying organizations falls in line with other County efforts to support recovery. Since May of 2020, the County has allocated federal and state recovery funds for small businesses and nonprofits in the following ways:

- \$866,660 to help stabilize 128 small businesses in the Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone
- \$1 million to COVID Emergency Funds, a partnership with the Pikes Peak United Way helped nonprofit organizations with COVID-19 expenses
- Approximately \$24 million towards the El Paso County Regional Business Relief Fund that helped small businesses and nonprofits respond to and recover from the economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$1.4 million in the first round of grants for chambers of commerce, business league and non-lobbying organizations to assist them with their response and expenses related to COVID-19

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