

Catastrophic Business Assistance Program



Program Overview

Recognizing the devastating effects of catastrophic incidents, whether caused by natural disasters, human-made events, or technological failures, The Catastrophic Business Assistance Program aims to enhance business resilience and ensure rapid response and recovery providing financial aid up to \$10,000.

Goals include increasing awareness and participation among local businesses, retaining employment by minimizing closures and job losses, and contributing to overall economic stability and growth. The program seeks to establish a comprehensive support network with local business associations, streamline the application process to reduce delays, and collect and analyze data to refine and improve the program.

Economic Impact



The economic impact of the Catastrophic Business Assistance Program was significant, with businesses receiving crucial support. Without this assistance, these businesses would have faced an estimated loss of \$744,577, encompassing damages, wages, and loss of sales due to potential closures. Additionally, 97 employees would have been affected by the shutdown or closure of these businesses. For instance, one restaurant applicant faced a catastrophic event when their industrial fridge malfunctioned, threatening their perishable inventory and operational continuity. Another example involved several businesses whose air conditioning systems failed during peak summer months, affecting customer comfort and staff productivity. These setbacks could have been devastating for small business owners, potentially leading to revenue loss and operational disruptions.

Through the program, these businesses were able to repair or replace essential equipment swiftly. This assistance not only preserved their ability to serve customers but also safeguarded jobs and prevented economic downturns that could ripple through the local economy. By stabilizing these businesses, the program contributed to maintaining a vibrant commercial landscape, ensuring continued tax contributions and community vitality.

Additionally, the program's success stories include businesses that quickly resumed operations after receiving aid, minimizing downtime and revenue loss. These outcomes underscored the program's effectiveness in promoting economic resilience and sustainability in the face of unforeseen challenges, illustrating its tangible benefits to both individual businesses and the broader community.

Innovation



The Catastrophic Business Assistance Program introduces several innovative elements that distinguish it from traditional business support initiatives:

Targeted Catastrophic Event Response: Unlike general business assistance programs, this initiative specifically addresses the needs of businesses impacted by catastrophic incidents, whether natural, human-made, or technological. This targeted approach ensures that resources are directed to businesses facing the most severe disruptions, providing timely and relevant support.

Rapid Financial Relief: The program is designed to provide quick financial aid to affected businesses. This rapid response can be crucial in the immediate aftermath of an event, helping businesses to stabilize and begin recovery efforts without significant delays.

Scalable and Replicable Model: The structure of the program can serve as a model for other regions or communities looking to implement similar initiatives. Its design allows for scalability and replication, making it a blueprint for effective disaster response across different contexts.

Community-Centric Approach: By focusing on local businesses, the program fosters a community-centric approach to economic recovery. It reinforces the idea that local businesses are vital to the community's identity and economic health, encouraging a supportive ecosystem.

Participants/Partners



The Catastrophic Business Assistance Program was supported by key partners, including New Mexico State Senator Carrie Hamblen, who funded the program with \$150,000 in Jr. Bill money. Another essential partner was the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), where all applicants were required to meet with the local office to assess the viability of their businesses and receive recommendations for funding.

The participants in this program were local businesses that had experienced significant losses, severely impacting their operations.

Business:	Reason:	Amount:
Rio Juice Bar	Replacement of Central Cooling System	\$10,000
Living Hope Montessori	Playground Fence Replacement	\$10,000
Karisma Hair and Nail	Theft of Equipment and Product	\$10,000
L' Unico Manufacturing	Machinery Theft and Damage	\$10,000
Splash Detailing	Theft and Building Damage	\$10,000
Rio Finance	Vandalism of A/C Unit	\$10,000
Luchador Food Truck	Equipment Malfunctions	\$5,500
Wok and World	Plumbing and Drainage Problems	\$10,000
Happy Panda Cannabis	Storefront Vandalism	\$1,700
Peddlers Pavilion	Vandalism of A/C Units	\$10,000
The Chosen Ones	Roofing and Flooding Issues	\$10,000
Mr. Phone Doctor	Severe Fire Damage	\$10,000
Le Rendez-vous	Inadequate Central Cooling	\$10,000
Balanced Life Psychotherapy	Theft and Office Damage	\$2,497
Mix Pacific Rim	HVAC Installation Issues	\$10,000
Indulgence Bakery & Café	Severe Leak	\$10,000

Challenges



The Catastrophic Business Assistance Program faced several obstacles that we successfully navigated through:

Limited Funding: Funding for the program is limited, and there is a risk that the available funds may be exhausted quickly, leaving some businesses without the necessary support.

Establishing clear criteria for prioritizing applications based on the severity of impact and ensuring that the most affected businesses receive assistance first is how we overcame this obstacle.

Awareness and Outreach: Businesses may not be aware of the program or may not understand how to apply, leading to low participation rates. Using multiple channels (social media, community events, and business networks) to raise awareness about the program and collaboration with local business associations, and community groups helped spread the word and assisted with outreach efforts.

Limited Time Frame: One major obstacle we faced with this project was the state statute mandating the use of Junior bill funds within a single fiscal year. This requirement presented several challenges. To overcome the challenge we streamlined the application process, and collaborated closely with the SBDC for expedited approvals. A dedicated project team focused on managing the program, while regular progress monitoring helped us identify and address any delays promptly.

Fast Turnaround: A rapid response is crucial, but ensuring a fast turnaround for application processing and fund disbursement can be challenging due to bureaucratic delays. Implementing an expedited review processes between each department that minimizes delays while ensuring due diligence is how we tackled this challenge.