



Department of Economic Development
City of Manassas
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ELEVATE

BUILDING BUSINESS & CAREERS

CITY'S BACK-TO-WORK INITIATIVE WORKS Innovative Use of CARES Act Funds Helps Many Manassas Residents

Manassas, VA – December 18, 2020 – An effort by the City of Manassas to help residents who lost their jobs due to the COVID 19 pandemic has exceeded initial goals and given many participants a start on new careers. Nearly 50 Manassas residents have been receiving guidance, support and training for entry into a variety of fields and many have already found new jobs. The program was launched early in the summer as a way to help unemployed and underemployed residents directly impacted by furloughs and layoffs resulting from COVID19.

Manassas City officials realized very quickly that there was both a need and an opportunity to help residents receive skills training that would assist them in getting good jobs with career path opportunities, despite the disruptions to the local economy that were taking place. Many high wage, in-demand jobs were still available in Manassas but frequently people lacked the training necessary to land them. To address this the Manassas City Council appropriated \$400,000 from its CARES Act funds and contracted with the region's workforce development agency, SkillsSource, to develop desperately needed Job Seeker and Employer Services programs. Training providers and partners throughout the region, especially Northern Virginia Community College, had the ability to deliver training and career development programs rapidly and were eager to help. Services were designed to be comprehensive and included outreach to potential enrollees, free tuition and enrollment, support services like transportation assistance and child care, and ultimately job placement. Because of this initiative participants are now pursuing new careers in a variety of fields and disciplines including; nursing, paralegal, business, management, computer science, information technology and more.

The City's unemployment rate had been at a three decade low of 2% in December, 2019 and spiked to 11.3% in May, 2020. Since the Jobseeker and Employer Services programs began the City's unemployment has dropped down to 5%. "I'm very pleased with how well our partners joined together to brainstorm, develop and implement this program so quickly," said Manassas Assistant Economic Development Director Nicole Smith. "I want to thank our City Council for their leadership and all of our partners who recognized the importance of what we were doing to help our residents during this crisis. The results have been phenomenal." Training is ongoing for many of the participants, and additional job placements are expected in the coming months as Manassas continues working to stabilize its economy – in this case, one resident at a time.

About the City of Manassas Department of Economic Development

The City of Manassas fosters economic development through collaborative partnerships, sustainable fiscal management and supportive City services. The Department of Economic Development (DED) is directly responsible for business attraction, retention, expansion and tourism initiatives in the City. As a resourceful and collaborative organization, we work in partnership with our key stakeholders to ensure that we have what businesses need; including a highly educated and technical workforce with access to major universities and first-class training providers. We take an active leadership role in all that we do, serving as a community builder, collaborator and agent of economic growth. For help with your business needs please visit: <https://choosemanassas.org/> or call 703.257.8882.