



Department of Economic Development
City of Manassas
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MANASSAS HELPING RESIDENTS GET BACK TO WORK

City Takes Innovative Approach to Using CARES Act Funds

Manassas, VA –August 19, 2020 –The City of Manassas is dedicating \$400,000 to expanding its long-standing partnerships with SkillSource and Northern Virginia Community College. The funds will directly help residents who have been furloughed or are unemployed as a result of the pandemic. “We will be using CARES Act funds to help people get the skills and support services they need to land the jobs they want,” said City Manager Pat Pate. “Manassas has a resilient and diversified economy. Almost all of our businesses will weather this storm, but too many of our residents are out of work and we need to address that.”

Using SkillSource as the lead agency, the City is working with NOVA and its own Department of Social Services to provide jobseeker and employer services focused on the needs of individuals. The \$400,000 will go towards occupational training, subsidized work experiences, job fairs and worker training. The money will also fund much needed supportive services like transportation, child care, and providing work-related equipment. The Jobseeker Services programs run by SkillSource and the training provided by NOVA already receive federal or state funding that reduces these costs. The City is allocating additional funding of up to \$5,000 per participant that, in most cases, eliminates the cost altogether. “By removing cost as a barrier and adding supportive services, the City can best help residents get jobs,” said Economic Development Director Patrick Small. “By helping people get jobs we help businesses meet their workforce needs.”

Like most local governments, Manassas initially used CARES Act funds to make small business grants. The City awarded 140 small businesses \$2,500 each to help offset the loss of revenues caused by having to close or curtail operations to meet social distancing guidelines; mostly personal service providers and restaurants. The grant programs were anticipated to have a much broader appeal, and City leaders were surprised by the low number of applicants who actually qualified to receive grants despite a significant advertising campaign. “Many of the businesses that didn’t qualify or didn’t apply simply didn’t have the revenue losses we expected,” said Small. “That doesn’t mean all of our businesses haven’t been hurt in one way or another.”

The City has also dedicated CARES Act funds to George Mason’s Small Business Development Centers to provide counseling and support services as a way to further help businesses. “Manassas relies heavily on partners in education and workforce development to meet the needs of residents and employers,” said Economic Development Assistant Director Nicole Smith.

For more information, visit choosemanassas.org/business-resources-covid19/.

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.