

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Arlington County

Program Title: ReLaunch by BizLaunch

Program Category: 2. Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Mark Schwartz

Title: County Manager

Signature: 
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VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Arlington, Virginia's ReLaunch Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ReLaunch is an innovative program designed by Arlington Economic Development's BizLaunch small business assistance center. The program, created to help small businesses adversely affected by the pandemic-related closures and challenges, is designed to assist small businesses with technical resources or marketing expertise to help them adjust to new ways of doing business and expand their customer base. With the help of technical assistance providers Revby and Amazon Web Service's (AWS) partner Nub8, BizLaunch set out to target small businesses in underserved communities, with fundamentals like online marketing and adaptation of business plans for website sales. All these resources were desperately needed to allow them to truly "relaunch" their business enterprises in this new business environment. The result for businesses? ReLaunch has been described as a "life raft" or a "light at the end of the tunnel" - a strategic grant that gave these small business owners the funding and resources they needed to stay afloat and thrive.

THE CHALLENGE

The COVID-19 pandemic hit small businesses hard across the globe. When the global shutdown began in March 2020, entrepreneurs everywhere struggled to maintain payroll and retain long-term employees, pay sizeable leases and service customers. The supply chain was broken, and what was previously the norm in managing a business was suddenly turned on its axis. Businesses needed to pivot to survive, but many small businesses found they lacked the resources to do so effectively. Local municipalities did

what they could do to quickly issue their own grants or loan initiatives; however, in many cases, it just wasn't enough. In Arlington County, several of these types of emergency grant initiatives were implemented, but the word from small businesses was that while the funding was appreciated, they needed other kinds of help – specifically, help with things like marketing, technology and planning. Businesses simply didn't know how to navigate the new world of online sales and meal delivery services. Arlington's small business team got to work, identifying innovative solutions that not only would solve the unique complexities of being able to manage a tight fiscal budget but also that would allow these small businesses to benefit from new technologies. ReLaunch was designed to solve this complex challenge facing Arlington's small business ecosystem.

THE INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Once the need was realized, the team at BizLaunch, Arlington Economic Development's small business division, set out to identify strategic initiatives and partnerships that would make the most impact. Using CARES funding and existing partnerships with Amazon Web Services, the team sought additional partners who could provide critical resources such as technical expertise, bi-lingual services and more. It all came together to form ReLaunch, an innovative small business initiative designed to target those diverse microenterprises with the tools and resources necessary for them to compete in the evolving ecosystem – all at no cost to the business themselves.

AED BizLaunch staff also reached out to neighboring jurisdictions to uncover best practices for small businesses from around the Northern Virginia region. Many municipalities mentioned the challenges their small business communities were facing in trying to design programs which met the needs of their localities. Staff reached out throughout the DMV (DC, Maryland, and Virginia), to the Main Street program in DC, Montgomery County, as well as Prince George's County's small business efforts.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

ReLaunch began accepting applications from small businesses in April 2021 for business consulting and/or technology resources. Selected contractor [Revby](#) then works with selected businesses on consulting activities that are essential to the successful support, sustainability and growth of the business, including access to capital, business planning and marketing, among others. Similarly, AWS partner Nub8 works with selected businesses on specific technical assistance for things like eCommerce platforms and website development. All services are available in both English and Spanish.

In addition, contractors also work alongside the BizLaunch team for a series of educational events tailored to the needs of small businesses in Arlington. Programming focuses on those recurring issues and needs, including accessing capital, website maintenance and security, marketing & branding, designing a marketing and branding guide and business operations.

FINANCING AND STAFFING

Initial funding was allocated by the federally administered CARES Act; however, as the County saw the positive impact of the ReLaunch program, the funding was expanded by using the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through FY22 and FY23. Current funding allocations range from \$8,000 to \$10,000 per month, which allows for assistance programs for approximately 16 businesses in that timeframe.

Staffing for the program includes 3 – 4 members of the BizLaunch Team as well as 8 Revby Team members and 6 AWS Partner members. The estimated total spend in FY2022 and FY2023 is \$1,000,000 each year.

FY2022 Administrative Budget

Item	Personnel	Non-personnel	Hourly Rate	Totals
Business Counseling	\$240,000 (10-15 staff)	NA	\$195 per hour	\$240,000
Website/e-Commerce Platforms	\$240,000 (6 staff)	NA	\$120 per hour (\$7,000 per eCommerce tool)	\$240,000
Advertising		\$10,000		\$10,000
Internal Staffing	\$6,000 (30 hours per week)	NA	\$50 per hour	\$496,000

Projected FY2023 Administrative Budget

Item	Personnel	Non-personnel	Hourly Rate	Totals

Business Counseling	\$240,000 (10-15 staff)	NA	\$195 per hour	\$240,000
Website/e-Commerce Platforms	\$240,000 (6 staff)	NA	\$120 per hour (\$7,000 per eCommerce tool)	\$240,000
Advertising		\$10,000		\$10,000
Internal Staffing	\$6,000 (30 hours per week)	NA	\$50 per hour	\$496,000

PROGRAM RESULTS

Small businesses throughout Arlington who have experienced ReLaunch, especially those in low-to-moderate income communities, have stated that the program was the defining factor in their business' success during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Finding ReLaunch was like finding a light at the end of the tunnel. ReLaunch was perfect for my small business. I was thankful to be able to gain assistance with the development of my website.”

--Danitza Galindo

Owner, Island Jewelry

Since 2021, the program has received 230 applications for assistance. Of the 230 applications, 33 businesses have received new websites and/or eCommerce websites, bots, cybersecurity and other innovative tech solutions. Additionally, a total of 122 businesses have received strategy, marketing, and technical assistance through the service provider. Interest in ReLaunch remains high, both from businesses interested in consulting services to those looking to increase their technology resources.

Here are several examples of legacy businesses that have benefited from the ReLaunch program:

1. [Los Chamacos](#)
2. [Beauty Fair](#)
3. [Island Jewelry](#)
4. [Lyon Park Barbershop](#)
5. [Rincome Thai](#)

A REPLICABLE MODEL

Arlington Economic Development's BizLaunch Team and AWS have been working to bring ReLaunch to municipalities across the United States. Arlington was not unique in having small businesses struggle during the pandemic; the innovative partnerships and creative ideas that brought ReLaunch are ones that can impact small business communities everywhere. With its effective outreach to hard-to-reach communities, affordable budget, and customizable solutions based on a community's individual needs, ReLaunch's core elements are ones easily implemented anywhere:

- I. Identify private sector resources to aid in providing high-level services
- II. Ensure bilingual services are offered if needed and find providers that can offer resources in multiple languages which reflect the languages spoken in the community

- III. Use one technical assistance provider to identify and assess the needs of eligible businesses
- IV. Simplify the application process so business owners can submit the application using their mobile devices
- V. Identify staff to serve as liaisons with the private sector resources
- VI. Be persistent and stay connected with the technical assistance providers as well as the business owners who are going through the program
- VII. Add a training component and assist the businesses for as long as they need help

The Kauffman Foundation is featuring the ReLaunch program in a report to be published this summer entitled, "COVID-19 and Entrepreneurial Firms: Seeding an Inclusive and Equitable Recovery." The report addresses the pandemic relief efforts and recovery funding in terms of how state and local governments were using it to assist entrepreneurial firms and how the programs worked to embed equity since the pandemic had greater effects on BIPOC and historically disadvantaged locations. The BizLaunch Director will be discussing how municipalities can use ReLaunch to create impact as we help our local businesses come out of the pandemic.

Arlington's small businesses have told us that the ReLaunch program was life-changing and truly made the difference in their ability to weather the pandemic. We would be proud to see the program implemented elsewhere to assist even more small businesses.

OVERVIEW OF RELAUNCH (For Press Release)

Developed by Arlington Economic Development's BizLaunch small business division, ReLaunch is a small business assistance program designed to assist small businesses in evolving their business operations for the present-day ecosystem and offering them consulting services to ensure business success. Through strategic partnerships, selected businesses have the opportunity to take advantage of no-cost consulting

services that can lead to everything from revised business or marketing plans to the creation of websites or e-commerce solutions. Since its inception a year ago, more than 150 Arlington small businesses have benefited from ReLaunch programs and initiatives.