

**County Administrator**

# Memo

**To: County Commissioners**

**From: County Administrator**

**cc:**

**Date: 06-16-2021**

**Re: ARPA Funding Recommendation for Economic Development**

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**Background:**

The County has received one half of our ARPA funding allocation and are free to spend this funding within the rules published by Treasury. While I am still working with Department Heads and other Senior Staff members to make a full recommendation as to you for the best use for the majority of these funds, there is a time sensitive issue with the requested funding from Economic Development that will require a decision.

**Request:**

Economic Development is requesting funding to keep enhanced operations running through the end of the grant period, December of 2026 using ARPA funding. This request meets the requirements for use of the funds as directed by the Treasury documentation. This funding request will allow the office to continue to provide enhanced services to our business community through the end of 2026 to include allowing the office to remain in its current location, additional support staff, and additional public information outreach among other activities and resources. (Please see attached "BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RECOVERY PROPOSAL" from Debbie Bowden. A draft Class Spec for Economic Development Coordinator, which would serve as additional support staff, is also attached for your review.)

**Recommendation:**

It is my recommendation that the Commissioner grant this request for dedicated funding from the ARPA funds while we are developing the rest of the recommended budget to avoid a gap in services to the business community.

## **BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RECOVERY PROPOSAL**

**June 22, 2021 submitted by Debbie Bowden, Director, Economic Development**

*Facilitate efforts for businesses and citizens to be whole and resilient  
as the economy returns to pre-pandemic situation*

### **SUMMARY**

- Support business recovery with established businesses and build a solid foundation of industries that are already an integral part of the Caroline County economy – agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, logistics.
- Support entrepreneurship and small community businesses through expert advice and guidance.
- Build and sustain community partnerships for long-term recovery with stabilization of lifelines for the citizens of Caroline County.

### **BUDGET**

- Funded through American Rescue Plan, July 2021 through December 2026.
- Staff: Economic Development Director, Economic Development Coordinator, Business and Community Recovery Support
- Location: 425 Colonial Drive, Denton – lease through December 2026. Location will house Economic Development Office, Office of Tourism, and offer Conference Room space for use by County Departments
- Budget (through ARP), **July 2021 – December 2026, \$591,215 total (not per year):**
  - Additional salaries and benefits: \$398,077
  - Building lease: \$133,138
  - Facility Improvements: \$10,000
  - Business-focused public information and outreach: \$50,000

### **BUSINESS RECOVERY**

- Goal is to be flexible and agile to help businesses with recovery and to be even better than before the pandemic
- Develop programs that help community businesses and agri-businesses/farmers through connections to experts and supply chain networks.
  - Program ideas (not all inclusive): Small Business Assistance (forgivable loan or grant), residential debt relief, residential housing support, agribusiness support
- Worker linkage – specific program to connect those in need of assistance directly with employers who need workers.
- Conduct comprehensive real estate assessment to understand availability of infrastructure and open space for business expansion and attraction.
- Develop a well-capitalized small business loan program that helps start-ups, entrepreneurs, and established businesses with expansion, innovation, and employee development.
- Look at systemic worker issues, such as childcare and schooling, debt relief, transportation, and develop solutions from a business standpoint.
- Conduct “What-if” scenario planning for public health and nature disasters, loss of major employer, regulatory changes.
- Research sustainable funding opportunities for the Department (i.e. program grants that support the County’s economy).

### **COMMUNITY RECOVERY**

- Goal is to support all citizens in Caroline County with specific lifeline needs (e.g. rent, mortgage assistance, debt relief) to maintain base population and help increase revenue streams.
- Partner with agencies to help individuals.
- Collaborate to provide education on opportunities for jobs and education.
- Be flexible and agile to provide direct relief as necessary.

### **EDUCATE BUSINESSES AND PARTNERS**

- Update and build database of businesses.
- Maintain regular communications with businesses through phone calls, meetings, and social media.
- Develop regular education and networking opportunities with partners (Chamber, SBDC, Score).
- Update and maintain industrial and commercial real estate listings.
- Update and maintain websites and social media pages.

### **PARTNERS**

- County departments, Towns, Tourism, private sector, CCPS, agencies (MRDC, DSS)

## CAROLINE COUNTY CLASS SPECIFICATION

**CLASS TITLE:** Economic Development Coordinator

### **DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW: Office of Economic Development**

The Office of Economic Development creates economic opportunities for the businesses and residents of Caroline County. It pursues economic growth in a strategic manner that preserves the County's rural character, while also improving quality of life, increasing economic opportunity, enhancing workforce development and job growth, and assisting businesses with startup, expansion, or retention.

### **DEFINITION:**

The Economic Development Coordinator provides administrative support, research and analysis, communication, and front-line customer service to economic development services for Caroline County. The Coordinator is the secondary point of contact for businesses that need assistance and for firms considering relocation into the county. The Coordinator supports the Director of Economic Development in its role as a resource for the County Commissioners in formulating and delivering effective economic development strategies.

Work in this class is characterized by a wide variety of tasks requiring a knowledge of business recruitment, retention, and expansion. An employee in this class works with a moderate degree of supervision, exercises a high level of independent judgment, and approaches problem-solving with innovation and rigor. The employee sets daily assignments, deadlines, plans, and performs work autonomously, deferring to the Director when matters are unclear or require executive-level decisions. Work in this class is characterized by a variety of assignments requiring use of communications tools, research resources, and marketing strategies, an understanding of business philosophies and operations, and understanding of the policies, views, and priorities of the County Commissioners.

Most work occurs in an office setting and in business locations where professional behavior, attitude, and attire are required. Some business travel may be required.

The position is non-exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in accordance with Section 13 (a)(1) Part 541, Administrative, Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations. The position is eligible for overtime pay and occasional work outside of the normal 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours is likely.

### **PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:**

Employee performance will be evaluated periodically in accordance with the County's Personnel Rules and Regulations and guided by mutually-agreed upon work goals. The normal probationary period for this position is six (6) months.

**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS:**

This position is considered "support" and is not expected to report to work when County Offices are closed due to emergency operations and/or inclement weather.

**CAREER PATH:**

Employees in this position are eligible to apply for any position they are qualified for in County government.

**EXAMPLES OF WORK:**

- Provide an exceptional level of customer service at all times.
- Serve as a point of contact for businesses; respond to business needs in a timely manner and follow up to ensure any issues have been resolved.
- Assist start-up, established, and growth businesses by connecting them with resources that will increase their likelihood of success and sustainability.
- Coordinate meetings and provide resources for business retention and expansion visits by the economic development office.
- Process applications for the County's Small Business Loan Program; schedule and coordinate committee meetings and bring the committee's recommendations to the Director for presentation to the County Commissioners.
- Process applications for the County's Enterprise Zone Program.
- Provide staff support to the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) including scheduling meeting, taking minutes, and conducting work as necessary.
- Manage an outreach strategy to make business owners aware of locations and benefits of beginning, expanding, or moving business to Caroline County.
- Manage an outreach strategy to make business owners aware of the services they can access through the economic development office and partner organizations.

- Coordinate with the Director on the County's branding and marketing efforts; develop and maintain newsletters, blog, social media.
- Develop and manage website content; including regular updates of property listings and partner incentives.
- Provide information and/or make presentations to supervisors, boards, commissions, civic groups, businesses, individuals, and the general public on economic development issues, programs, services, and plan.
- Represent Caroline County at regional and state economic development meetings.

**Supervision** - May supervise work-study students and interns. Ensures that all work is completed properly and in a timely fashion. Orients, trains, supervises, and develops work-study students and interns.

**REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

- Excellent communication and listening skills, including in-person, telephone, and writing.
- Knowledge of Business English, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Ability to operate various types of office equipment.
- Advanced computer and software knowledge including Microsoft Office, email, social media platforms, and online databases.
- Working knowledge of economic development, business, finance, and marketing principles and practices.
- Ability to work independently and to understand and follow complex directions and policies; to communicate effectively and politely with coworkers and the public; to obtain, record and pass on whatever technical information is necessary.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Excellent time management skills with the ability to effectively prioritize and execute tasks within tight deadlines.
- Ability to work in a multi-task environment.
- Strong attention to detail and organizational skills.

- Ability to conduct effective public presentations.

### **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

1. Must be able to read regular typewriter size print, (vision correction instruments are acceptable).
2. Hear the normally spoken word at fifteen (15) feet, (hearing aids are acceptable).
3. Speak clearly and concisely to communicate with public and staff.
4. Lift, pull, push and carry fifteen (15) pounds.
5. Sit for periods in excess of two (2) hours.
6. Pick up items from the floor; grasp items.
7. Read and understand complex materials.
8. Solve mathematical problems.
9. Write a concise statement of a problem its recommended solution.
10. Travel by vehicle to business locations throughout the county.

### **MINIMUM EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE:**

Associate's degree in business or a business-related field. A minimum of five years general administrative or business experience. Working knowledge of personal computing and software routinely used in an office environment (Microsoft ® Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.).

### **REQUIRED LICENSES AND/OR CERTIFICATES:**

Maryland Class "C" Driver's License

### **CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT:**

**Substance Abuse Test:** Must pass a pre-employment urinalysis test for designated controlled dangerous substances.

**Criminal Background Check:** Must pass a Criminal Background Check as defined in Chapter 1 of the Caroline County Personnel Rules and Regulations.

**Essential Functions:** Must be able to execute the "Essential Functions" listed in this Class Specification at the time of hire and while employed in this class series, unless a request for accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act is received and granted.

**Driving Record:** May have no more than four (4) points on driving record at the time of hire and while employed in this class series.

**Personnel Rules and Regulations:** Must comply with the terms of the Caroline County Personnel Rules and Regulations, including the Substance Abuse Policy, while employed in this class series.

**DESIRABLE ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:**

Experience in economic development.

Experience in marketing or communications.

Experience with social media platforms.

Bachelor's Degree in a related field.