



November 12, 2020

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Garvey,

Eight months after the initial responses to the coronavirus, it has become clear that the pandemic will continue to impact our economy well into 2021. Arlington's small businesses need further support, beyond existing programs such as Temporary Outdoor Seating Areas (TOSAs) and Pick-up/Drop-off Zones (PUDOs), to make it through the winter and the year ahead.

Two-thirds of Arlington's small businesses responding to a recent Arlington Economic Development survey identified access to capital as the most critical resource for success in the next six months. Our member businesses similarly have identified specific capital needs for safe operation. Restaurants that have invested in outdoor seating seek to maintain these spaces, but need to make adaptations for diners' comfort during the winter. The Chamber encourages Arlington County to work with the same flexibility and expeditiousness to solve restaurants' winterizing challenges as it did in the spring to set up the successful TOSAs. Other retail and office businesses have also identified one-time improvements that will enhance employees and customers' safety, but need funding for these investments.

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly recommends that Arlington County provide grants for capital investments to Arlington-based small businesses to help them persevere through the coming months. Such grants would be investments in public health and in the jobs that Arlington's small businesses provide. Many of our neighboring jurisdictions, including the City of Alexandria and District of Columbia are offering grants to small businesses for winterization and similar improvements to promote safe operations during the pandemic, and we are eager to see the same opportunity for Arlington businesses.

We encourage Arlington County to pursue all avenues for assisting businesses and their employees. Along with capital support, important supports for our community continue to include procuring rapid coronavirus tests to identify who is infectious and should self-isolate, and opening space for child care so that parents, especially those with jobs that do not allow teleworking, can be full participants in the workforce. The Chamber looks forward to cooperating with and supporting local government in these efforts, and offers the Chamber as a resource to share insights from our local businesses about what efforts will have the most constructive impact for them.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, Christian Dorsey,
and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Arlington Economic Director
Telly Tucker