



VIRGINIA  
RESTAURANT · LODGING · TRAVEL  
ASSOCIATION

October 4, 2021

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

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association, and the Arlington hotels that are members of our organizations thank the County Board for entertaining our requests for an industry-specific hotel recovery grant program. A grant amount per hotel room, similar to other hotel grant programs in our region, would provide the greatest benefit to help Arlington's hotels retain staff and make the short-term expenditures necessary to remain open through the pandemic.

We encourage Arlington County to set its grant amount at least at \$400 per hotel room, which is the same as Fairfax County offered this summer through its PIVOT program. We further encourage Arlington County to offer the full \$400 per room to all hotels with 10 or more rooms. However, should it be necessary to limit the total amount of the hotel grant package, we prefer to set a maximum grant amount per hotel with a cap limiting relief for the first 250 rooms, as in Loudoun County, rather than a lower per-room amount, so as not to reduce the amount paid to Arlington's smaller hotels.

Hotels have a current need for payments to meet obligations that are critical to maintaining the ongoing operation of their businesses. Low occupancy rates have made it challenging for hotels to keep staff on payroll or to finance equipment to keep their properties up to date to ensure employee and guest health and safety. Similar grant programs in neighboring Northern Virginia localities have required recipients to spend funds on such operating expenses and COVID-19 related costs; Arlington's hotels would have no difficulty in meeting such a requirement.

Grant support will mean that hotels can retain or rehire staff through the uncertain travel period ahead. Many Arlington hotels have staff on furlough about whom they will soon need to make retention decisions. There have also been instances in which hotels told staff they planned to bring them back, only to have to abandon those plans when expected bookings were canceled. Grant funding will provide income that hotels can use to budget for the near future.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates".

Kate Bates  
President & CEO  
Arlington Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Eric Terry".

Eric Terry  
President  
Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and  
Travel Association

CC: Arlington County Board Vice Chair Katie Cristol, and members Christian Dorsey, Libby Garvey, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Deputy County Manager Shannon Flanagan Watson, CFO Maria Meredith and Budget Director Richard Stephenson, Department of Management and Finance; Director Telly Tucker, Deputy Director Cindy Richmond, BizLaunch Director Tara Palacios, and Arlington Convention and Visitors Service Director Emily Cassell, Arlington Economic Development