

## **A Project I have Been Involved With**

Governance work remains important. And many staple governance programs (on public financial management, taxation, etc.) contribute to economic development. In my role as an economic development coordinator, I was a part of a major, but a challenging project with the Director, Board Members, and City Council to establish a Temporary COVID-19 Business Retention Assistance Program for our small businesses that were negatively impacted by the pandemic. My boss and I knew that there were different EDCs in other communities that were creating grants and providing gap measures to help them with the process while the businesses waited to receive their federal funding. We published a lot of information throughout the community in terms of the federal grants that were available but knew that there was obviously still a need locally. We took our plan to the Board as well as City Council who unanimously agreed for us to create some type of temporary business retention assistance program for businesses that continued to stay open. We gathered information on what some other communities were providing to small businesses and contacted our third-party a firm that we use to conduct an economic impact analysis on all our other grants. Contacting our third-party firm to conduct the ROI was very helpful to our project as well as working with our Purchasing, Finance, and Building Permit Departments. At a regular board meeting, we discussed the program suggestions that our third party provided to us on how an ROI could be determined while keeping the process simple for our small businesses. We created information to add to our website including the application with an option for the applicant to complete and submit online. We received 168 applications but based on the ROI the Board approved 118 applicants for grants. I scheduled meeting times with all the applicants, interviewed all the applicants, and

reviewed the requested information, i.e., Certificate of Occupancy, invoices, and receipts. I notarized their applications (three times; once for the applicant, once for the City Manager, and once for the Board President), and processed their payments. The applicants had to submit all their information by September 14, 2020. It was an honor and privilege to announce the establishment of this recovery initiative for our small businesses. The monies available came directly from the city, and the application process was managed locally. The entire process was creative and possessed our concern for our small businesses.