

TIMOTHY BISHOP REMARKS

While I've been working with small businesses for most of the last three decades, being new to this position I'm in the same boat as a lot of our listeners this morning doing a lot of advocacy and looking for ways that our community can leverage ARPA funds to really focus on small business recovery and reshape the playing field and create a more resilient small business ecosystem as we move forward.

Throughout the pandemic small businesses were among the hardest hit and yet they were also incredibly resilient and innovative, as they adapted and pivoted towards recovery. Community leaders have started to realize the value of these small businesses not only as an economic engine that they were before the pandemic but also the transformative power that they can bring to the ongoing recovery and eventual resiliency of our local economies.

While there were a lot of early recovery resources directed at supporting small businesses, many of these resources went instead to larger businesses and corporations that had the resources and the capacity to navigate what were frequently complex and fast-moving application processes that edged many small mom and pop operators out.

The resources available through ARPA provide us the opportunity to genuinely reinvent our traditional vision of economic development with one that places small businesses and their importance to our local economy at the center of those efforts.

Prioritizing that the resources available through ARPA are focused on small businesses, can transform the ongoing recovery and future resiliency of our communities by making sure that resources, tools, and policies are right sized, and accessible for this critical sector of our local economy.