

**Fort Bend County
Small Business Employment Incentive Grant Program
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) (FY2021)**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) states that State, local, and Tribal governments may provide assistance to small businesses to adopt safer operating procedures, weather periods of closure, or mitigate financial hardship resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency¹. This includes costs to retain employees and extend to incentivizing employment.

The program will provide additional funding for Fort Bend County for COVID-19 recovery by way of a newly implemented program “**Get Hired**”. ARPA funding can be utilized for job creation and incentivizing employment. “Get Hired” encourages individuals to apply to small businesses within Fort Bend County – and encourages them to stay hired by offering an incentive after 90 days of employment. This assists small businesses in their operation efforts so they can acquire and retain employees.

The Project Management team has proposed the following draft outline and eligibility plan for the administration and implementation to meet the disbursement deadline of December 31, 2021, for the court’s consideration and review:

Proposal:

1. “Get Hired” Grant Awards will be available for small business applicants that are between \$25,000 - \$5,000,000 in annual revenue (based upon their 2020 Tax Return).
2. The expectation is that the business would remain operational in Fort Bend County through December 31, 2024, and significantly beyond.
3. December 31, 2021 would be the disbursement deadline for the “Get Hired” Grant Program.

	2021 New Hire Wages (Salary/Hourly)	Employee Incentive Amount (per new hire)	Administrative Fee*
Level 1	Up to \$30k (up to \$15 per hour)	\$ 500.00	\$ 50
Level 2	\$30.01K up to \$40k (\$15.01 up to \$20 per hour)	\$ 750.00	\$ 75
Level 3	\$40.01k up to \$50k (\$20.01 up to \$25 per hour)	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 100

*Administrative fee that covers documentation duties - allocated at 10%.

Eligibility and Grant Criteria

The business or organization is considered active when they have met the below criteria:

- Meet the below to be considered eligible:
 - Business formation documents (DBA, LLC, Sole Prop, Corp, etc.)
 - Operational as of December 31, 2020 (defined as incurring revenue & expenses)
 - Non – Profit documentation: 501c3 designation (if applicable)
 - Franchise Tax Status (if applicable)

¹ Interim Rule, American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

- AND meet at least one of the following:
 - Has documented transaction from the sale of a product or professional or personal service.
 - Has acquired debt or equity capital to pursue business operations (e.g. to purchase inventory, etc.)

Grant Criteria:

- Business or Non-Profit is located and generating revenue in Fort Bend County.
- Business/ Organization must have been active (as defined above) as of December 31, 2020.
- Revenue Requirements: \$25,000 - \$5,000,000 (as reported on 2020 Tax Return as gross sales and receipts).
- Business/organization must have at least one (1) employee (or owner/employee) and no more than fifty (50) employees

Employer Required Documentation (if applicable)

- Valid Government ID (Passport, Driver’s License, Identification) – not expired
- Certificate of Good Standing or Franchise Tax Status, DBA or Schedule C
- Formation Documentation
- Tax Return (2020) including but not limited to 1120S,1040 (with Schedule C), Form 990 and 1065
 - The entire tax return must be provided.
 - The tax return must be signed or the applicant must provide Form 8879 (confirmation of e-file signature).
 - If it is an amended tax return, must provide an IRS Tax Return Transcript
- Signed and dated W9 – section 1-3 should be completed.
- New Hire Form – includes DL of employee.

Employee Eligibility Requirements

- Applicant must complete interview process and accept employment offer.
- Employee must work 20+ hours per week (average) over the 90 day period.
- Employee must be in good standing and must complete 90 calendar days in order to be eligible to receive the “Get Hired” incentive.
- Employee total compensation cannot exceed \$25 per hour or \$50,000 annually.
- If the applicant is not hired or does not complete the required days/ hours of continuous employment, no incentive will be paid.

Employer Required Documentation

- Driver’s License (or valid government ID) – not expired
- Bank statements highlighting corresponding payroll transactions
- Check copies: front and back endorsed by the bank
- Payroll ledger (bank statements for support)
- 3 months of paycheck stubs for the specified employee

Other Considerations/Guidelines

1. The expectation is that the business/organization would remain operational in Fort Bend

County through December 31, 2024.

2. Participants receiving grants will work with program administrators to provide necessary documentation of incentives paid out of grant money.
3. Using the guidelines above for the selected tier, participants receiving grants will develop documentation and supporting materials to track and support employee payments (i.e. payroll register or equivalent).
4. Participants receiving grants may develop individual guidelines that best serve their business needs so long as they incorporate the criteria outlined above for each grant tier. To ensure program compliance, the incentive and requirements above must be adhered to, however, businesses may create ADDITIONAL criteria if needed to better meet the needs of their businesses.
5. Participants in this program are advised to seek legal counsel and ensure that they abide by all applicable employment laws and fair employment practices.