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Business Innovation Group, city of Statesboro select local businesses for COVID-19 relief funds

July 15, 2020



Georgia Southern University's Business Innovation Group (BIG) recently helped the city of Statesboro choose 14 local businesses to benefit from the "Love Ur City" campaign, a fundraising initiative to help small businesses that have been impacted financially by COVID-19.

Recipients were selected by BIG through a multi-step process that included an online application and documentation demonstrating the impact of COVID-19 on their business. More than 100 donors helped raise the award funds through the "Love Ur City" campaign that was sponsored by the city of

Statesboro in May to provide relief to businesses and families in Statesboro and Bulloch County that were hurt financially by the pandemic.

"We received applications from several great Statesboro businesses and wish we could have helped them all," said Dominique Halaby, D.P.A., director of BIG. "That said, we are very grateful to those who contributed to this effort and honored to help allocate the available support to local small businesses impacted by the pandemic."

The award amount varied based on need with six businesses receiving a \$1,500 award, two businesses receiving \$2,000 and six businesses receiving \$2,500. The businesses spanned multiple industries from wellness to manufacturing. The average annual revenue for the recipient businesses was \$76,832 with an average number of 3.5 employees.

"We used a holistic approach to determine the final number of recipients and their eventual amount of funding," said Halaby. "Some of the factors considered included demonstrable revenue loss, the number of jobs impacted, stated use of funds related to combating the pandemic and industry type. All applicants were ranked on the reviewed factors and placed in brackets with recommended funding levels."

The "Love Ur City" campaign raised more than \$42,000 during May to benefit two funds: the Statesboro COVID-19 Small Business Relief Fund and the Statesboro COVID-19 Family Relief Fund. The small business fund was managed and administered by BIG, while the family fund applications and grants were managed by local nonprofit United Way of Southeast Georgia.

"I never questioned if our community would come together to support our neighbors in need," said Statesboro Mayor Jonathan McCollar. "To raise \$42,000 in just two weeks speaks volumes to how far our community is willing to go to help each other. I would especially like to thank the Business Innovation Group and United Way of Southeast Georgia for stepping up to help our families and businesses that have been most affected by COVID-19. This project would not have been possible without the help and experience of our gracious partners."