



City Manager's Office
3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Date: September 21, 2020
To: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
From: Jim Thompson, City Manager
Subject: Scottsdale Resilience and Recovery Report

Honorable Mayor and City Council members,

The COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis has disrupted our daily professional and personal lives — here in Scottsdale and across the world. While each day brings new challenges and uncertainties, employees remain steadfast in their roles to provide safe and simply better service. Below are updates and stories on our resilience and recovery accomplishments in Scottsdale.

The sections covered in this report are: [Community Assistance](#), [Business Assistance](#), [Communication and Outreach](#), [Workforce Support](#) and [Safety/Operational Enhancements](#).

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

Residential rental assistance

Vista del Camino launched a rental assistance program for Scottsdale residents who meet income eligibility and have experienced a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Households can receive flat payments of \$1,500 to assist with up to three months of rent for a maximum benefit of \$4,500.

Residential utility assistance

Scottsdale Water, Business Services and Human Services are implementing a program to supplement the current rent and utility assistance program being run by Human Services at Vista Del Camino. The supplemental program will provide up to a \$500 credit for City of Scottsdale residential utility customers and covers water, sewer and solid waste debt. The program is scheduled to go live no later than Oct. 1.

Vista del Camino Career Center expands virtual services

Since the start of the pandemic, staff and volunteers have worked remotely to provide job seeking assistance through email, phone and video conferencing. Thanks to the help of the Scottsdale Public Library, job seekers can now sign-up online for one-on-one appointments for mock interviews, resume assistance and job search techniques.

Senior Services provided home visits, food services and emotional connectivity

Scottsdale's Senior Centers are a critical resource for seniors. Having the doors closed at the centers could have presented serious issues for seniors who rely on the centers for food security, social connection and social services. Senior Center staff quickly worked to provide meals, home visits and social services while maintaining appropriate physical distancing. Going one step further, Senior Center staff created ways for seniors to connect with others through group phone calls, virtual programs and daily wellness videos to keep seniors active.

Operation Fix-It meets rising requests

This city-sponsored volunteer-based program helps those with physical and/or financial challenges — often the elderly — by completing home-improvements and maintenance projects. To date, the program has seen an increase in requests for services overall, and increased requests from the central and northern areas of the community. Using the Scottsdale AZCares funds, the city has already assisted homeowners who were facing fines from HOAs. Homes have been repainted, replacement fencing installed, and funds have been used to eliminate overgrown plants that obstruct rights-of-way and trigger code enforcement notifications.

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Expanded Shop Scottsdale campaign

This city campaign is focusing on community education and awareness by underscoring the importance of keeping dollars in our community by shopping and supporting local business. Small businesses make up over 92 percent of the storefront and restaurant experiences in Scottsdale — for every \$100 someone spends in Scottsdale, \$43 stays in our community. In the coming months, the campaign will take flight around the Airpark, the Preserve and retail shops around the community. There will also be a small business video series spotlighting the trials and tribulations of Scottsdale small business owners. These videos will focus on why these owners chose to open in Scottsdale and what is making them stay.

Scottsdale small business assistance center

The Scottsdale Small Business Assistance Center has received over 300 calls from Scottsdale businesses seeking help and guidance. SBAC is staffed by redeployed Scottsdale employees who stepped up to the challenge to research and learn all things related to government assistance programs for businesses, including the CARES Act, Payment Protection Plans and local grants. Small businesses have used the center as a lifeline while applying for assistance programs. This dedicated team has been on-hand to answer questions, provide information on additional programs businesses may be eligible for and to help navigate the application process.

Arts and culture program grants

Fifteen non-profit organizations have been awarded grants and received funds totaling \$884,633 to support reopening their operations and programming related to arts and culture. Additionally, up to \$175,000 has been approved by the city manager to reimburse two non-profit arts and cultural organizations for expenses incurred in reopening their operations and related programming.

Regulatory license assistance

Business Services has created an application for business customers to apply, based upon eligibility requirements, to receive relief from delinquent license fees. The process is in place and ready to use.

Commercial utility assistance program

This program will provide for up to \$2,000 credit per small business (commercial) customers who can show financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This credit will cover payments owed for Water, Sewer and Solid Waste services. A request for proposal was released by the Procurement Department in early August for administration and facilitation of this program. A vendor was selected and a contract for services is being finalized. The vendor will take 4-6 weeks to get the webpage and program operating.

Water Service Disconnects - Grace Period Extended

Scottsdale Water extended its current practice of not disconnecting customers (business or residential) who fail to pay their bills. This practice, put in place with the Governor's ban on evictions, has been extended until Jan. 1, 2021, matching the time when the federal ban on evictions expires.

Scottsdale Small Business Reimbursement Program

As a component of the Scottsdale AZCares Framework approved by the City Council on July 1, the city developed the Scottsdale Small Business Reimbursement Program to assist small businesses with pandemic related health and safety costs.

The city partnered with the Scottsdale Industrial Development Authority to administer the program that provides up to \$5,000 in reimbursements to Scottsdale businesses. From Aug. 21 through Sept. 8, applicants were directed to ReimburseScottsdale.com which detailed eligibility criteria and provided examples of reimbursable expenses. In the short time the program was open, more than 230 applications were received and more than \$500,000 was reimbursed to Scottsdale small businesses.

In addition to the City of Scottsdale's program, below are updates on additional external grant programs:

- **Maricopa County:** Maricopa County is offering grants up to \$25,000 to small businesses and nonprofits experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Relief grants are intended to support the continued viability of small businesses and nonprofits across the Valley. For-profit businesses and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations located in Maricopa County, but not within the cities of Mesa or Phoenix, are eligible. Phase one of the program closed on July 31, 2020. Phase two provides a broader approach to supporting qualified small businesses and nonprofits by expanding eligibility criteria and began on Aug. 17 and will run through Oct. 2, 2020. Applications are currently being accepted at Arizona Community Foundation.
- **Local First Arizona Small Business Rent and Mortgage Relief Grant Program:** The Governor's Office is partnering with Local First Arizona Foundation to help small businesses specifically mandated to pause operations. Businesses include gyms, fitness centers and studios, bars, water parks and others named in Executive Order: 2020-43. The maximum award will be \$25,000 to cover up to two months of rent and mortgage payments. Grants will be prioritized for businesses with fewer than 50 current employees that are most in need of the funding to meet their rent or mortgage obligations, and do not have access to other financial support.

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Making public meetings available during the COVID-19 pandemic

IT Web and Design staff worked with City Manager's office staff, Scottsdale Video Network and other Information Technology leaders to explore alternatives to holding in-person meetings. Once platforms were determined, many hours were spent testing and tweaking technology prior to any public Council meetings. Once hybrid meetings were necessary — where the Council members and some staff would be in the same room and the public and presenters would be online — staff reconfigured the Kiva and cabling to promote social distancing among the Council members and staff.

Board and Commission and other public meetings also resumed remotely. IT Web and Design staff as well as City Manager's Office staff worked to train board liaisons and staff on how to manage and schedule remote meetings. To ensure this new technology does not present additional challenges for staff, an IT staff member is present on all remote meetings (City Council and Board and Commission meetings) to provide live technical support (this staff person sometimes manages multiple meetings simultaneously). As of September 2020, 63 public meetings and 25 test meetings have been held remotely or in a hybrid manner.

Making information available to the public on digital communication platforms

Getting information and resources out to the public and communicating the quickly changing facts is crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have worked to increase our licenses with our email

communication vendor from 300,000 emails per month to be able to send up to one million emails per month to the public.

Office of Communication and IT staff partnered to make information for the public easy to find via alert boxes on city websites that lead to COVID-19 resources and information sections with content organized for specific audiences. The sections are updated often and are redesigned as more content is available to share, including resources specific to citizens who want to help, citizens who are seeking help and resources for Scottsdale businesses.

IT Web and Design staff monitored content updates throughout city websites and email newsletters to identify content that should also be updated in the main COVID-19 pandemic resources sections. Staff created special templates for Parks and Community Services pages to be able to post closures and re-opening information that could be found from all pages. Staff also provided quicker-than-usual turnaround and off-hours content updates throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure content was available and current.

“Healthy Scottsdale” Campaign

Office of Communication continues to work with Web and Design staff and others around the city to share the key message that, “A Healthy Scottsdale Starts with You.” More than 100 Scottsdale businesses, non-profit organizations and homeowner associations have submitted online requests to receive Healthy Scottsdale campaign posters to encourage safe practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Office of Communication staff made several in-person visits to distribute materials and share information about the program. The Scottsdale Police Department lent a hand to the effort as well by distributing 100 poster packs to businesses within each of the city’s patrol districts. In total, through online requests and in-person drop offs, almost 400 poster packs have been handed out citywide. Approximately 1,400 reusable cotton masks featuring the “Healthy Scottsdale” message have been distributed for the public via the Scottsdale Trolley, Mustang and Civic Center libraries, the Preserve, Scottsdale Fire and Tourism and Event staff. The campaign and its easy to follow safety tips rolled into neighborhoods citywide last month thanks to advertising on our residential solid waste vehicles. Similar advertising is slated to run through January 2021 at Scottsdale Quarter.

Increasing the pace of city communications

The need for consistent and frequent information from the city was immediately evident as the pandemic grew. The Office of Communication quickly adjusted internal and external communication cadence to include a daily brief for employees, and bi-weekly email newsletters to about 10,000 subscribers. In addition to this, dozens of new video interviews have been produced featuring interviews with community leaders and city employees to help create a more complete understanding of the impact of COVID-19 in Scottsdale.

WORKFORCE SUPPORT

Staff redeployments

Community Services has provided redeployment opportunities for full- and part-time staff to help where there are vacancies and shortfalls of staff for programs and facilities. Since March, 90 people have been redeployed to fill positions in Solid Waste, Transportation, the Warehouse, Purchasing, Economic Development and other service areas throughout the city. Redeployment opportunities continue to be available.

Administrative Regulation created to support the workforce

AR301 (Remote Working) was approved to support employees who are working remotely. Tips for a successful work environment and guidance to maintain productivity are included in this new policy aimed at allowing flexibility during situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Benefits updates

The city has taken steps to support a healthy workforce through many benefit enhancements and programs for employees. This includes covering the full cost of COVID-19 testing for all employees, virtual counseling services, vacation carryover program modification that allows more carry-over hours over the next two years and additional paid leave for COVID-19 positive employees that have exhausted their leave benefits.

Enabling a mobile workforce

To comply with the governor's orders, IT rapidly increased the capacity for employees to work remotely. Using loaner laptops and tablets as well as repurposed departmental equipment, employees were able to perform their jobs as though they were sitting in their offices. Within a week's time, IT expanded the backend solutions needed to support 1,000 additional remote workers. This was in addition to more than 1,000 mobile users that previously had this functionality. This included the city's Call Center and 911 services. IT also created video training on the tools and extended help desk hours to educate and solve problems as they arose. A mobile phone application was also deployed that allowed staff to answer their office phone calls from a cell phone. The application masked their cell phone numbers with their office phone number, so citizens had the familiar city experience.

Promoting collaboration

Realizing that working from home can be isolating and that collaboration during this time was going to be critical, IT launched widespread adoption of the Microsoft Teams application for use by all staff in the city. Using the city's existing Teams licensing, IT created and provided mass training in the use of Microsoft Teams, SharePoint and similar tools to enable teams to stay connected and move the city forward as a substantial amount of work transitioned from onsite to remote. Teams has been used for standard work, one-on-one communication with screen sharing, large group meetings, interview panels as well as some meetings with the public.

CityPoint intranet

As more employees worked remotely it was crucial to have internal news and information available to staff who had internet access but were not connected to the city's network. IT Web and Design Services staff accelerated a project to build the city intranet using SharePoint and developed news feeds and special sections providing COVID-19 information, teleworking resources and security information needed for all employees. Content was either migrated or developed quickly for sections as needed. In addition, Web and Design staff worked with the Office of Communications staff to determine their needs and provided training for content updates and distribution.

SAFETY / OPERATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

City of Scottsdale COVID-19 Reopening Plan

Scottsdale's buildings and facilities are reopening to the public in phases as Scottsdale scales its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The [current reopening plan](#) is available and on the city's website on the COVID-19 update page. The city has modified spaces, offerings and policies to comply with relevant guidelines.

Building upgrades

The city's Capital Project Management team has been working with the Facilities Department to prioritize the initial approved city facilities that are to be fitted with a combination of UV, Ionization and HVAC equipment to improve indoor air quality. Staff have been working with a design team and contractors to order equipment for installation at WestWorld and will next work on installations at the Public Safety Headquarters and the Scottsdale Center for Performing Arts.

In tandem with the air-purification projects noted above, the Facilities Department is working with approved contractors to begin replacements or retrofits of main entry/exit and high traffic doors to hands-free operation as well as upgrading all restrooms at these facilities to hands-free operation for all

dispensers, plumbing fixtures etc. WestWorld, Scottsdale Center for Performing Arts and Public Safety Headquarters are the first buildings targeted for these upgrades.

City masks distributed

The city has purchased and distributed over 8,000 masks in three different styles to all city employees. Each employee received three masks, so they can rotate and wash them regularly.

Parks and Recreation provided masks to the youth attending the Summer Camps at city centers and school sites. These masks were in two sizes for the smaller children and teens. They came in vibrant fun colors for the participants including neon yellow, purple, red, green, blue and black and all had the "Summer Program" logo.

Scottsdale Water created hand sanitizer for the city

When the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact the availability of hand sanitizer, Scottsdale water lab created a recipe for hand sanitizer and was able to create 100 liters of sanitizer for city facilities to use. This 'homemade' sanitizer recipe was shared with other Valley cities that were also experiencing shortages.

Scottsdale Water working to keep Arizona water and wastewater employees safe

Scottsdale Water is an active member of Arizona Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network, a statewide mutual assistance program among water and wastewater utilities. This volunteer-based network allows utilities to help one another in times of emergency. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this network looked to the local water and wastewater agencies for assistance to distribute cloth masks for water and wastewater employees. The cities of Scottsdale, Flagstaff and Tucson volunteered and were selected to assist in distributing the masks for the state of Arizona. Scottsdale Water received 40,000 cloth masks from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to distribute throughout Central Arizona. Customer Service staff in Scottsdale Water took on the additional roles to coordinate and distribute cloth masks that were requested by local water and wastewater municipalities. To date, Scottsdale Water staff has distributed nearly 30,000 masks to essential water and wastewater employees.

Airport grant received

The city received a \$157,000 federal CARES Act grant for the airport that will be used to reimburse for debt service that was created building the new business center and corporate hangar complex.

Signature:

Jim Thompson,
City Manager