

**From:** [Michelle Mikitish](#)  
**To:** [Luzerne County Council Meeting Public Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Mary Malone](#); [Lindsay](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]: Luzerne County ARPA Funding: Assistance for Small Business  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 14, 2023 1:01:50 PM  
**Attachments:** [image008.emz](#)  
[image009.emz](#)  
[image010.emz](#)  
[image011.png](#)  
[2023.02.14 Letter to Luz Co Council - ARP funding.pdf](#)

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Public Comment – Work Session

Michelle Mikitish, City of Pittston; Mary Malone, City of Hazleton; Lindsay Boylan, City of Wilkes-Barre

Dear Council Chair Radle, Vice-Chair Lombardo, and Members of Luzerne County Council:

On behalf of our membership, Greater Hazleton, Pittston, and Wyoming Valley Chambers of Commerce, submit this letter regarding the ARPA funding, specifically any remaining or unallocated funds.

There are 6,790 small businesses that operate in and employ over 50,000 residents in Luzerne County. According to data from the PA Center for Workforce Information & Analysis, these businesses, who employ less than 50 employees each, represent 93% of the employers in Luzerne County.

Many of our small businesses lost significant revenue due to forced closures and reduced operations in the early timeframe of the pandemic. This loss of revenue was followed by significant financial investments as businesses prepared to re-open by implementing new processes to keep both employees and customers safe. Now, these same small businesses are faced with significant increases in the cost of goods, fuel, and utilities, labor shortages and increased wages, and an unpredictable supply chain.

These small businesses could directly benefit from access to the remaining ARPA funding. We encourage the Council to consider supporting small businesses in the allocation of the remaining funding available through the ARPA program.

*The Luzerne County Small Business Sustainability Program* grant application submitted by Greater Pittston Chamber proposed the creation of two defined mini-grant pools to assist small businesses with less than 50 employees. Assistance that could lead to more jobs, higher wages and long-term successes for our Luzerne County Small Business Community.

The existing partnership between our three chambers combined with our established relationships with many other economic development, small business development and main street organizations gives us the unique ability to extend outreach to all the small businesses of Luzerne County to maximize the impact of the ARPA funding in sustaining a strong and healthy small business ecosystem. The *Small Business Sustainability Program* is further enhanced by the support of our board members; business

leaders within the county working on the frontline.

We appreciate Council's passionate dedication to making sure funds from the American Rescue Plan Act impact as many individuals in Luzerne County as possible and we applaud your commitment to getting it right. Our Chambers work every day to advocate for the success of Luzerne County and echo and support your vision.

We also advocate for the needs of our business communities and today, we must advocate for our small businesses. The small businesses of Luzerne County are the biggest advocates of our communities, they employ over 25% of our workforce, they support countless local organizations, and their work fuels the economic engine of our county.

We respectfully ask Luzerne County Council to consider allocating a portion of American Rescue Plan Funding that has not yet been designated to support the small businesses that are the backbone of our local economies and crucial to the success of our communities.

Sincerely,

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February 14, 2023

Luzerne County Council  
200 N. River Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711



Re: Luzerne County ARPA Funding: Assistance for Small Business

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Sincerely,



Mary R. Melone, President



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