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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Thursday, June 2, 2022
9:05 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER

RESOLUTION: 220424

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1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good
3 morning, everyone. I am Mark Squilla
4 and today we have on June 2nd the
5 Committee on Commerce and Economic
6 Development.

7 Due to -- before we begin the
8 public hearing, I will make the
9 following announcement: Due to the
10 continuing threat of public health and
11 COVID-19, City Council Committees are
12 currently meeting remotely. We are
13 using Microsoft Teams to make these
14 remote hearings.

15 Instructions for how the
16 public may view and offer public
17 testimony at public hearings of Council
18 Committees are included in the public
19 hearing notices that are published in
20 the Daily News, the Inquirer and the
21 Legal Intelligencer to the hearing and
22 can also be found on PHLCouncil.com. I
23 now note that the hour has come.

24 Mr. McMonagle, would you
25 please call the roll of people in

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1 attendance. And the Members taking
2 attendance, please signify by saying
3 aye or present as we move forward.

4 Mr. McMonagle.

5 THE CLERK: Councilwoman
6 Brooks.

7 (No response.)

8 THE CLERK: Councilman Domb.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good
10 morning, Mr. Chair, colleagues,
11 attendees. And happy birthday, Sean.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you.
13 Councilmember Gauthier.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
15 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues.
16 Present.

17 THE CLERK: Councilwoman
18 Gilmore Richardson.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
20 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
21 Good morning, colleagues. And happy
22 birthday, McMonagle.

23 THE CLERK: Thank you,
24 Richardson.

25 Councilman Green.

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1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK: Councilman

3 Johnson.

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank

6 you, Mr. McMonagle.

7 THE CLERK: Councilman --

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: A quorum

9 of the Committee is present and the

10 hearing is now called to order. This

11 is the public hearing on the Committee

12 of Commerce and Economic Development

13 regarding Resolution No. 220424.

14 Mr. McMonagle, will you please

15 read the title of the resolution.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution No.

17 220424, a resolution authorizing the

18 Committee on Commerce and Economic

19 Development to hold hearings to examine

20 the economic impact of the COVID-19

21 pandemic on professional services,

22 specifically barbershops and beauty

23 salons, to assess the impact of the

24 SABER grants administered by the

25 Commerce Department, and to explore the

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1 creation of a new specialized grant
2 program for barbershops and beauty
3 salons.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
5 you. Thank you, Mr. McMonagle.

6 Before we begin hearing
7 testimony from the witnesses we have
8 for today, everyone who has been
9 invited to the meeting to testify
10 should be aware that this is a public
11 hearing being recorded. Because the
12 hearing is public, participants and
13 viewers have no reasonable expectation
14 of privacy. By continuing to be in the
15 meeting, you are consenting to be
16 recorded.

17 Additionally, prior to
18 recognizing Members for the questions
19 or comments they have for witnesses, I
20 will note for the record at this time
21 that we will use the chat feature
22 available in Microsoft Teams to allow
23 Members to signify that they wish to be
24 recognized in order to comply with the
25 Sunshine Act, and the chat feature must

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1 only be used for this purpose.

2 Before we call the panel,
3 Mr. McMonagle, do we have any comments
4 from any of the Board members?

5 Councilmember Parker, did you
6 want to make a statement before we
7 start?

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes.

9 Thank you so very much, Chairman
10 Squilla.

11 Let me just start by saying
12 traditionally and you mentioned this,
13 Chairman Squilla, prior to us starting,
14 that barbershops and beauty salons,
15 particularly Black- and Brown-owned
16 barbershops and beauty salons, they
17 have served as more than just cosmetic
18 institutions. These types of
19 businesses serve as a springboard into
20 entrepreneurial careers, a cultural
21 meeting place across communities, a
22 safe space for men, women and children
23 and a place where people get access to
24 vital health, educational and social
25 resources.

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1 At the onset of the COVID-19
2 pandemic, barbershops and beauty salons
3 suffered tremendous economic setbacks,
4 and businesses were forced to close.
5 These types of professional services,
6 they were severely limited due to the
7 structure of their service delivery in
8 open spaces with little to no ability
9 to isolate.

10 According to the Bureau of
11 Labor Statistics between February and
12 April of 2020, the number of jobs at
13 employment-based salons plunged a
14 whopping 84 percent. Even as the
15 industry began to gradually recover in
16 April of 2020, the Professional Beauty
17 Association reported that only 93,000
18 people -- this is nationwide -- were on
19 payroll at employment-based salons and
20 that was down from 569,000 in February
21 of 2020, and you'll remember that was
22 right before the pandemic. Their
23 report also noted that this was the
24 fewest number of salon jobs in well
25 over five decades.

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1 In the City of Philadelphia,
2 according to the Pennsylvania
3 Professional Image Alliance, who we
4 will hear from today and I want to
5 thank them for bringing the issues and
6 concerns to my attention, more than 90
7 percent of the stylists and the
8 barbers, they experienced a significant
9 loss in business revenue, clientele and
10 brick-and-mortar locations. And
11 listen, many more were forced to use
12 already-limited resources to install
13 safety mechanisms in their shops.

14 Some took more extreme
15 measures for the record, and they had
16 to pivot from operating from their
17 homes or they had to convert to a
18 mobile service to visit their clients
19 at home, and some had no choice but to
20 file for unemployment while they waited
21 for an opportunity to apply for local,
22 state and federal grant assistance. To
23 its credit -- we want to give credit
24 when we get it right -- the
25 Philadelphia Commerce Department, they

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1 observed the economic impact of the
2 pandemic on this particular industry,
3 and then they acted.

4 The Commerce Department in
5 partnership with the Office of
6 Community Empowerment and Opportunity,
7 CEO, I think Mitch is here, I think
8 Karen, VestedIn, Entrepreneur Works and
9 PPIA established the Salon and
10 Barbershop Emergency Relief program, we
11 refer to it as SABER, which provided
12 159 hair care businesses with small
13 grants.

14 Now, this program was designed
15 to provide financial relief to
16 businesses in the hair care industry
17 that were among the most adversely
18 impacted by the City's sort of
19 pandemic-related restrictions.
20 However, and this is important, due to
21 the limited resources in the SABER
22 program, access was limited to just 17
23 zip codes in the City, excluding an
24 extensive number of business owners who
25 were equally at risk for losing their

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1 businesses, their storefronts, their
2 clientele and to be quite frank,
3 lifelong investments.

4 Barbers and stylists, they
5 continue to navigate the pandemic.
6 They're hoping for an economic
7 recovery, but they're still facing
8 challenges such as inflation and supply
9 chain issues. Think about those who
10 are saying, can I get gas or do I go
11 get a cut. Many have not reached
12 prepandemic revenue levels, and they
13 continue to face challenges tackling
14 professional and personal debt that
15 they accumulated during the pandemic
16 while trying to rebuild their
17 clientele, rebranding their business
18 services and fighting to support their
19 families.

20 Barbershops and beauty salons,
21 they are instrumental in communities,
22 they help stabilize neighborhood
23 business corridors in their roles and
24 destination services, bringing people
25 to corridors who then patronize other

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1 nearby businesses, including apparel
2 shops and restaurants which ultimately
3 have a positive impact on the overall
4 stability of our neighborhood-based
5 commercial corridors.

6 So as we move forward from the
7 COVID-19 pandemic, although cases are
8 going up, so I won't say forward, I'll
9 say through this economic fallout, the
10 City must explore, Mr. Chairman, new
11 ways to support these institutions.
12 Special thank you to Chairman Squilla,
13 to your team and who's clerking for us
14 today, Sean McMonagle. I look forward,
15 Mr. Chairman, to hearing from these
16 business owners firsthand what it's
17 like to walk in their shoes and why the
18 City must make investing in them a
19 priority.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
22 you, Council Leader. Very well said.

23 Mr. McMonagle, can you please
24 call the panel to testify this morning
25 on Resolution No. 220424.

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1 THE CLERK: Yes. Can we
2 please have Karen Fegely followed by
3 Mitch Little, Mitchell.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
5 you. Welcome, Karen and Mitch. Karen,
6 I guess if you're available. Just
7 state your name for the record. I do
8 see you on screen --

9 MS. FEGELY: Yup. Good
10 morning --

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Also,
12 before you start, Karen, I just want to
13 recognize Councilmember Jones is
14 present for the Committee hearing. He
15 had that nice sharp hat on I guess to
16 show that he really didn't need to go
17 to a salon or anything this week or so.
18 But thank you for that --

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
20 so much, Mr. Chair.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Karen,
22 just state your name again for the
23 record and proceed with --

24 COUNCILMAN JONES:
25 Mr. Chairman, for the record I got it

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1 from South Philly.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah.

3 Good, good.

4 Karen, state your name and
5 proceed with your testimony.

6 MS. FEGELY: Sure. My name's
7 Karen Fegely, Deputy Commerce Director.
8 I'm here to testify today on Resolution
9 No. 220424. I feel like I'm going to
10 repeat some of what Councilwoman Parker
11 already said, and I think so, and Mitch
12 and I are also talking from the same
13 points so I'll try to bridge a little
14 bit. As a result of mandated business
15 closures and reopening restrictions,
16 the personal services industry was
17 certainly one of the hardest hit by the
18 pandemic, and it also well-recognized
19 that these businesses, especially
20 barbershops and hair salons are corner
21 stones of our community and have a
22 broader impact beyond just hair care.

23 As Council knows, and with
24 your support, Commerce has been
25 involved in multiple business relief

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1 programs since March 2020, including a
2 citywide small business relief program,
3 a citywide restaurant and gym relief
4 program, a statewide small business
5 relief grant, a statewide hospitality
6 industry relief program. And in 2021,
7 Commerce partnered with the Office of
8 Community Empowerment, VestedIn and
9 Entrepreneur Works to develop the
10 SABER.

11 The concept in funding for
12 SABER came from our colleagues at CEO.
13 The recipients, as was stated, comprise
14 of 159 business owners. They were
15 preselected from a pool of businesses
16 that had already applied for the City
17 and state programs, and that's because
18 we didn't want small businesses to have
19 to fill out yet another application
20 without confidence that they would be
21 awarded.

22 The eligible businesses also
23 had to be located in one of 17 priority
24 zip codes with the highest poverty
25 rates. Entrepreneur Works, VestedIn

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1 and the PA Professional Image Alliance
2 were critical in guiding the businesses
3 to access these relief dollars. Of the
4 159 awardees, 99 percent were minority-
5 owned and 60 percent were women-owned
6 businesses. SABER was certainly very
7 necessary and well-received. However,
8 there were challenges as to the
9 complexity of the industry since often
10 each chair in a barbershop is its own
11 business, for example.

12 Another challenge with these
13 programs is fear of fraud and
14 technology challenges that make it
15 difficult for businesses to get to the
16 finish line. We were literally hand-
17 delivering a number of checks to
18 business owners. I want to thank
19 Councilmember Parker for her continued
20 advocacy on this issue. We are happy
21 to partner with Council on all
22 strategies that help small businesses
23 reopen, and recover and grow in
24 Philadelphia.

25 I do want to comment that any

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1 new relief fund needs to be carefully
2 designed to consider, one,
3 administrative staffing both for
4 processing the applications and proper
5 recordkeeping. Outreach and technical
6 assistance is needed, especially
7 funding support for what we've been
8 referring to as our trusted partners,
9 organizations that are on the ground
10 spreading the word and providing
11 application assistance. And third,
12 setting the criteria for the
13 eligibility and the preference to
14 ensure that the funds really reach the
15 targeted audiences, and we don't want
16 to waste the time of our vital small
17 business community by not being really
18 clear about that upfront. So thank you
19 for the opportunity to testify. I'm
20 happy to answer any questions.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Karen,
22 thank you so much for your testimony.
23 And one just quick question before we
24 go to Mitch. During the process of the
25 pandemic and when we were reaching out

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1 to a lot of these small businesses, did
2 we see that any of these small
3 businesses were able to take advantage
4 of that or is there something that we
5 could have done differently to maybe
6 have attracted the interest or at least
7 share knowledge of how to apply to
8 these programs that we had during the
9 pandemic?

10 MS. FEGELY: Yeah. I mean, we
11 certainly attempted this with everyone.
12 We learned as we went about, some sort
13 of tips and tricks about doing it. But
14 you have to build in that time and sort
15 of paid assistance for outreach. You
16 need folks who are going to really go
17 out. We knew before the pandemic that
18 small businesses don't always have all
19 of their paperwork together and so
20 forth, so this was certainly
21 eye-opening for many of them. And
22 there are a lot of services that exist
23 for that, but it just needs to be
24 really on the ground and it just needs
25 to be from trusted sources, from folks

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1 who are sort of their colleagues or
2 peers in the industry or part of some,
3 you know, thing that they identify
4 with, whether it's a neighborhood
5 organization or an ethnic or a culture
6 organization or a trade organization.

7 And we need time. I mean, we
8 did this right from the beginning, like
9 it should never be first come, first
10 serve, right. You need time for people
11 to get in so you make sure the folks
12 who need it the most have the time to
13 apply.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah,
15 because what happens is people who are
16 better prepared are usually first in
17 line to fill out these applications and
18 the ones who aren't are at the end.
19 And so, it seems like it's
20 disappropriated. But also, we can do a
21 better job as Council with outreach,
22 especially with some of our commercial
23 corridors and how we get that
24 information to them.

25 But it's also we have a lot of

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1 these small businesses that aren't a
2 part of a commercial corridor. So
3 maybe somehow as we work with Commerce
4 to build some type of link or form with
5 these businesses that are not part of a
6 commercial corridor that actually send
7 that information out to them and get to
8 them, how do we then reach them. I
9 don't know that answer, but maybe
10 that's something we can work on
11 throughout the summer to be able to
12 better adapt to that.

13 MS. FEGELY: Absolutely.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
15 so much.

16 If we'll next go to Mitch to
17 testify. Mitch, state your name for
18 the record and then proceed.

19 MR. LITTLE: Mitch Little,
20 Executive Director, Office of Community
21 Empowerment and Opportunity. Good
22 morning, Councilperson Squilla and
23 other members of the Committee. It's a
24 pleasure to be here today like Karen
25 said. I feel like I'm a part of the

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1 choir today because we're all singing
2 on key here about this sort of very
3 important issue. So some of my
4 comments today might compliment some of
5 which you've already heard today.

6 Just as a reminder, CEO is a
7 the City's community action agency and
8 our mission is to provide leadership on
9 economic issues just as advancing
10 racial equity and inclusive growth so
11 that all Philadelphians might share in
12 the City's prosperous future. I thank
13 Councilmember Parker for introducing
14 Resolution No. 220424 and inviting me
15 here to testify today.

16 This effort was in keeping
17 with CEO's mission as we envision and
18 funded the Salon And Barbershop
19 Emergency Relief program, known as
20 SABER, to support equitable COVID-19
21 recovery. We were certainly pleased to
22 partner with our colleagues at the
23 Department of Commerce and their
24 tremendous help all along the way along
25 with VestedIn and Entrepreneur Works.

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1 We could not have done it without them.

2 This partnership distributed
3 grants of \$5,000 each to 159
4 businesses, and the more recent second
5 round of funding offered those same
6 businesses an additionally \$1200,
7 potentially providing a total of \$6200
8 to grantees. I applaud the Commerce
9 Department of how swiftly they acted in
10 those early days to get financial
11 assistance out to shuttered businesses
12 on our neighborhood commercial
13 corridors. And so, CEO wanted to
14 contribute to those efforts. And so,
15 we allocated a million of our federal
16 Community Services Block -- Community
17 Services Block Grant dollars, our CARES
18 Act funding to create the SABER
19 program.

20 Surely you all are now
21 familiar with the reports on how small
22 businesses and that majority White
23 neighborhoods were receiving Paycheck
24 Protection Program loans much more
25 quickly than small businesses, than

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1 majority Black and Latino
2 neighborhoods. Businesses owned by
3 people of color were also more likely
4 to be denied PPP loans.

5 Research before the pandemic
6 had already showed that businesses,
7 owners of color are routinely treated
8 worse than White business owners when
9 applying for bank loans, leading to a
10 disparity of business lending and a
11 lack of adequate capital investment in
12 businesses of color. Given this
13 inequitable treatment and access, we
14 wanted to support those business owners
15 who were already at a disadvantage and
16 needed investment to weather this
17 unprecedented crisis. As you know,
18 salons and barbershops have a higher
19 percentage of employees of color than
20 most other businesses. In all
21 businesses in the U.S., only about 12
22 percent of employees are Black, about
23 18 percent are Latino and only about 6
24 percent are Asian.

25 As you can see from the chart

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1 in my testimony, a whopping 39.4
2 percent of barbershop employees are
3 Latino and salons and barbershops have
4 a greater share of Black and Asian
5 employees as compared to all other
6 businesses. The loss of these
7 businesses would have hit employees of
8 color higher, so we hoped our modest
9 investment would help retain these jobs
10 somewhat.

11 Salons and barbershops are
12 also an important opportunity for
13 entrepreneurs of color due to lower
14 capital costs of opening compared to
15 other small businesses, so CEO wanted
16 to help these entrepreneurs who were at
17 risk of losing their businesses that
18 many of them essentially built from the
19 ground up, knowing that business owners
20 of color are always sort of woefully
21 represented in other industries.
22 (Inaudible) see themselves represented
23 on commercial corridors and in
24 neighborhoods in positions of
25 entrepreneurship so that it can provide

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1 a future for themselves as business
2 owners.

3 We just thought this was a
4 critical sort of opportunity. We knew
5 that this industry had been resistant
6 to sort of big-box stores and online
7 companies, and as stated earlier,
8 really vibrant and essential components
9 to neighborhoods, watering (inaudible)
10 for communities, exchange of
11 information through trusted sources and
12 often times rights of passages.

13 So there's a Councilmember
14 today who might mention that we often
15 see each other in the barbershop. And
16 he sees me with my son there, and my
17 son gets his haircut by the same guy
18 who cut my hair since I was 14 years
19 old, and it's important to have such a
20 space. So culturally as a lifelong
21 Philadelphian, CEO is proud to create
22 this program and we hope that it leads
23 to more partnerships with the Commerce
24 Department to advance equitable
25 economic recovery across Philadelphia,

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1 so thank you for allowing me to provide
2 testimony today.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
4 you, Mitch. Great testimony and thank
5 you for your work here. Before we go
6 into questions, I see that we're having
7 some problems with a couple of people
8 trying to log in. Council Support has
9 asked the participants to try to log in
10 again, if they could do that.
11 Hopefully, we can get them in. If not,
12 let us know and Council Support will
13 work at least on, I think, Darryl and
14 Tania -- Tanya who weren't able to log
15 in.

16 Councilmember Parker.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
18 you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one,
19 I want to say a special thank you to
20 both Karen and Mitch for being here
21 today. Each of your respective
22 departments have been heavily vested in
23 this issue. I appreciate your
24 documenting the ingenuity and the speed
25 through which the City responded.

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1 Everything's not right and everything's
2 not perfect, but when we do get
3 something right, when we do it right
4 and we act together to get it done,
5 that needs to be a part of the public
6 record as well.

7 Karen, I want to start with
8 you. Three very important things you
9 said from my perspective in your
10 testimony. Any new relief funds -- and
11 let me be clear for the record. That
12 was the purpose of my wanting to make
13 sure that we put on the record the
14 issues that were brought to us, that we
15 use this budget process as an advocacy
16 effort to secure additional funding to
17 support this industry.

18 And with that in mind, Karen,
19 you said the important thing. You
20 said, listen, any new relief funds need
21 to be carefully designed and you talked
22 about three important things. The
23 first thing you said was administrative
24 staffing. Second was for processing
25 recordkeeping -- well, that was in one.

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1 Second was outreach with technical
2 assistants and trusted partners and
3 setting the criteria for eligibility
4 and preference. Because listen -- and,
5 Chairman Squilla, I want to note this
6 for the record. Every time I hear
7 people talk about just the
8 neighborhoods where we have the deepest
9 level of poverty, in my mind here we go
10 pitting the have-nots versus those who
11 have just a little bit, right. And I
12 don't want the City of Philadelphia to
13 have to sort of penalize a small
14 business that is thriving in another
15 community and we've pit them against
16 one another. That's what I'm hoping,
17 Mr. Chairman, we can address this time
18 because so many people in neighborhoods
19 get left out of the mix.

20 Karen, quantify for me to the
21 best of your ability -- I'm not
22 expecting anything exact -- when you
23 talk about administrative staffing
24 because it has to be somebody's job at
25 Commerce to manage this, what dollar

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1 amount are you talking about? So as
2 we're making our ask, we've kept in
3 mind very specifically, even if it's
4 just a ballpark.

5 And, Mitch, I'm going to ask
6 you the same question as well. When
7 you think about what CEO did as it
8 relates to staffing administratively,
9 what would you need to carry out
10 something?

11 MS. FEGELY: Oh, you are
12 putting me on the spot. So typically
13 I'm going to say Commerce always need
14 staff, right. We always need staff
15 support. Thank you, Council, please do
16 what you can. But the funding
17 probably, we end up using like a third
18 party to administer it. In some cases
19 it was PIDC. In the case of SABER, we
20 used VestedIn because for the City to
21 cut those checks, to cut 159 and
22 actually we're talking about more than
23 that, that would be a big challenge.
24 And those organizations tend to get
25 some percentage of what the total

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1 dollar amount is or based on how many
2 grants they're going to process. So,
3 you know, I don't know. I want to say
4 \$50,000 to \$100,000.

5 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: 50 to
6 100, okay.

7 And, Mitch, when you think
8 about what your department did, same
9 ballpark for you in that it has to be
10 somebody's job to manage it and this is
11 how many people or how much you think
12 it would cost?

13 MR. LITTLE: Yes, I think
14 that's a pretty accurate assumption. I
15 think that part of Karen's comments was
16 focusing on the administrative piece,
17 but I also think the other piece in
18 which you've talked about, that
19 outreach piece is extremely important,
20 and that comes at a cost to get people
21 out on those streets in vehicles, to
22 knock on doors, to expand on
23 established relationships or just seem
24 trusted and knowledgeable of the issue
25 that folks can respond to the

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1 opportunity I think is important to
2 lift up as well.

3 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: My final
4 question, Mr. Chairman, and I just want
5 Karen and Mitch to get this on the
6 record for me.

7 That's an important part,
8 Mitch. So tell me whether or not my
9 frame of thinking right now is along
10 the lines of what both you and Karen
11 just described. Would that be finding
12 an entity within the barbershop, beauty
13 salon industry that would then be
14 refunded and responsible for taking the
15 message about the availability of this
16 new product or the extension of the
17 product that we have, they would be
18 responsible for getting it to people
19 across the City, on corridors across
20 the City?

21 And, Councilmember Squilla,
22 you said something that also I -- a lot
23 of people thought about, that some of
24 the salons are not on major commercial
25 corridors. Some of them are by

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1 themselves on the corner and then it's
2 just residential properties surrounding
3 them, so we got to make sure we don't
4 leave them out. Is that what we were
5 thinking? We were thinking about the
6 barbershop and beauty salon trade
7 organizations that we would fund them
8 and then they would do the work of
9 getting to them; is that what we're
10 thinking?

11 MS. FEGELY: Yeah, I think
12 that's -- yeah, I think that's one way
13 to do it for sure. You got to make
14 sure that they're not only going to
15 work with their members. There's
16 always details to be worked out, but
17 that's all surmountable, yeah. What
18 we've done before we had a number of
19 trusted -- I mean, we can figure it
20 out. One way we did it before we had a
21 number of organizations and anybody
22 that helped somebody with an
23 application was then eligible and got
24 reimbursed on the backend. But the
25 other way to do it, it would be nice to

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1 maybe fund somebody on the front end so
2 that they are out there really doing
3 the outreach. I'm sure the
4 organizations prefer the front end, but
5 either way I think it's really
6 important to recognize the cost and the
7 work that goes into that.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
9 Mitch, do you affirm that?

10 MR. LITTLE: Yes, I do. And I
11 think that to both of your points I
12 think as these businesses are coming
13 together and problem-solving to their
14 needs and creating coalitions on their
15 own, and I think for us, we knew that
16 it wasn't enough dollars there to
17 really meet the need as quite often as
18 our work. But grateful to continue to
19 have the conversations, show proof of
20 concept and a light at the end of the
21 tunnel for some of these businesses as
22 we think about how we can provide
23 additional support.

24 Not only the additional
25 dollars, but as we're mentioning in

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1 testimony here today, just better
2 business practices, accounting
3 opportunities to stay in their business
4 and be able to apply and not have to
5 shutter their shop. And so, if we're
6 thinking about this comprehensively,
7 this is just really a great day and we
8 appreciate you having the conversation,
9 both you and the Chairperson.

10 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So,
11 Chairman Squilla, I just want to close
12 with this. Again, thank you, Mitch,
13 thank you, Karen, for expressing your
14 sentiments here today.

15 The last part of Karen's
16 testimony and, Karen, this hit me, when
17 you talked about setting that criteria
18 for eligibility and preference to
19 ensure that the funds reach the target
20 audience to support and not waste the
21 time of our vital small business
22 community.

23 For the benefit of the viewing
24 public, before we started officially
25 this morning, I was sharing with

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1 Chairman Squilla that I had noticed
2 that more of the salons that were
3 chain-based, like franchise out, and I
4 mentioned the one that I knew of, and
5 I'm sort of not picking on this one but
6 I want you to have a framework of what
7 I'm describing, the Hair Cuttery was
8 like a chain that you could see in
9 strip malls across the City, it has
10 very much a corporate structure, but
11 it's very different in terms of its
12 structure when you compare it to
13 individually-owned barbershops and
14 beauty salons.

15 So, Chairman Squilla, when you
16 acknowledged very early on that it
17 seemed like the bigger guys were much
18 more prepared, had their taxes in
19 order, all of their records, the
20 banking in order, they were prepped to
21 apply to the PPP loans and everything
22 else that was coming out because their
23 administrative capacity and technical
24 capacity was at a different level, and
25 that is what we really need to take

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1 into consideration as we move forward.

2 So again, thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman. And I'm looking to
4 forward to hearing the next panel.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
6 you. For the record also, I want to
7 make note that Councilmember Brooks is
8 present and Councilmember Jones has a
9 comment or question.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: So thank
11 you, Mr. Chairman.

12 And I want to thank this first
13 panel for taking a deeper dive into
14 commercial corridors, recognizing the
15 importance of barbershops and beauty
16 salons. It's where it goes down. It
17 is our physical DM, if you would. And
18 you can gain information. You can
19 distribute information from those
20 outlets. So they are far more than
21 just small businesses and places where
22 people get haircuts and hairdos. They
23 are places almost like a Town Square.

24 Mitch and I share a location.
25 Raheem is a lifelong friend of Mitch's

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1 and good friend of mine. I watched his
2 maturation as he cut in his momma's
3 basement, grew to buy a location to
4 employ people, to be the barometer, if
5 you would, for the Wynnefield
6 community.

7 If you look at places in my
8 district like ESPM Zone on Haverford
9 Avenue, they take it a step further.
10 They are interveners, intercessors into
11 gun violence. Meaning, they may cut a
12 kid's hair from one corner and then cut
13 another young man or woman's hair
14 several blocks away and find out based
15 on barbershop conversation that there's
16 a problem and what they try to do is
17 become intermediaries, credible
18 messengers, if you would, to stop some
19 of that violence. So I emphasize the
20 fact that they're not just barbers and
21 salon owners. They are credible
22 messengers within our community.

23 Finally, that was taken by
24 ESPM to an actual program where they're
25 really taking whole groups and working

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1 with young people to try to get them to
2 think through, problem-solve and not
3 have conflict resolution end in gun
4 violence. So they are a very important
5 aspect during the pandemic.

6 As said by Members of this
7 body, many of them didn't have their
8 technical aspect together. They were
9 still keeping records in the shoebox
10 and some of them needed to come out of
11 that condition and come into the real
12 world of QuickBooks or whatever. Tell
13 me how we're going to provide technical
14 assistance to them to be able to make
15 sure that they navigate the paperwork
16 to be successful?

17 MS. FEGELY: Is that a
18 question?

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Was that
20 a comment?

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: That is a
22 question mark at the end of the
23 comment.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
25 Who wants to answer that?

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1 MS. FEGELY: I mean, you're
2 absolutely right. And Commerce, like I
3 said, we've been working on these
4 issues prepandemic. And I don't want
5 to say any good thing about the
6 pandemic, but it has made businesses
7 realize that this is really important.
8 So we have a number of service
9 providers that can address these kinds
10 of things. We just expanded our Biz
11 Coach program, which is a one-on-one
12 service now instead of one firm. We
13 have JT Goldstein. We're going to add
14 another firm to serve more businesses.
15 We also have some of our TA providers
16 who have accountants and bookkeepers on
17 board to help one-on-one with that. So
18 we really encourage people to call us
19 at Commerce, our Office of Business
20 Services, 215-683-2100. And we can
21 hook you up with some of these
22 organizations that provide this kind of
23 assistance.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Also, I
25 would be remiss if I didn't recognize

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1 member Derek Green's barber Ali up on
2 North Broad Street. But again, these
3 are places that if you go, salons as
4 well, that you hear unfiltered truth as
5 they see it, and you have an
6 opportunity while you're getting
7 service in that barbershop to present
8 your case and a wide range of public
9 policies are discussed there, so them
10 being a part of the fabric of a
11 commercial corridor, them surviving the
12 pandemic.

13 The one thing -- one of the
14 things, not the only thing, one of the
15 things that let me know that the world
16 was not is topsy-turvy was when they
17 were able to start cutting again. So
18 keeping them a part of our communities
19 is an essential aspect of keeping the
20 fiber of our community together.

21 So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
23 you, Councilmember. And also, for the
24 record I want to note that
25 Councilmember Oh is present at the

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1 hearing today.

2 Next, we'll move on to our
3 next panel to testify. We have -- I'll
4 just read the next three names. And if
5 they're available, we'll start from the
6 first one. Ann Turner, Darryl Thomas
7 and Tealia Torres. Ann, we'll start
8 with you and then we'll go down. State
9 your name for the record and then we
10 can proceed with your testimony.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Excuse
12 me, Mr. Chair.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes.
14 Councilmember Jones -- Johnson.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
16 want to notify for the record that I'm
17 present.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
19 you, Mr. Johnson -- Councilmember
20 Johnson is also present for the hearing
21 today.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
23 you, sir.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
25 you. Ann, just state your name for the

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1 record and proceed with your testimony.
2 Thank you.

3 MS. TURNER: Yes. Good
4 morning. My name is Ann Turner. I'm
5 the Owner of Hair Du Jour Salon. I'm
6 also the President of the PA
7 Professional Image Alliance, which is
8 the beauty and barber alliance. Some
9 of our team leads have been trying to
10 get on since they were actually on at
11 8:45. So some of them were on early
12 and I don't believe they can get on
13 now. So these are some of the things
14 that has happened to us as small
15 businesses. As an example, we've been
16 pushed out like this today. Some of
17 our team leads were going to testify.
18 I'm not sure if they're able to do so.

19 But I wanted to say some of
20 the things, and I appreciate Ms. Karen
21 from the Commerce Department, we've
22 worked with VestedIn as well as
23 Entrepreneur Works. There have been
24 major challenges with the SABER grant
25 in the very beginning, and I say that

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1 to say we had to contact the City
2 because some of the businesses wasn't
3 getting access to the information when
4 it was being released. So when it did
5 come to a fruition, a large number of
6 beauty and barbershops in certain
7 districts that I'm familiar with
8 received the grant.

9 And then most recent they
10 received an email and unfortunately, a
11 lot of people didn't want to do the
12 Docusign and they had to call us as the
13 business owners which my -- I'm the
14 President, they was like, Ann, should I
15 sign it, we think this is spam. And
16 so, I think the technical support is
17 really crucial when it's comes to our
18 team administering information, but
19 also we partnered up with so many
20 different entities to make sure that
21 our businesses get the resources like
22 the Comcast RISE, like the Google
23 cameras from the Urban League, working
24 directly with the Chamber of Commerce.

25 The problem that we're having

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1 as small businesses is that we do get
2 pushed out, we do get minimized as we
3 if we don't pay for QuickBooks or
4 things of that nature. The accountants
5 have to take accountability that they
6 don't help our small businesses to
7 scale up and get the resources and
8 information applicable to our
9 microbusinesses.

10 The issues that I was having
11 as a small business owner is that my
12 clients don't feel safe coming back in
13 because of the variants. So we did the
14 COVID initiative and we were able to
15 get direct funding from the City with
16 Philly Counts as well as the University
17 of Penn to keep our businesses safe as
18 well as our clients safe. So we always
19 took the precautionary measures as
20 small business owners because
21 sanitation is first in our industry
22 when it comes to being licensed by the
23 state, so we had to make that clear in
24 the very beginning that we were first
25 to close and last to reopen, and they

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1 deemed us as being unsafe. So from the
2 very beginning, our businesses took the
3 leadership role and created the process
4 to keep our businesses and customers
5 safe and they were able to assist major
6 hospitals with that vital information.

7 We've learned that we are te
8 small fish in the pond so we do get
9 disrespected as small businesses. But
10 we're more than just business owners
11 like Councilwoman Cherelle and
12 Councilman Jones alluded to. We deal
13 with the gun violence. We deal with
14 the anxiety. We deal with the voting
15 issues, and we are very transparent to
16 small businesses that don't want to
17 vote as well as customers that don't
18 want to vote and things of that nature.

19 My concern is moving
20 forward when they said that PA
21 Professional Image Alliance partnered
22 up with the SABER grant, that was one
23 individual who received the contract
24 and not our organization. So
25 everything that we do within our

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1 alliance is not just Ann Turner gets
2 highlighted and get a personal
3 paycheck. It really is for the
4 businesses.

5 So just most recent we
6 received funding and all of our
7 businesses received resources because
8 they've done personal training to help
9 better their community and their family
10 as well as their friends, and we still
11 have other initiatives waiting to be
12 compensated for to continue to do the
13 things that we've been fighting to do
14 and that is to keep our businesses open
15 and thriving.

16 So when it comes to the state
17 funding, we're working on a business
18 accelerator and we're waiting for our
19 resources. We're also waiting for
20 other additional funding. And these
21 are things that they said, we promise
22 you we're going to get those things and
23 we're going to expedite it. However,
24 those things haven't come to fruition.
25 We're always very hopeful.

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1 And our team leads have been
2 on calls from the very beginning of the
3 pandemic for hours. I know a lot of
4 Councilmanic Districts as well as the
5 Senators and I know that because of
6 this pandemic. I've had relationships,
7 but never had to ask for the
8 government's support to keep our
9 businesses thriving. So during this
10 hearing, if you can hear anything, you
11 would hear that my children matter to
12 me. The next generation of wealth
13 matters to our Black and Brown
14 businesses.

15 Tealia is one of the leaders
16 who is Hispanic and a part of our
17 organization so we have a very diverse
18 group, and she was able to relate to
19 some of the Hispanic businesses, the
20 importance of being not just a part of
21 our Alliance, but understanding don't
22 be afraid to grow your business and
23 give information. So we have been
24 trusted messengers throughout this
25 pandemic. We've always been a person

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1 that people go to get their car fixed,
2 the funeral homes and things of that
3 nature. So if we need to do things, we
4 have been able to do it on our own, and
5 within our consortium we've been strong
6 enough to maintain our level of sanity
7 during this crisis. But if we can get
8 the support in reference to this new
9 bill, that would be very helpful to
10 strengthen not just our businesses, but
11 also the training that we're doing
12 moving forward. Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
14 so much for your testimony. Much
15 appreciated. And it really goes to
16 show the more effort we need to do here
17 in government to make sure we do that
18 outreach necessary to make sure
19 everyone is included.

20 Next we have -- I don't know
21 if Darryl Thomas is available. I know
22 he was one of the ones trying to
23 connect.

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: I think

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1 they're working on that, Mr. Chairman,
2 trying to see if they can get him back
3 on.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Is
5 Tealia -- I know Ms. Torres, she was
6 also one of the ones who was trying to
7 connect.

8 All right. We can go to Zina
9 Patrick. Zina, just state your name
10 for the record and then you can
11 proceed. Thank you.

12 MS. JOHNSON PATRICK: Good
13 morning. Zina Johnson Patrick. I'm an
14 Owner and Operator, Hair 4 U Hair
15 Salon. I've been in business for 28
16 years. I too did not receive the EIDL
17 loan. Funding ran out before I was
18 able to receive it. My business has
19 not been the same since COVID hit. I'm
20 on South Street. Everything has gone
21 up. My rent, bills, utilities. My
22 income has decreased.

23 Clients are more reluctant to
24 come to the shop because of the
25 obstruction in the City because of the

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1 parking. The parking is horrible
2 because we have these eateries out
3 front. My view is obstructed from the
4 street. You cannot see my salon from
5 the street view, but that doesn't make
6 a difference. I still have to pay and
7 do what I have to do to stay afloat.
8 And because of the fact that my zip
9 code is 19146, I was not able to
10 receive the SABER grant. Because of
11 the fact that I'm punished because I'm
12 on a commercial corridor. However, I
13 will still have the same bills, if not
14 more, than the people in the other
15 corridors. And this has really
16 impacted Hair 4 U and my business.

17 Like I said, I want to make it
18 to 30 years. I'm pushing hard to stay
19 at 28. So we need your help, guys. We
20 definitely need your help. I am Vice-
21 president of PPIA along with Ms. Ann.
22 We came together because of Darryl
23 Thomas at the time of the pandemic to
24 help businesses to do what they had to
25 do to stay afloat.

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1 And for the businesses that
2 did not have their stuff, we were their
3 technical support. We volunteered for
4 that. We all came together and put
5 together their paperwork to help them
6 get their -- contacted the state for
7 their taxes, the City for their taxes.
8 Helped them get everything in order so
9 they could qualify, but at the same
10 time they were still left out in the
11 cold.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
13 you, Zina, for your testimony.

14 MS. JOHNSON PATRICK: Thank
15 you.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And
17 again, it just shows the more effort we
18 need to do as we move forward.

19 Next on our list to testify is
20 Jamal Davis from Max Level. Jamal,
21 just state your name for the record and
22 you can proceed with your testimony.

23 MR. DAVIS: Yes. Good
24 morning, everyone. Jamal Davis. I am
25 a Third Generation Barber and Community

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1 Leader in the City of Philadelphia.
2 I'm also a mentor, barber educator and
3 also a hair industry culture
4 cultivator. I just wanted to speak to
5 the fact that I was actually one of the
6 businesses that did receive the SABER
7 grant which was helpful to my business.
8 It wasn't enough to help the entire
9 business in terms of some of the other
10 people that are in my barbershop. So I
11 host barbers, multiple barbers. I also
12 have a nail tech and also hairstylists
13 in the barbershop.

14 COVID has dramatically
15 impacted my business and the businesses
16 in our communities. I'm also part of
17 PPIA and I represent the barbershops.
18 One of the things that we wanted to
19 push forward was for all of our small
20 businesses to be able to benefit from
21 these resources that are coming out.
22 So just like Zina said, she wasn't able
23 to get the SABER grant.

24 For us, any of us that
25 supported, you know, that is something

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1 that is our mission, to try to make
2 sure that everyone that is in our small
3 businesses and in our communities are
4 supported because everyone counts. Our
5 businesses come together as a
6 community. We support communities, so
7 when one section of our community is
8 suffering, it impacts us all.

9 I'm familiar also with Brother
10 Curtis Jones with the barbershop that
11 he was speaking of, ESPM Hair Zone.
12 ESPM Hair Zone is on the other side of
13 Philadelphia around the Nassau Street
14 side, and Maximum Level, my barbershop,
15 is on the other section which is the
16 Haverford Street side. We had a major
17 conflict between young men in our
18 communities. So Brother Mike from ESPM
19 Hair Zone and myself, we got together
20 and we spoke to some of the youth that
21 were a part of this major friction that
22 they had between the two communities
23 and we were able to get some balance
24 based on us having a position of
25 leadership in our communities, based on

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1 us having relationships with our youth.
2 These are things that are behind the
3 scenes that are helping our communities
4 in so many different ways.

5 So when you think of a
6 barbershop and when you think of a
7 beauty salon, it's a lot that people in
8 other positions just don't understand.
9 So that's why it's important for the
10 people in the actual industry to be
11 those people that are the leaders when
12 it comes to making sure other
13 barbershops and salons or other small
14 businesses in our urban community are
15 supported.

16 They would know about Zina's
17 shop which is on a major commercial
18 corridor, but it's still a small
19 business in itself. They would know
20 about the ESPM Hair Zones or the Max
21 Level barbershop that has boot camps
22 for young men so that they can earn
23 their barber license or earn skills so
24 that they can maintain, feed their
25 families and stay out of the streets

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1 themselves.

2 So in particular, I have one
3 student that was actually working in my
4 shop since he was in middle school
5 sweeping hair, and this young man
6 December 29th got his barber license
7 and on April 14 got his own barbershop,
8 and that just happened this year. This
9 young man got his own barbershop, and
10 it's a beautiful thing. These are the
11 things that we do behind the scenes.
12 They don't get heard. They don't get
13 seen, but these are the things that
14 resonate. We start the culture. It
15 starts to influence other young men
16 that you can thrive, you can still be
17 who you are. You can still earn and do
18 something positive in your community.

19 These are the people that we
20 need to have at the forefront to have
21 resources for other businesses that
22 most people may not see or even hear
23 from that are doing the work behind the
24 scenes in urban communities. So I just
25 wanted to speak my piece on that. I

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1 think it makes sense to have the people
2 that have been doing the work with no
3 compensation, that have been doing the
4 work genuinely, that have been doing
5 the work above board, I think it only
6 makes sense to have those people as the
7 leaders when it comes to resources for
8 the other businesses that are in our
9 communities. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
11 you, Jamal. Thank you for your
12 testimony, and it's great to hear too
13 that even people who did receive the
14 grant are still willing and out there
15 advocating for others because that's
16 important for all of us.

17 Now, I see that Darryl -- I
18 know we had skipped Darryl and he is
19 now online. Darryl, you just want to
20 state your name for the record and
21 begin with your testimony.

22 MR. THOMAS: Yes, sir. Darryl
23 Thomas, Owner of Philly Cuts
24 Barbershop, 4409 Chestnut Street.
25 Testimony goes as such: We opened up,

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1 we broke ground -- well, opened the
2 business up in 1997, September 1st. We
3 through the help of Councilwoman Janie
4 Blackwell, we achieved our home. We
5 own our bricks at 4409. That was 2007.
6 We're very and forever grateful and
7 appreciative of her and State
8 Representative Jim Roebuck.

9 So it brings me up-to-date
10 when you do business, when you do
11 business and in the City of
12 Philadelphia, you can do business
13 anywhere, you have to integrate
14 yourself at the political level and
15 that's what we did, and we got
16 tremendous assistance because we had
17 great leadership. We have great
18 leadership now here in City Council.

19 I've been assisted by many who
20 are on this call right now. When the
21 pandemic hit, we reached out to
22 individuals in the political realm and
23 were assisted greatly because it was a
24 dire need. This was probably the first
25 time that this has been done from the

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1 Black barbershop and beauty salon
2 perspective.

3 We've created an organization
4 with great leadership and tremendous
5 intentions and we're in dire need of
6 your assistance. We've partnered with
7 some agencies -- and we'll let them
8 remain nameless -- that had good
9 intentions from the start, but the
10 follow-through wasn't quite what we
11 expected it to be. When you ride
12 through the neighborhoods, you will see
13 that many of the barbershops and beauty
14 salons have closed. You may know many
15 have closed. In the community, we know
16 particulars who didn't make it through
17 the pandemic.

18 At this current time, numbers
19 are down. We at Philly Cuts we house
20 about 18 chairs, and our numbers are
21 down tremendously. So the assistance
22 that has been afforded to us by the
23 SABER grant and other grants has been
24 tremendous. But I'm very of
25 optimistic. I'm optimistic because we

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1 have this call today. I'm optimistic
2 with the intentions of what I've seen
3 individuals on this panel, their works
4 and their results and I know what
5 they're capable of and I know where
6 their interests lie. So without being
7 longer-winded than I normally am, I'll
8 relax and I'm very appreciative and
9 very optimistic. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
11 so much for your testimony. It's very
12 helpful insight. Much appreciated.

13 MR. THOMAS: Yes, sir.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Next, we
15 have --

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of
17 information --

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
19 Councilmember Jo -- yes. Go ahead,
20 Councilmember Jones.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Darryl's
22 testimony was very humble and
23 understated. If you go to his shop, it
24 is a Town Square where everything can
25 be discussed. A lot of bad things can

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1 be prevented and a lot of good
2 information distributed. Without that
3 shop at that location, West
4 Philadelphia in particular even though
5 his clientele is citywide, statewide,
6 tristate, the things that were averted
7 because of credible messengers in his
8 shop is priceless, so I'm preaching to
9 the choir on this Committee.

10 If you ever get an opportunity
11 to go through there and hear the level
12 of discussion, the level of
13 intervention, but I must warn you it's
14 uncut. And if they think you're doing
15 a good job, they'll tell you. If they
16 believe you're not doing a good job,
17 they will tell you. It's a true
18 reflection of how people feel. I'll
19 never forget -- not that this is a
20 political thing, during the Democratic,
21 Presidential, Republican debate, you
22 heard some real commentary that needed
23 to be heard. So I'm grateful to
24 Darryl -- who also used to cut my son's
25 hair -- for what he does not just as a

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1 barber, but as an entrepreneur in that
2 community. So thank you, sir.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
4 you, Councilmember, for your comments.

5 MR. THOMAS: Thank you,
6 Councilmember.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
8 Councilmember Parker, you had your hand
9 up. Did you want to make a comment?

10 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: No,
11 Mr. Chairman. I can make my comments
12 after the entire panel. If the panel
13 is finished, you let me know and then
14 I'm going to make some comments.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
16 No, we still have -- I know we have
17 Will Shelton and we also have the
18 Association that is here to testify.

19 Is Will available?

20 MR. SHELTON: Yes, I'm here.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
22 right, Will. Just state your name for
23 the record and proceed with your
24 testimony.

25 MR. SHELTON: Yes. My name is

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1 Will Shelton, the President of Will
2 Power Integrated Marketing. My company
3 has a network of over 50,000 Black
4 barbershops and salons all across the
5 nation, and I work with barbershops and
6 salons in Philadelphia and their salon
7 owners. And it's just important, I
8 mean, barbershops and salon owners they
9 just don't shape hair, they shape the
10 culture and they shape the community
11 one cut at a time. They're the
12 incubators of the culture and the
13 cultivators of the culture.

14 The Black barbershops are like
15 the ecosystem that makes the Black
16 communities flourish. Your stylist or
17 barber can get more out of you
18 (inaudible) how important they are.
19 Black lives mattered in Black
20 barbershops before the Black Lives
21 Matter Movement even started. They
22 were there for civil rights activism.
23 They moonlighted as literal town halls
24 where Black men and women would gather
25 to organize and expand political

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1 networks. And those proffers were used
2 often back in the day for political
3 movement to support marches, create
4 protest signs and even bail out
5 protesters out of jail.

6 They're really the architects
7 or blueprint for how the Black
8 community, you know, that they can't
9 survive without that. They offer such
10 a place of res -- (inaudible).

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I'm not
12 sure, Will --

13 MR. SHELTON: Did it cut out?

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah,
15 there you go. You're back.

16 MR. SHELTON: Okay. All
17 right.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We only
19 lost the last couple of seconds.

20 MR. SHELTON: Okay. No
21 problem. But I've run programs. Last
22 year -- I've worked with global brands.
23 And last year we ran a Rise Above COVID
24 program to get Blacks to participate in
25 clinical trials. You know, it's so

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1 hard to reach the Black community for
2 clinical trials because of things that
3 have happened in the past. So one way
4 to reach them is in the barbershops
5 where we turn the barbershops and the
6 salons into pillars of health where
7 they became credible messengers and
8 ambassadors for facts about the
9 vaccine, the new monoclonal anti-body
10 treatments that were coming out, and we
11 really were able to educate and to help
12 people as far as their health would go,
13 so they're even important on that
14 level.

15 I put together programs for
16 different brands that want to connect
17 with the African American community and
18 actually these brands invest. Most
19 brands want loyalty, but I teach them
20 you have to gain the Black communities
21 respect and you have to gain their
22 trust in order to gain their loyalty.
23 So there's so many things that the
24 barbershops and the salons offer to the
25 community.

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1 So I just wanted to give those
2 statements today and that testimony
3 from my vantage point and working with
4 shop owners all over the country in
5 Philadelphia and working with global
6 brands and working with pharmaceutical
7 companies to do outreach in these Black
8 communities.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
10 so much and well said. It does
11 definitely have an impact on how these
12 businesses are able to operate.

13 Next person to testify, the
14 Association. I guess there's a group
15 who's going to represent them. You can
16 state your name and organization but
17 also state the name of the person who's
18 testifying and then we'll go from
19 there.

20 MS. SOLIS: My name is
21 Tannia (inaudible) --

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We're
23 having a little hard time -- go ahead.
24 Just start over again.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you

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1 hear us? Hello?

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Go ahead.

3 Try again.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you
5 hear us?

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We hear
7 you now.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you
9 hear me now?

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah.
11 State your name and then you can
12 proceed with your testimony.

13 MS. SOLIS: Good morning. My
14 name is Tannia Solis from (inaudible)
15 -- you cannot hear me?

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah, we
17 can hear you. It's real low. We got
18 you.

19 MS. SOLIS: We have our
20 advisor here.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you
22 hear us?

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Go ahead.
24 Proceed.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

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1 I'm the advisor and also a translator.
2 I will be translating for you today.
3 Tannia is the President of the
4 nonprofit organization for the Hispanic
5 Cosmetology Association. Gloria Castro
6 is the secretary and also the Owner of
7 the hair salon. She's also the
8 secretary of the Association, the
9 nonprofit association.

10 MS. SOLIS: We also want to
11 thank you guys for allowing us to
12 testify and be in front of you guys in
13 testifying. We also wanted to share
14 that during the pandemic our
15 organization was able to help our
16 community from donations through food
17 and also to give back to the different
18 stages of the vaccine and helping our
19 hairstylists and our hair salons apply
20 for the different grants and apply for
21 the different loans.

22 As the other hair salons
23 mentioned, we were kind of like the
24 technical support for the hair salons
25 in our community. However, because of

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1 the pandemic we were able to continue
2 moving forward, but it has not been the
3 same. It's been very difficult. And
4 also, a lot of hair salons have been
5 closed. They haven't been able to make
6 it. With the help they received, it
7 still wasn't enough for some hair
8 salons.

9 Also, many people -- some
10 customers have not returned because
11 they've been afraid. The hairstylists
12 after the pandemic, they've been afraid
13 to come to the salon and work with
14 other hairstylists, so they decided to
15 start working from their home. And
16 that has also affected our economy a
17 lot because these hairstylists are now
18 working from home, which they're saving
19 money. They don't have to provide and
20 have that extra to spend on the hair
21 salon to be able to meet the
22 requirements for the salon to be safe.
23 And when they're working from home,
24 they're not having to spend that money
25 and they're also not paying what we're

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1 paying and the taxes that we have to
2 pay at the salon.

3 MS. CASTRO: Me as a
4 secretary, I also have a hair salon and
5 I'm also very effective because
6 (inaudible) pandemic because it's hard
7 for me to find hairstylists now. I'm
8 very short-staffed. Many people are
9 not working at the hair salons anymore.
10 We've already mentioned, so this has
11 affected me tremendously. However,
12 I've been trying to fulfill and I have
13 fulfilled all my requirements with
14 regard to the City and the state with
15 our customers.

16 So in speaking with the other
17 hair owners, hair salon owners, we
18 discussed we need the City to help us
19 take control and manage the
20 hairstylists that are working from home
21 because it's not the same. The
22 requirements and everything that's
23 required to provide a good service is
24 not required from the home. So what
25 we're asking is for the City to be able

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1 to help and control what's going on in
2 our community which is that a lot of
3 stylists are just working from home and
4 are not working from the salon.

5 So a lot of these places at
6 home are not equipped or not properly
7 organized to be able to provide a
8 service that meets the same health
9 requirements. Yeah, so as we mentioned
10 already the expenses that you have to
11 use at the salon is a lot more to be
12 able to provide for hand sanitizer,
13 cleaning, ensuring that everything is
14 up par in regards to the health and
15 safety of our customers. This same
16 expense is not utilized and used at
17 home. There's no regulation.

18 For these individuals it's
19 very comfortable when they work from
20 home. And that's why our community and
21 our Hispanic community, we've had a lot
22 of salons that had to close because
23 there's not a lot of people to work.
24 And a lot of customers are going to see
25 people at their house. So what we ask

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1 from the City for our petition is that
2 even though we're not considered
3 essential, we do have direct contact
4 with our customers. And like the other
5 barbers stressed, our businesses are
6 essential. So like a doctor, we have
7 direct contact with the individuals.
8 So what we ask the City is that we are
9 looked at as essential and we're looked
10 at as important in our community.

11 So as the other barbers and
12 hair salon owners mentioned already, we
13 do have a positive impact that we
14 engage in communication and integration
15 in our community, so that's very
16 important. That's something we want to
17 make sure is understood. Some
18 customers have expressed to them that
19 just by going to the hair salon, they
20 feel relieved, they feel like they're
21 doing something. So that's important,
22 and that has to take into place with
23 the mental health of all the customers,
24 which is important.

25 So, yes, we support it and we

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1 appreciate it being citywide. And
2 whatever you guys need, we're here to
3 provide our input in the (inaudible),
4 thank you very much.

5 MS. SOLIS: So thank you very
6 much for having us. And in the name of
7 our association, we would really
8 emphasize that our petition and our
9 input is taken into consideration and
10 get to your ears and something can be
11 done. Thank you so much.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
13 you. Thank you so much for that
14 testimony. And it really means a lot
15 to hear that. We do have one more
16 person to testify. I know,
17 Councilmember Parker, you wanted to
18 make a comment. We couldn't get
19 Ms. Torres on.

20 But Tannia Robertson, I think,
21 is available. Tannia, if you're there,
22 you want to state your name for the
23 record and give your testimony as the
24 last person to testify.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tannia

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1 already testified.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Oh,
3 that's you? Okay. I apologize. I'm
4 sorry.

5 MS. SOLIS: Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
7 for the translation also. Much
8 appreciated.

9 I want to thank everyone for
10 testifying. And before we end the
11 hearing, I know we have a comment from
12 Councilmember Parker.

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
14 you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 For the benefit of everyone
16 who testified here today and for the
17 benefit of the viewing public, it's
18 important to me that you know how we
19 got here.

20 Ann and Darryl, the time is
21 running together so I don't remember
22 exactly when. But I do remember,
23 Darryl, you were in a car like you were
24 today, Ann, you were in a place like
25 you are right now, we had a Zoom

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1 meeting with the Commerce Department
2 and with the Administration. And it
3 was during that time that you laid out
4 for me an issue that I knew that all of
5 my colleagues thought was important in
6 their respective regions when you
7 started talking about the barriers to
8 access, about sometimes when we develop
9 programs with very good intentions, the
10 dollars don't always reach the people
11 who we want to support the most.

12 And so, I want to say to Ann
13 and to Darryl in particular, thank you
14 so very much for speaking plainly. I
15 didn't have to decode everything.
16 Although I'm not in your industry, I
17 understood clearly the barriers.

18 I also wanted to say thank you
19 because she really, really laid it out.
20 She said she was on South Street, Zina.
21 When Zina talked about -- Zina talked
22 about basically, Mr. Chairman, she was
23 getting penalized because she was in
24 the wrong zip code because she wasn't
25 in one of those zip codes that was in

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1 the deepest poverty in the City.
2 Although she is a Black-owned business,
3 she was not able to take advantage of
4 the program.

5 Again, good intentions,
6 Chairman Squilla and Councilmember
7 Jones, when we start talking about who
8 we want to impact. But because the way
9 it was designed and we kept focusing on
10 areas with the deepest poverty, we
11 create as a system of haves and
12 have-nots about those who are owners
13 and trying to survive in a particular
14 industry. So you've informed us today
15 that we in essence picked winners and
16 losers in how we designed the program,
17 and no one should be penalized. If
18 they're trying to survive, there should
19 be a level playing field.

20 So I want to say a special
21 thank you to each of you. And in
22 particular for the Hispanic
23 Association, it is so very important
24 for us, it was important for us to hear
25 your voices here today because if this

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1 has happened to the overall industry
2 nationwide and statewide here in the
3 Commonwealth, you've heard the saying
4 that if the nation has a cold, Black
5 and Brown folks get the flu.

6 And so, what you described
7 about the barriers, the challenges that
8 you've experienced, it is across the
9 board. And I know that my colleagues,
10 we needed to get this done in the midst
11 of the budget process because now is
12 the time to have the discussion. So to
13 all of our colleagues here today, you
14 know we're having our meetings. We're
15 trying to figure out what that final
16 product is going to look like.

17 And I know from what I've
18 heard today, we're going to make sure
19 that this industry is not looped into
20 "the all small businesses sort of
21 umbrella," because what you're
22 experiencing is very unique. And as
23 Councilmember Jones and Squilla noted
24 and you noted in your testimony, you
25 are more than the simple professional

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1 services that people view barbershops,
2 barbers and hair salons and stylists,
3 right, you do so much in our community.
4 But you won't know that we believe you
5 are essential until you see what that
6 pot looks like at the end of the budget
7 negotiations. What the pot looks like,
8 how streamlined is the process so that
9 you can get access to the funding and
10 then how many more.

11 And I want to say to Karen and
12 to Mitch, the Administration is
13 listening. I want to be laser-focused
14 on making sure that we are not doing
15 what Zina described. Thank you, Zina,
16 again. Pitting haves and have-nots
17 because somebody is in the right
18 neighborhood -- I mean, it just
19 reminds, Councilmember Jones, of people
20 saying somebody lives on the wrong side
21 of the tracks. Because your business
22 is located in the wrong area, although
23 you are struggling the same, you
24 haven't gotten access to that
25 opportunity. So we will keep you

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1 posted.

2 Darryl and Ann, special thank
3 to you for saying we need to get this
4 on the public record. Philadelphia
5 needs to know what's happening in this
6 industry. We did that today. Now, the
7 only thing you can do is wait to see
8 what happens when our budget process is
9 complete and that all members of City
10 Council of Philadelphia have
11 acknowledged that your industry needs
12 the support that it deserves from our
13 City of Philadelphia. So thank you all
14 so very much.

15 MS. JOHNSON PATRICK: Thank
16 you. I appreciate --

17 MS. TURNER: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
19 you, Leader. I appreciate your
20 comment.

21 MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
23 right. Thank you everybody who had
24 testified and your testimony was very
25 well-received. And since there's no

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1 other questions or members to testify,
2 this will conclude the business before
3 the Committee today on Commerce and
4 Economic Development. Thank you all
5 very much for your attendance and work.
6 Have a great day, everyone. Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 MS. TURNER: Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
11 all.

12 MS. JOHNSON PATRICK: Thank
13 you everyone.

14 (Committee on Commerce and
15 Economic Development concluded at
16 10:18 a.m.)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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I, hereby certify that the
proceedings and evidence noted are contained
fully and accurately in the stenographic notes
taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that
this is a correct transcript of the same.

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
this transcript does not apply to any
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