

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2302

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Isabel Guzman
Administrator
US Small Business Administration
409 3rd St SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman,

We write today to urge the Small Business Administration to expedite the release of funds to beneficiaries of the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program and provide answers to the questions below in a timely manner.

For over a year, we have consistently heard from venue operators about the unprecedented and unsustainable economic impacts the COVID-19 pandemic had on their small businesses. This community was relieved when the SVOG program was created in the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act in December of 2020 and additional funding was added as a part of the American Rescue Plan.

However, the rollout of this program and the release of funds is of great concern to us and many of our constituents. In addition to the initial crash of the application portal on April 8th and delay of the opening to April 28th, there has been a significant delay in the processing of applicants and awarding of funds. According to the Office of Disaster Assistance, as of June 14, the SBA has only approved 411 grants out of the over 14,000 applications submitted, and nearly half of the applications have not yet reached the review stage.¹

The slow pace is becoming increasingly untenable for the small businesses in our districts. Their banks have threatened to call in the full amount of small business loans, they do not have the funds to pay their landlords full rent, and they cannot retain staff. We are hearing from venue operators who are days away from closing their doors if these funds are not sent soon. These small businesses not only provide good jobs and contribute economically to our local communities, they contribute to the spirit and local culture as well. We must act now.

We understand the complexity and difficulty of managing a program of this size; however, we request the disbursement of funds be expedited immediately.

In addition, we respectfully request answers to the following questions are made available to all Members and staff:

1. What is causing the delay of processing applications and disbursement of funds? Is further action by Congress needed to help you address these issues?

¹ [Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Public Report: June 14, 2021 \(sba.gov\)](https://www.sba.gov/public-report-shuttered-venue-operators-grant)

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2. Since the Priority 1 Tier deadline has passed, will funding be awarded retroactively to those who didn't receive funding in the Priority 1 Tier?
3. When can businesses expect to receive these funds? What plans are in place to communicate a likely timeline for disbursement of funding to afford small venue operators the opportunity to appropriately plan and respond to their individual needs?
4. Would you and the SBA staff host a briefing for Members and staff on this program and the issues with its implementation?

Thank you and your staff for your hard work to implement the various SBA programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We know you are committed to serving our small businesses and we look forward to working together to ensure these funds are distributed and these issues are addressed efficiently.

Sincerely,

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Roger Williams
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Mark E. Amodei
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss
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Cindy Axne
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Donald J. Bacon
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Karen Bass
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Stephanie Bice
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Earl Blumenauer
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
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Carolyn Bourdeaux
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Jamaal Bowman
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Larry Bucshon, M.D.
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Cori Bush
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Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
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Ken Calvert
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Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

André Carson
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Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
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Steve Chabot
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