

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wolf Administration: CHIRP Program Helping Restaurants Across the Commonwealth Recover from COVID Hardships

Gov. Wolf secured \$145 million in pandemic relief for the hospitality industry

Altoona, PA – Secretary of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Dennis Davin joined Stephen McKnight, President and CEO of The Altoona Blair County Development Corporation (ABCD), Altoona Mayor Matthew Pacifico, Blair County Commissioner Bruce Erb, and the owners of Mama Randazzo's Pizzeria & Restaurant to highlight the assistance available through the [COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program](#) (CHIRP).

"The COVID-19 pandemic placed so many of our favorite restaurants in peril. These are places like Mama Randazzo's Pizzeria, where friends and families have gathered for years to catch up with one another or celebrate special occasions," said Sec. Davin. "The support provided to them through the CHIRP program will help them on their way to recovery and will ensure that patrons in communities across the commonwealth can enjoy their favorite eateries for years to come."

Last year, Governor Tom Wolf secured \$145 million in funding support businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the commonwealth has worked with counties and economic development partners to quickly send assistance to the hospitality industry.

State funding has already been provided to all 67 counties.

"On behalf of Altoona City Council, we are appreciative of programs like CHIRP that were able to help provide a lifeline to our local hospitality and restaurant industry who were impacted the most," said Altoona Mayor Matthew Pacifico.

"The close collaboration between ABCD Corp. and the Commissioners' office in cooperation with other community partners resulted in a successful and timely distribution of the CHIRP funds to these businesses as they move toward a successful recovery," said Blair County Commissioner Bruce Erb.

Counties are administering the funding through one or more designated Community Economic Development Organizations (CEDO) or Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI), which began processing applications from businesses in each county on March 15. Funding must be provided to businesses by July 15, 2021.

“On behalf of the ABCD Corporation Board, we were glad to play role in administering this program and most importantly, getting these dollars to the hands of the businesses as quickly as possible. Everyone is looking forward to better days ahead,” said Stephen McKnight, ABCD President and CEO.

Mama Randazzo’s Pizzeria & Restaurant, a longtime family favorite restaurant in Altoona, received \$25,000 in assistance through CHIRP.

“The CHIRP program was more than a welcome lifeline for us locally in the restaurant industry. The ABCD Corporation, along with the state of Pennsylvania, deserve plenty of credit for getting the funds directly to restaurants in a timely manner,” said Paul Randazzo of Mama Randazzo’s Pizzeria & Restaurant. “When federal, state, and local agencies work together, like they did with CHIRP, they deserve to be recognized. We here at Mama Randazzo’s thank everyone that was involved with this program.”

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