

SSTAR Fund Program Evaluation Findings and Recommendations



Background



COVID-19 pandemic highlighted ongoing racial and geographic disparities in King County. It negatively impacted many small, local, independently owned and operated food businesses, including areas with high cases of COVID-19 and longstanding inequities ("high priority areas"). To reduce financial challenges related to COVID-19 among small food businesses, Safe Start for Taverns and Restaurants (SSTAR) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) planned and executed the SSTAR Fund Program from September to December 2020. Almost \$400,000 was administered to 143 eligible, locally owned and operated small food businesses.

Methods



Purpose of Evaluation:

- To determine the importance, challenges, lessons learned, and successes of the program
- To determine if financial assistance was distributed equitably to businesses with non-English speaking and minority-owned businesses.
- To provide recommendations for future financial assistance programs for small businesses.

Data was collected and analyzed from grant applications, referral tracking spreadsheets, 69 SSTAR Fund recipients' feedback surveys, and interviews with seven key informants from agencies involved in the planning and implementation of the SSTAR Fund Program.

Key Findings



- **92%** of SSTAR Fund recipients operate in **high priority zip codes** (areas with higher health and socioeconomic inequities and higher COVID-19 positive case rates in King County)
- **72%** of SSTAR Fund recipient survey respondents identified their business as **minority-owned** (BIPOC, LGBTQ, women)
- **All SSTAR Fund recipients** that responded to the feedback survey reported that the SSTAR Fund grant was **helpful**
- **Main challenge for SSTAR Fund recipients:** Finding and gathering receipts and submitting proof of payment were time-consuming and stressful, especially for those who work more in a cash-based system or did not already have records of invoices and receipts.
- For SSTAR Fund survey respondents that noted their experience with applying for the grant was **very easy**, all but one completed the survey in English, which indicates that **the process for applying for the grant came much easier for those who have higher English proficiency.**
- **All of the agency key informants** reported that they had **great partnerships** which led to the overall success of the program.

Key Recommendations



- **Continue equity-based targeted outreach approaches**
- **Incorporate business owner's residence in high priority zip codes** in addition to the location of business.
- Provide **flexibility** on reimbursable items.
- **Implement non-reimburse-based grants:** administer flat grant amounts or vouchers to businesses based on evidence of financial hardships.
- Capture and update **contact information and preferred language** from permitted businesses.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the key informants and the food businesses that participated in the SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, your feedback is incredibly valuable to this evaluation.

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Evaluation of Safe Start for Taverns and Restaurants (SSTAR) Financial Assistance Referral Program

(September – December 2020)

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Thank you to Sinang Lee, Ryan Kellogg, and Eyob Mazengia for providing reviews of this evaluation report.

Executive Summary

Background: Emergency Grant to Address an Urgent Health Risk and Financial Crisis in the Local Food Business Community

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the ongoing racial and geographic health disparities in King County, especially cities of South King County. COVID-19 negatively impacted many small, local, independently-owned and operated food businesses across the county, including areas with high cases of COVID-19 and longstanding inequities. These areas are defined as “high priority zip codes”. To help reduce the financial challenges related to COVID-19 among small food businesses operating in high priority zip codes, Safe Start for Taverns and Restaurants (SSTAR) planned and executed the SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Program (also called SSTAR Fund Program) from September to December 2020, in partnership with Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Through this SSTAR Fund program, the first of its kind in the Environmental Health Services Division, SSTAR and OEM teams administered close to \$400,000 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to 143 eligible, locally owned/operated small food businesses.

Methods: Evaluation of the Successes, Challenges, Lessons Learned of SSTAR Fund Program and Recommendations for Future Financial Assistance

A graduate student intern from the SSTAR team planned the evaluation of the SSTAR Fund Program, collected and analyzed the data, and prepared the report. Data was collected and analyzed from grant applications, referral tracking spreadsheet, 69 SSTAR fund recipient feedback surveys; and interviews with seven key informants from the agencies involved in the planning and implementation of the SSTAR Fund program. Data was collected remotely through Zoom and Microsoft forms. For the interviews and surveys, questions were focused on experience with the SSTAR Fund Program during planning and implementation and the successes, challenges, and recommendations for future financial assistance programs for small businesses.

Key Findings: SSTAR Fund Recipient Business Characteristics, SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, Key Informant Interviews

- 92% of SSTAR Fund recipients operate in high priority zip codes (areas with higher health and socioeconomic inequities and higher COVID-19 positive case rates in King County).
- 77% of SSTAR Fund recipient survey respondents identified their business as minority-owned (*BIPOC, LGBTQ, women*).
- All SSTAR Fund recipients that responded to the feedback survey reported that the SSTAR fund grant amount was helpful.
- The main challenges for SSTAR fund recipients included how time-consuming gathering and submitting proof of payment was and how they needed more time. Trying to run a business while running around finding and gathering receipts became a stressful experience, especially for those who work more in a cash-based system or did not already have records of invoices and receipts.
- For survey respondents that noted their experience with applying for the SSTAR Fund was very easy, all but one completed the survey in English, which indicates that the process for applying for the grant came much easier for those who have higher English proficiency
- All of the agency key informants reported that they had great partnerships which led to the overall success of the program.
- Both SSTAR Fund recipients (survey respondents) and key informants supported the continuation of a targeted, equity-based financial assistance program with some recommendations for improvement.

Executive Summary (continued)

Recommendations

For future King County financial assistance to small businesses

Eligible Items for Reimbursement

- Provide flexibility on reimbursable items
- Non-reimbursement-based grant: administer flat grant amount or vouchers to businesses based on evidence of financial hardships.

Model equitable practices from other organizations and departments that lower barriers for financial support to small business, such as

- WA State Dept of Commerce
- Small Business Administration
 - Restaurant Revitalization Fund
- KC Dept of Local Services

SSTAR Team

- Manager(s) to continue to advocate the program and funding small business community
- Ensure adequate staffing

Outreach & Announcement

- Continue-equity based targeted outreach approach
- Establish standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Ensure Food & Facilities Program captures, and updates contact information and preferred language from permitted food businesses.

Screening & Eligibility Criteria

- Update high priority zip codes
- Define different priority tiers of small businesses
- Incorporate business owner's residence in high priority zip codes in addition to location of business.
- Limit grant funding to one business per owner

Instructions and Reviewing Applications and Forms

- Establish templates and SOPs on reviewing grant applications and data entry
- Establish SOPs on how to update business owner of application status
- Create fact sheets with images on how to fill out applications.



INTRODUCTION

The impact of COVID-19 highlights the ongoing racial and geographic health disparities in King County (*PHSKC Equity Surveillance Data, 9/16/2020*). Neighborhoods and cities in South King County have been experiencing the highest positive COVID-19 rates in the county (*PHSKC Equity Surveillance Data, 9/16/2020*). These locations generally overlap areas where many communities of color and non-English speaking and business owners of color operate ([Public Health Insider, 5/1/20](#)).

Figure 1 shows a map of King County that illustrates wealth and diversity by zip codes. The higher the equity score, the lower the area ranked among life expectancy, health and socio-economic indicators. Figure 2 shows the COVID-19 positive rates in King County zip codes. When comparing the two maps, there is an overlap in zip codes where there is less wealth, more ethnic/racial diversity and high COVID-19 positive cases.

There have been many COVID-19 related financial assistance programs available to help small businesses. However, non-English speaking and business owners of color were far less likely to receive information about these programs even as they faced disproportionately higher rates of business closures ([WA State Department of Commerce, 9/20](#)).

The Safe Start for Taverns and Restaurants (SSTAR) program, in partnership with OEM, planned and implemented the SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Program (or SSTAR Fund Program) from September to December 2020 to provide financial support to the small food business community in King County. The SSTAR Fund Program's aim was to prioritize areas that have been highly impacted by COVID-19 and longstanding health inequities.

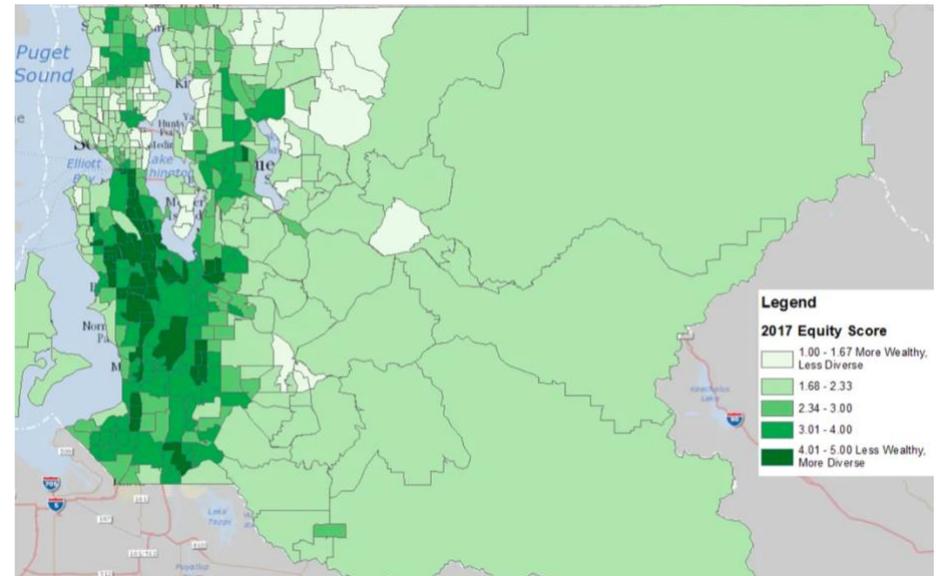


Figure 1. Equity Score Metric by Census Tract 2017, *Public Health Insider 5/1/20*

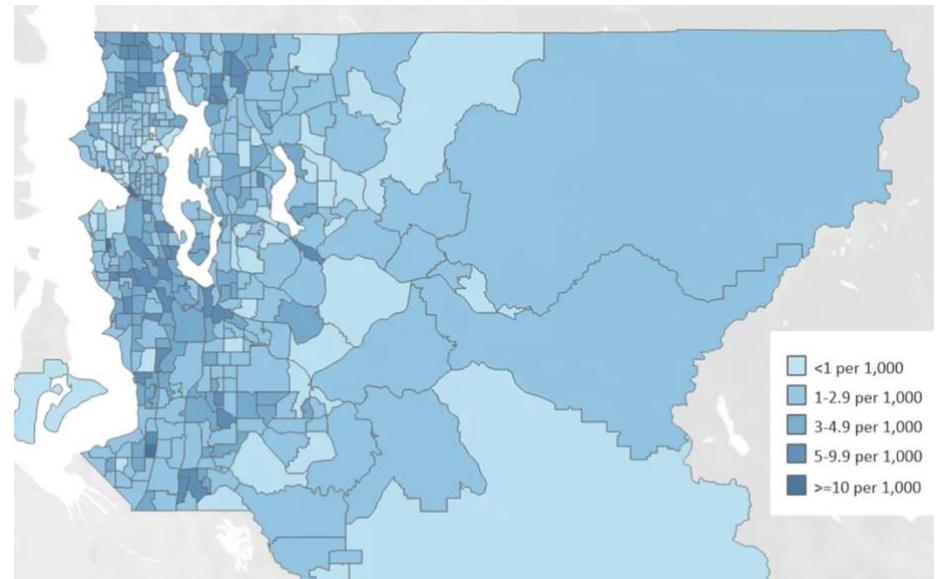


Figure 2. Rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 1,000 residents by Census Tract 2020, *Public Health Insider 5/1/20*

Program Description

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) received a Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) amount of \$500,000 to support small locally owned/operated food businesses. Without an existing structure for working directly with the restaurant community, OEM partnered with Environmental Health Services Division's SSTAR team and developed the SSTAR Fund Program. The CRF was used for

- (1) Bulk order purchase of common PPE/supplies for SSTAR team to distribute to locally owned/operated small businesses in King County (\$100,000)
- (2) Financial assistance to eligible, locally owned/operated small business that have incurred costs related to COVID-19 impacts and Safe Start Guidelines (\$400,000).**

The SSTAR Fund Program focused solely on the second use of CRF funds.

Planning and Implementation of SSTAR Fund Program

Planning and implementation of the SSTAR Fund Program required strong partnerships between internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the design and administration of financial assistance to small, independent, locally owned/operated food establishments reduced inequities and disparities by lowering barriers to accessing financial support.

Table 1 (page 8) summarizes the stakeholder engagement in the SSTAR Fund program.

Table 2 (page 9) displays the Logic Model for the program.

Planning SSTAR Fund Program

The program was designed with the input of OEM, SSTAR outreach team, King County Department of Local Services (KC DLS), KC Small Business Task Force, City of Seattle, community-based organizations and under the consultation of Witt O'Brien's. The main goal was to make the grant application process accessible and equitable.

With the help of the above-mentioned stakeholders, a two-page grant application form, two-page grant agreement, and the following below were developed:

- Equity-based Eligibility Criteria for Screening Applications (Appendix A)
- List of Allowable Expenses (Appendix B)

Targeted outreach was achieved by abstracting emails from Environmental Health Services Division's ENVISION database and emailing and mailing out announcements and forms of SSTAR Fund program. The announcement, KC W-9 form, Grant Agreement and Federal Terms were provided in 11 languages: Amharic, English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Khmer, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese (Appendix C). SSTAR field team and CBO partners also helped to disseminate the announcement.

On November 16, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee enacted a 4-week (November 17- December 14, 2020) statewide set of restrictions in response to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus in Washington and the U.S. The temporary restrictions closed indoor dine-in services but permitted outdoor dining and to-go services. With the use of third-party food delivery services (such as Door Dash, UberEats, Grub Hub, etc.), restaurants were faced with increased costs related to delivery fees and using these services have become a necessary expenditure as a result of the impacts of COVID-19. Flexibility in the design of the program allowed applicants to request reimbursement to cover costs of delivery fees in addition to other incurred costs due to COVID-19.

Implementing SSTAR Fund Program

After announcements were sent out and staff referrals were made, between 10/20-11/16/20, the SSTAR Fund team received a total of 175 applications and approved 144 businesses. Applications were accepted on a rolling-basis. Even after the team selected the possible maximum number of recipients, more applications poured in – in total, 255 businesses were received, and 143 approvals were finalized.

Figure 3 shows the prioritization of the award selection process. 130 businesses from Tier 1 and 13 businesses from Tier 2 were approved for reimbursement.

Approved businesses submitted proof of payment of approved COVID-19 related expenses. Technical and educational assistance (with interpreter if required) was provided to help businesses discern which expenses were COVID-19 related and which ones were not. In addition, some business owners consulted with the technical Environmental Health Inspector to discuss if “other expenses” related to COVID-19 impacts were reimbursable.

SSTAR team reviewed the application referral forms and proof of payment, approved the businesses and their award amounts and submitted the paperwork to OEM to finalize approval of the grant agreement, set up the recipient in the payment system, and process the payment.

OEM worked with Accounts Payable to process payment, cut checks, and mail them out to businesses.

Purpose of SSTAR Fund Program Evaluation:

- To determine the importance, challenges, lessons learned, and successes of the program.
- To determine if financial assistance was distributed equitably to businesses with non-English speaking and minority-owned businesses.
- To provide recommendations for future financial assistance programs for small businesses.

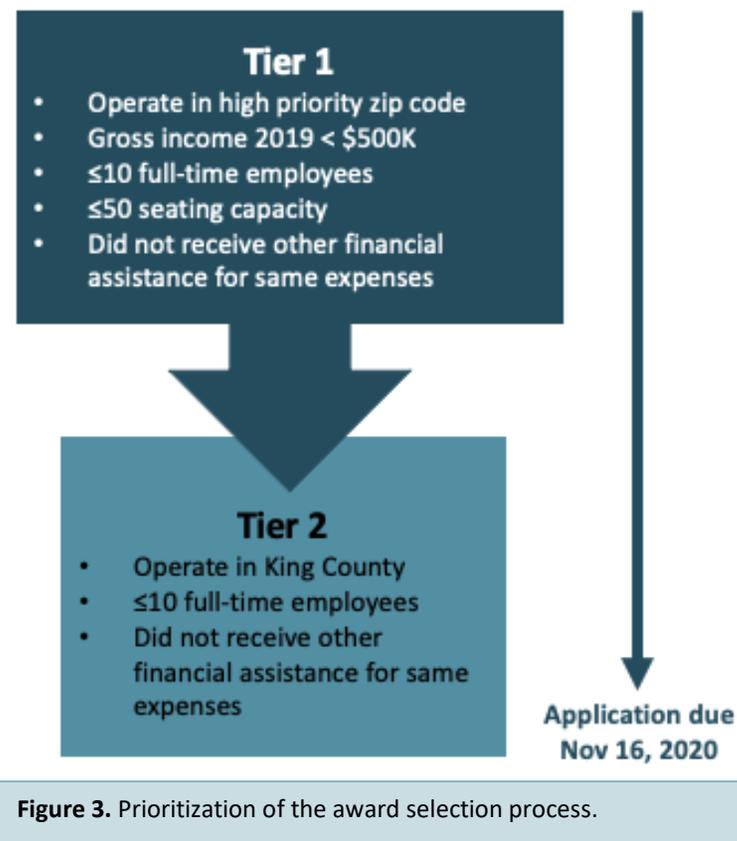


Table 1. Stakeholder Engagement in SSTAR Financial Assistance Program

Stakeholder	Interest or Perspective	Role	How were they engaged?	When were they engaged?
Office of Emergency Management	Internal	Reviews/approves paperwork from SSTAR, cuts and sends reimbursement checks to funding recipient	Design grant process that is streamlined and equitable.	Planning and implementation phases
Environmental Health Leadership	Internal	Provided oversight of grant process to ensure alignment with division’s COVID-19 goals.	Design grant process that is streamlined and equitable.	Planning and implementation phases
SSTAR and Food & Facilities Programs’ Field Teams	Internal	Provided advice on grant criteria and application process Disseminated the grant announcement to business operators Referred small business restaurant owners	Design grant process that is streamlined and equitable.	Planning and implementation phases
Witt O’Brien’s <i>Business management consultant</i>	External	Consulted and designed grant process to meet U.S. Treasury guidelines.	Design grant process that is streamlined and equitable.	Planning phase
King County Department of Local Services & KC Small Business Task Force	Internal	Managed small business grants in unincorporated King County and provided advice on grant process.	Design grant process that is streamlined and equitable.	Planning phase
Community Partners <i>Friends of Little Saigon</i> <i>Seattle Chinatown International District PDA</i> <i>Ethnic Chambers of Commerce</i> <i>Somali Health Board</i> <i>Tukwila Food Innovation Network</i> <i>Latino Community Fund</i> <i>Pike’s Market Preservation District</i>	External	Provided advice on grant process; and/or helped disseminate announcements.	Design grant process that is streamlined and equitable.	Planning and implementation phases
Small Food Businesses <i>Independently owned and operated in King County</i>	External	Recipients of SSTAR financial assistance Informally disseminated about the grant to other business owners	SSTAR targeted these small food businesses. Provided informal and formal feedback of grant process.	Implementation phase

Table 2. SSTAR Fund Program Logic Model

Objective	Activities	Outputs	Outcome
To administer financial assistance to small, independent, locally owned/operated food establishments that have incurred additional costs as a result of COVID-19 impacts and complying with Safe Start measures.	Planned financial assistance process with input from SSTAR team, Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Witt O'Brien, King County Department of Local Services (KC DLS), and City of Seattle small business grant.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Translated referral forms in different languages. 2. Ran a database report on permitted contacts (abstracted emails). 3. Generated announcements in 11 languages. 4. Produced a simplified two-page Grant Application form and a two-page Grant Agreement document. 	<p>A targeted, equity-based outreach approach was able to provide up to \$3000 financial assistance to small, independent, locally owned/operated food establishments.</p> <p><i>See below for quotes of businesses that applied for SSTAR financial assistance.</i></p>
	Completed targeted outreach announcements (email, mailings, direct contact via business' websites or Facebook webpages) to targeted applicant pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,060 email announcements • 500 mailings with announcement • 4 SSTAR field staff referrals 	
	Business filled out grant referral form and SSTAR team approved referral based on eligibility criteria.	Reviewed 255 business grant applications	
	Business gather and submit proof of payment	Provided technical and educational assistance on which incurred costs are eligible for reimbursement.	
	SSTAR team determines award amount based on eligible expenses and submits for payment to OEM.	143 businesses were eligible to receive up \$3000 in reimbursement.	

"Enclosed is our Financial Assistance Referral Form. We are a locally black owned business originally from the Central District that was misplaced. We are now located in the Skyway area. We have been severely impacted by Covid - 19 and any assistance that you guys can provide would be greatly appreciated."

-Small Food Business Owner, Skyway, 10/21/20

"Please find a copy of my SSTART application attached. Thank you so much for reaching out with this opportunity."

-Small Food Business Owner, Seattle, 10/21/20

"Thank you! We are holding on a thread. This will help greatly with the added expenses of dining outside and doing about 25% of the business we did last year. Thank you again for your consideration."

-Small Food Business Owner, Renton, 10/21/20

"We recently received email about this opportunity to apply for financial assistant for our restaurant business. Our business has been established since 2011. And now we are struggling to stay in business due to the pandemic since march. AS small ma/papa business we have had try many way we can to get help from our government but it seem we could not get through any help. Please Please review and accept our application. much appreciated the opportunity."

-Small Food Business Owner, Kent, 10/21/20

Methods

Evaluation of the SSTAR Fund Program captured both quantitative and qualitative data (mixed-methods approach) via a survey and semi-structured key informant interviews. All interviews were deidentified and surveys were completed anonymously.



Data from the implementation process via the SSTAR Fund Referral Tracker and grant applications were collected and analyzed via quantitative methods. Data included applicants' gross income in 2019, zip code, duration (days) from time grant application approved to receiving check, whether or not establishment was an independently-owned/operated franchise and their primary service (restaurant, bar/brewery/winery, or coffeeshop/teashop), and the amount paid out to SSTAR Fund recipients.



A **multilingual online feedback survey** (English, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese) via Microsoft Forms and PDF survey was developed and emailed to all 137 unique SSTAR Fund recipients (some business owners had multiple businesses that received SSTAR financial assistance). The survey was open for responses between February 21, 2021 through March 1, 2021 (with a midpoint reminder email). The feedback survey aimed to collect information on the SSTAR Fund recipients' experiences with the financial assistance process, recommendations for future financial assistance, and demographic and business information. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey data was performed on RStudio programming software and Microsoft Excel software, respectively.

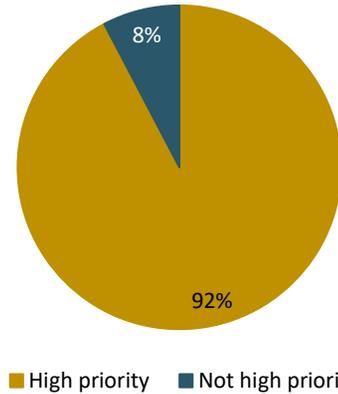


Seven key informants were interviewed between February and March 2021 via Zoom. They represented the internal staff from multiple agencies involved in setting up and administering the SSTAR fund program. One interview session involved two key informants at the same time. The interviews aimed to collect information on what went well, the challenges encountered and how they were addressed, recommendations for future programs, and lessons learned. All interviews were recorded and transcribed on Zoom. Audio transcriptions were reviewed for any errors in speech-to-text transcription, which were corrected. A qualitative, content and thematic analysis was performed using the Dedoose software to analyze the interviews of those involved in the planning and implementation of the SSTAR fund program.

RESULTS

SSTAR Fund Recipient Business Characteristics

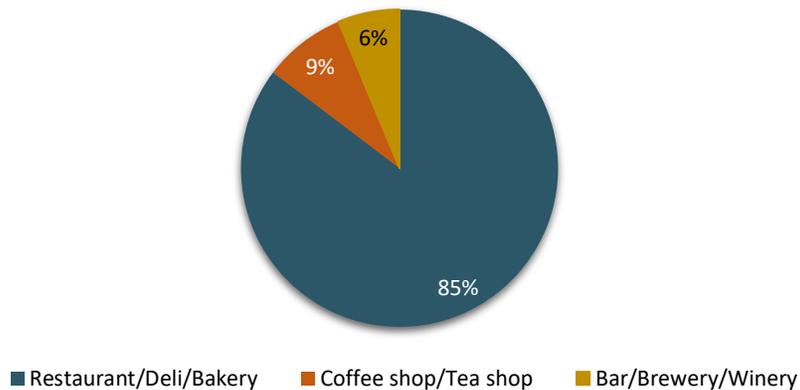
Zip Code of SSTAR Fund Recipients



- **132 (92%)** of SSTAR Fund recipients operate in **high priority zip code** (as determined by PHSKC APDE's Communities of Opportunity (COO) Equity Ranking and CD-Epi team's COVID-19 Equity Surveillance data).
- **11 (8%)** of SSTAR Fund recipients operate in **zip codes not determined as high priority**.

Figure 4. Breakdown of zip code group of where SSTAR Fund Recipients

SSTAR Fund Recipient Primary Service



- **122 (85%)** of SSTAR Fund recipients own a **restaurant, deli, or bakery**.
- **12 (9%)** of SSTAR Fund recipients own a **coffee shop or tea shop**.
- **9 (6%)** of SSTAR Fund recipients own a **bar, brewery, or winery**.
- **14 (9.8%)** SSTAR Fund recipients have **independently-own franchise restaurant(s)** (Not shown in Figure 5 pie chart).

Figure 5. Breakdown of SSTAR Fund Recipient's business service

RESULTS (continued)

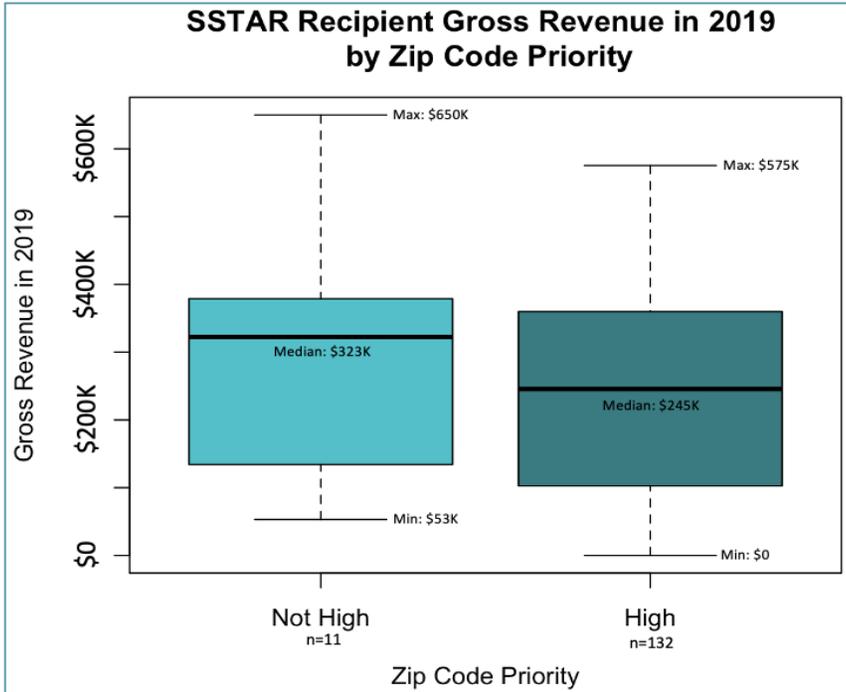


Figure 6. SSTAR Recipient Gross Revenue in 2019 by Zip Code group

- On **average**, SSTAR Fund recipients have a **gross revenue of \$244,000 in 2019** (not shown in Figure 6 boxplot).
 - Note: A couple of businesses that exceeded the \$500K threshold, but met most other criteria, were approved in Tier 2 as the deadline to finalize all awards were approaching.
- When categorizing SSTAR fund recipients operating in not high versus high priority zip codes, **recipients that operate in high priority zip codes have a median gross revenue of \$245,000, which is somewhat lower than the median of those not operating in high priority zip codes (\$323,000)** – See Figure 6.
- Two businesses did not operate until 2020; therefore, their gross revenue in 2019 is \$0.

Table 3. Days of payment receipt* and amount paid to SSTAR Fund Recipients	
Duration of receipt of check	Days
Average	43
Minimum	10
Maximum	66
Amount paid to SSTAR Fund recipients	N = 143
Average amount (\$)	\$2,720
	n (%)
\$3000 (full amount)	104 (73%)
Less than \$3000	39 (27%)

*receipt is defined as the timepoint checks were mailed out by Accounts Payable

- On **average**, it took about **43 days** for SSTAR fund recipients to receive their reimbursement check from the time they got their grant application approved.
- \$2,720** was the **average amount paid** to SSTAR Fund recipients.
- 104 (73 %)** of SSTAR fund recipients received the **full reimbursable amount of \$3000** to cover incurred costs due to COVID-19.
- 39 (27%)** of SSTAR fund recipients received **less than \$3000** to cover incurred costs due to COVID-19.
- Note: Businesses requested either max of \$1000, \$2000, or \$3000 in reimbursement. Not all businesses requested max of \$3000.

RESULTS (continued)

SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey

69 out of the 137 unique SSTAR Fund recipient business owners completed the multilingual online feedback survey, an approximately 50% response rate. Figure 7 shows a breakdown of the number of respondents by language that the survey was completed in. The majority of surveys were completed in English. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of zip code group of where survey participants operate. 90% of survey participants operate their business in high priority zip codes.

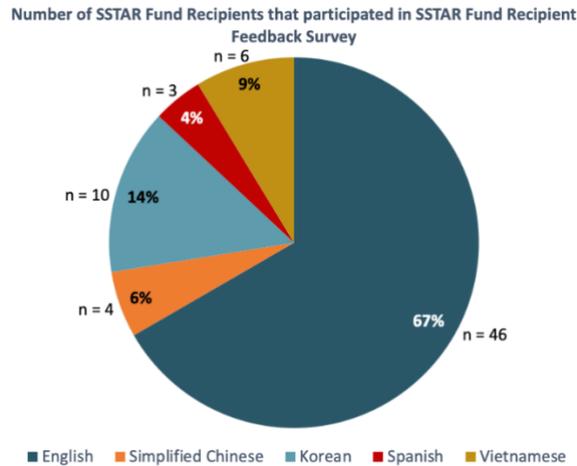


Figure 7. Number of SSTAR Fund Recipients that participated in the SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey

Zip code group of where Survey Participants operate

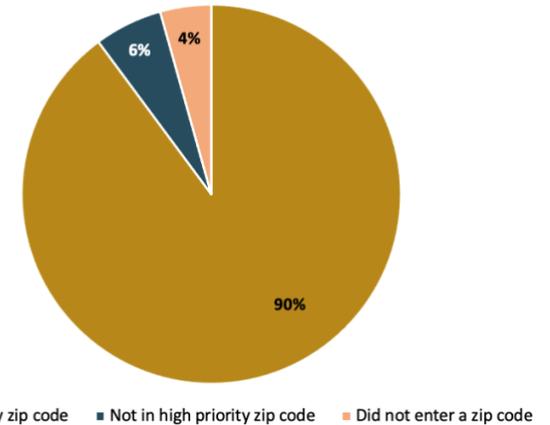
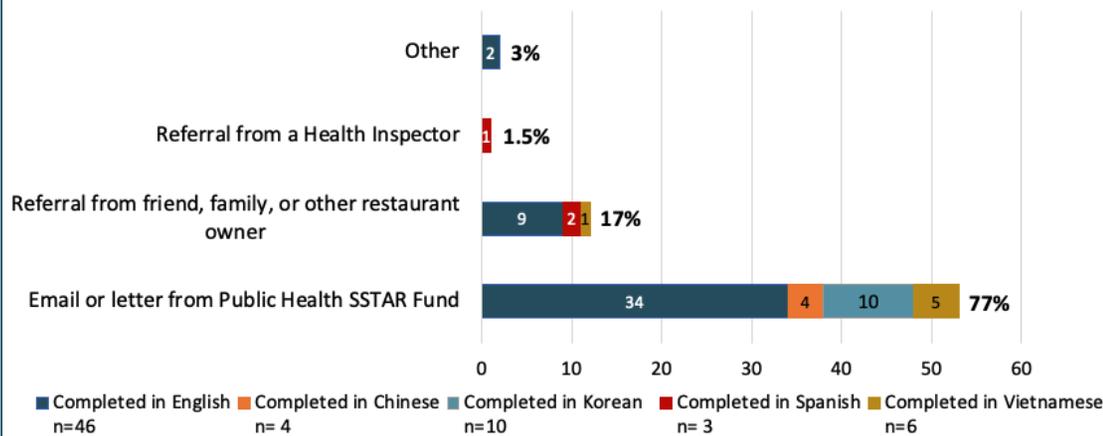


Figure 8. Zip code group of where survey participants operate.

How did you hear about the SSTAR funding opportunity?

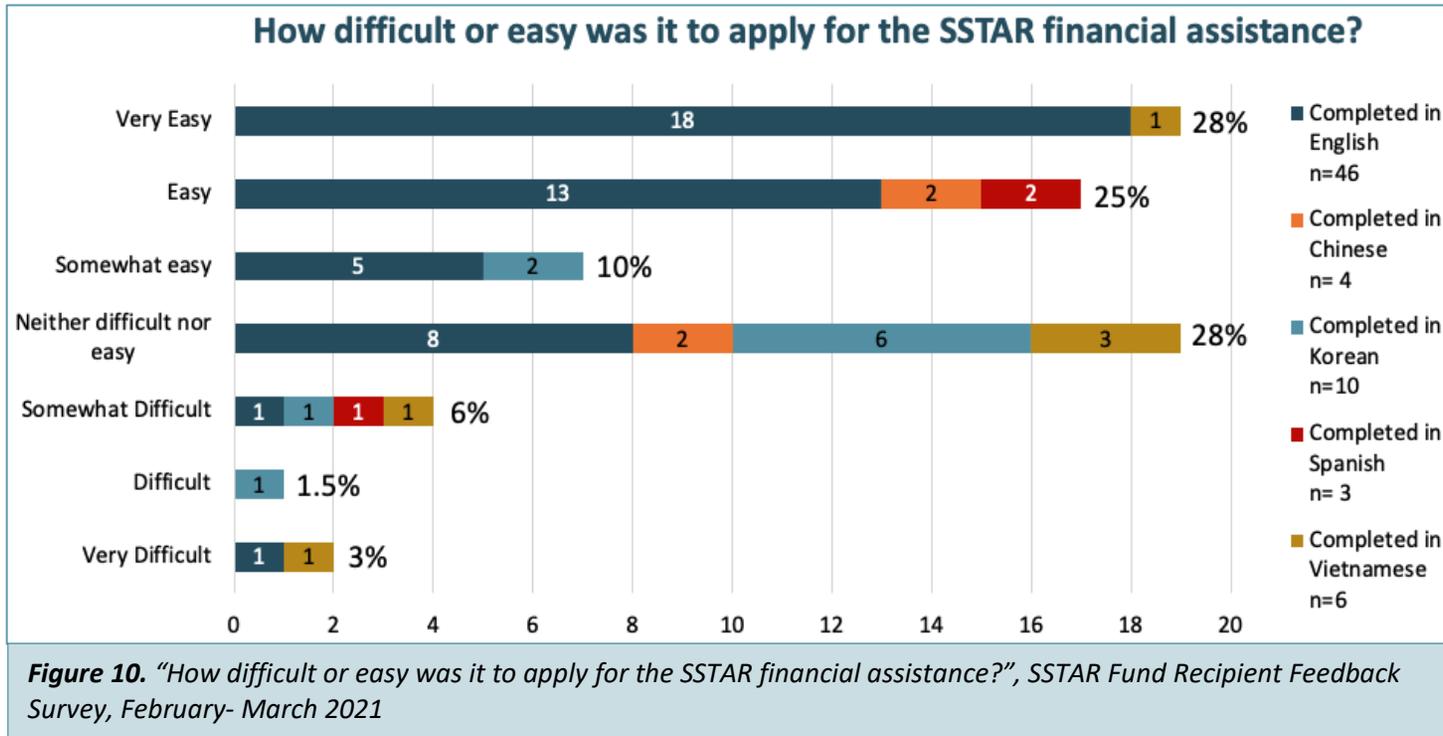


The majority (**77%**) of survey participants heard about the SSTAR funding opportunity through the **announcement email or letter from SSTAR Fund team**. Some (17%) heard about the SSTAR funding opportunity through family, friends, or other restaurant others. One person heard about the opportunity through a health inspector.

A couple of (3%) survey participants reported that they heard about this funding opportunity from the news and Hugo Garcia, King County Economic Development Program manager.

Figure 9. “How did you hear about the SSTAR funding opportunity?”, SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, February-March 2021

RESULTS (continued)



For many survey participants, applying for SSTAR financial assistance was **easy** (very easy, easy, somewhat easy) because the **process was simple**, the **instructions were clear** and provided in **multiple languages**, and **SSTAR staff was helpful** in the application process. All but one survey participant that noted that the application process was “very easy” completed the survey in English.

Many survey participants also reported that the application process was **neither difficult nor easy** because it **took a lot of time to find the application link and gather receipts**, but the process overall was **simple and clear** due to **being prepared** and getting **help from SSTAR staff and family members**.

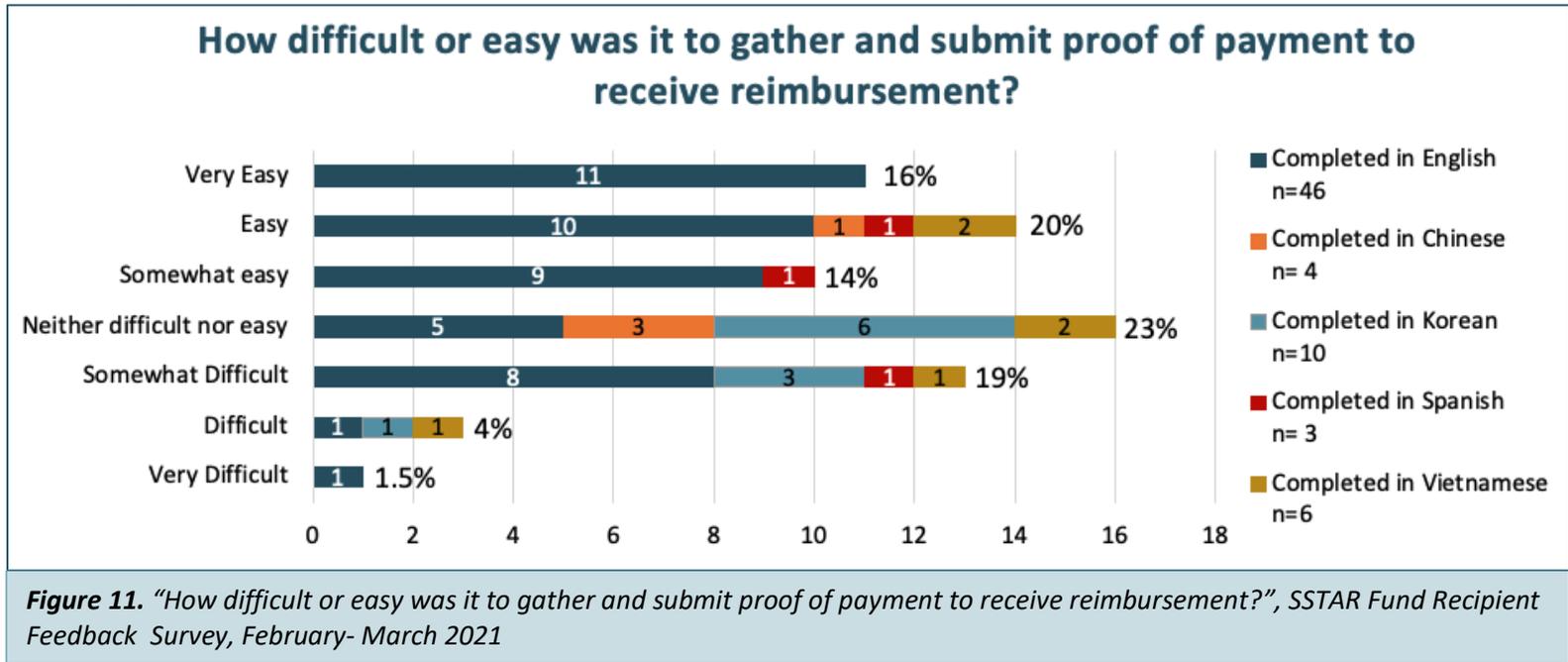
For some survey participants, applying for the SSTAR financial assistance was **difficult** (very difficult, difficult, somewhat difficult) because **gathering receipts was difficult, time-consuming**, and they **needed more time** to get the information organized for the application. A couple noted that they **weren’t too familiar with working with computers nor filling out paperwork**, especially electronic-based ones.

See Appendix H for the compiled feedback responses from the survey participants.

“I’m not good at computer and also not good at paperworks.”
 - SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

“Everything was organized in such a way that it was easy to fill out the form.”
 - SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

RESULTS (continued)



“We just followed the instruction from the email and keep receipts of all our spendings, which is very easy.”
 - SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

“Im a small business and gathering all the receipts, taking pics of all of them and emailing took a long time. But totally worth it. Thanks.”
 - SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

Most survey participants thought the process of gathering and submitting proof of payment was **neither difficult nor easy** because it was **time-consuming**; however, the **instructions were simple** to follow.

Many survey participants thought the process of gathering and submitting proof of payment was **easy** (very easy, easy, somewhat easy) because the **submission process was simple**, the **instructions were clear**, and were able to **submit the receipts through other methods**, such as photographing them and emailing the images. Some people **kept a good record** of their purchases and invoices, which made the receipt gathering and submission a streamlined process. Those who reported that this process was “very easy” completed the survey in English.

Some survey participants found the process of gathering and submitting proof of payment **difficult** (very difficult, difficult, somewhat difficult) because locating the receipts and invoices and interpreting items on the items was **time-consuming**. Some felt they **did not have enough time** to gather and submit their proof of payment. A few noted that they **did not have all proofs of payment**, which made the process difficult.

See Appendix H for the compiled feedback responses from the survey participants.

RESULTS (continued)

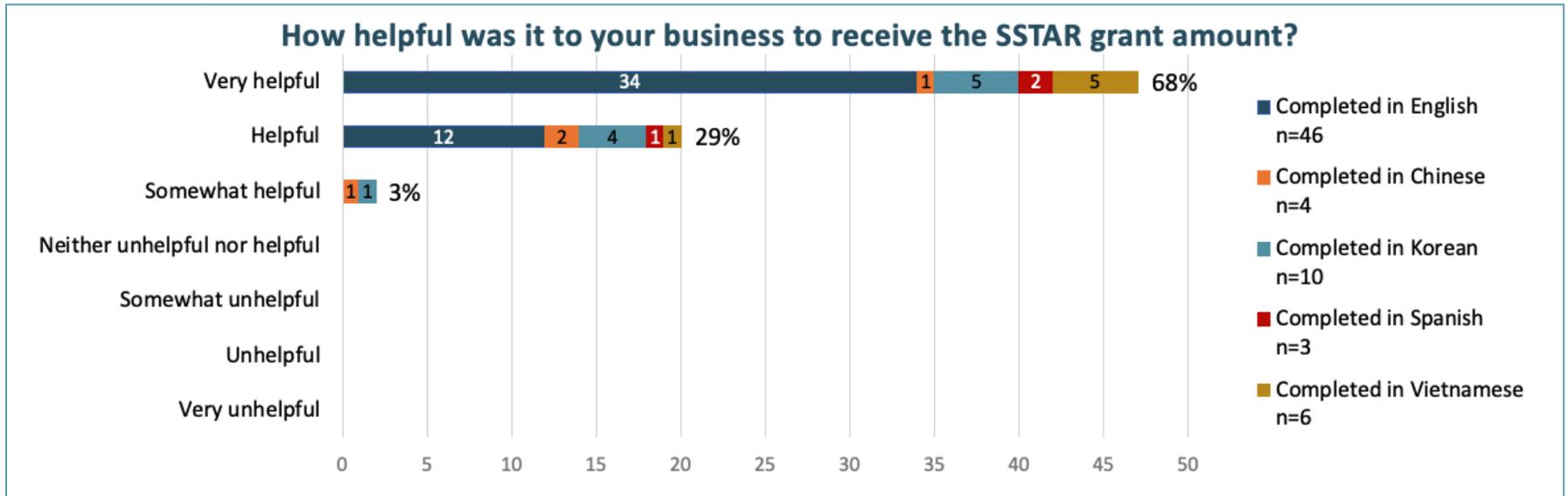


Figure 12. “How helpful was it to your business to receive the SSTAR grant amount?”, SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, Feb-Mar 2021

All survey participants reported that the SSTAR grant amount was **helpful** (very helpful, helpful, somewhat helpful) because not only did it cover costs incurred due to purchasing **COVID-19 supplies**, it helped **operating costs** and **covered payroll, lease, and utilities**. For some, the grant helped with **month’s expenses, operating costs, and overall financial hardship**.

There were six survey participants that selected “very unhelpful”. However, their explanation for selecting this response was contrary to unhelpfulness. The explanations noted that **every amount helped**, and the grant helped them with their **overall financial hardship** and **covered payroll, lease, and utilities**. Very unhelpful must have been selected mistakenly, since these explanations support the notion that the grant was very helpful. Figure 12 reflects these responses as “very helpful”.

See Appendix H for the compiled feedback responses from the survey participants.

“In this difficult situation with no money coming in and spending money to complying with state laws and city government and county government SSTAR program was a life saver.”
 - SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

RESULTS (continued)

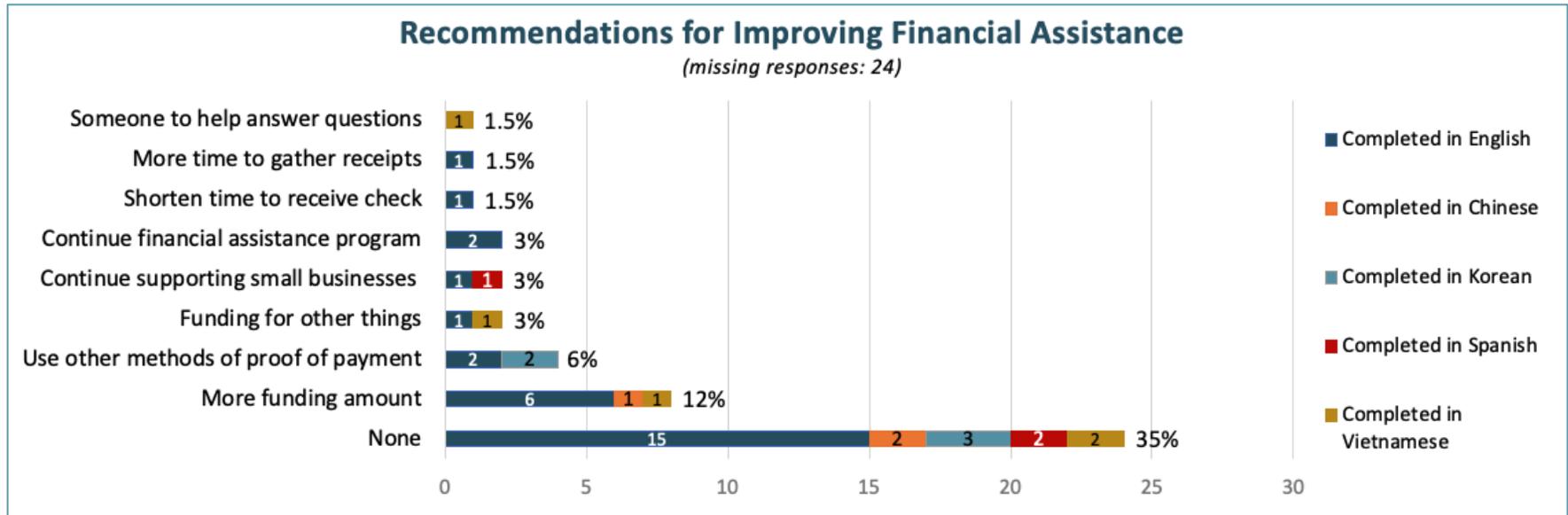


Figure 13. “Recommendations for Improving Financial Assistance”, SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, February-March 2021

For the survey participants that had no recommendations, some also shared that **SSTAR was helpful, the program was great and well organized**, and the **funding process was fast compared to other financial assistance programs**.

Some survey participants recommended future financial assistance programs should use other methods of proof of payment, including using **monthly sales** or **bank statements** rather than finding and submitting receipts.

3% of study participants recommended that future funding should cover other things, such as **paying rent, employee salaries, routine bills from suppliers, and utilities**.

“Accurate description of who is supported and what is supported, direct connection to each business, fast decisions, fast answers, follow up, all was satisfied.”

- SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

“I need support to pay lease rental and employees’ salaries”

- SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

“We need assistance for the routine bills from the suppliers! Electric, water, telephone, internet, etc.”

- SSTAR Fund Recipient (survey participant)

RESULTS (continued)

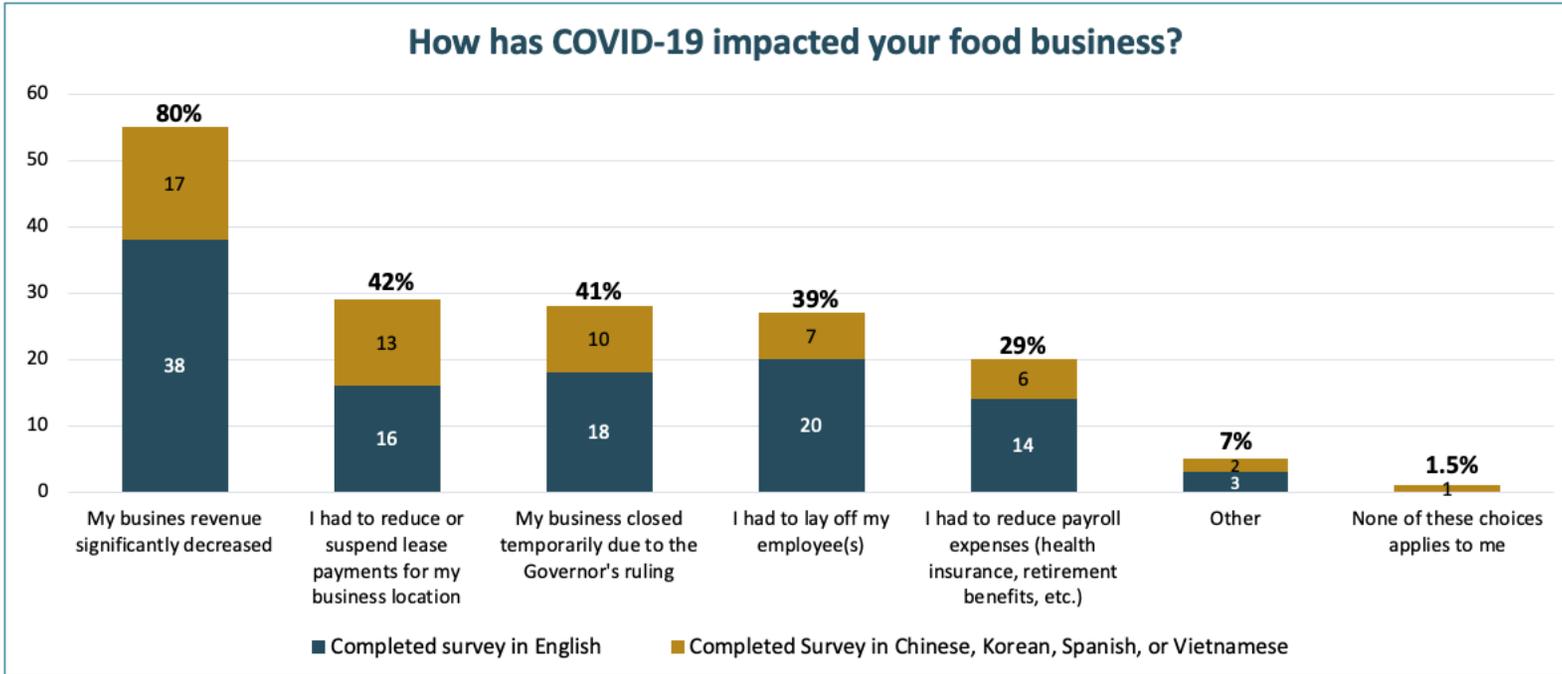


Figure 14. "How has COVID-19 impacted your food business?", SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, February-March 2021

The **most common impact of the COVID-19** on the survey participants' food businesses is the **significant decrease in business revenue**. Some survey participants also reported that COVID-19 forced them to reduce or suspend lease payments for their business, close their business temporarily due to Governor Inslee's ruling, lay off their employee(s), and/or reduce payroll expenses.

For the survey participants that selected "**Other**" for this question, they shared the following reasons of how COVID-19 impacted their food business:

"Had to spend more on COVID protections, spend more time handling COVID personnel issues."

"Can't even train new employees because in our tiny kitchen space and with the skill sets needed to convey in making espresso, and our menu items, can't do it while maintaining proper social distancing. I've been working everyday by myself since July...and am flat out exhausted."

"Slightly reduced profits."

"I'm working seven days."

"I had to close my business for two weeks because one of my employees got Corona."

RESULTS (continued)

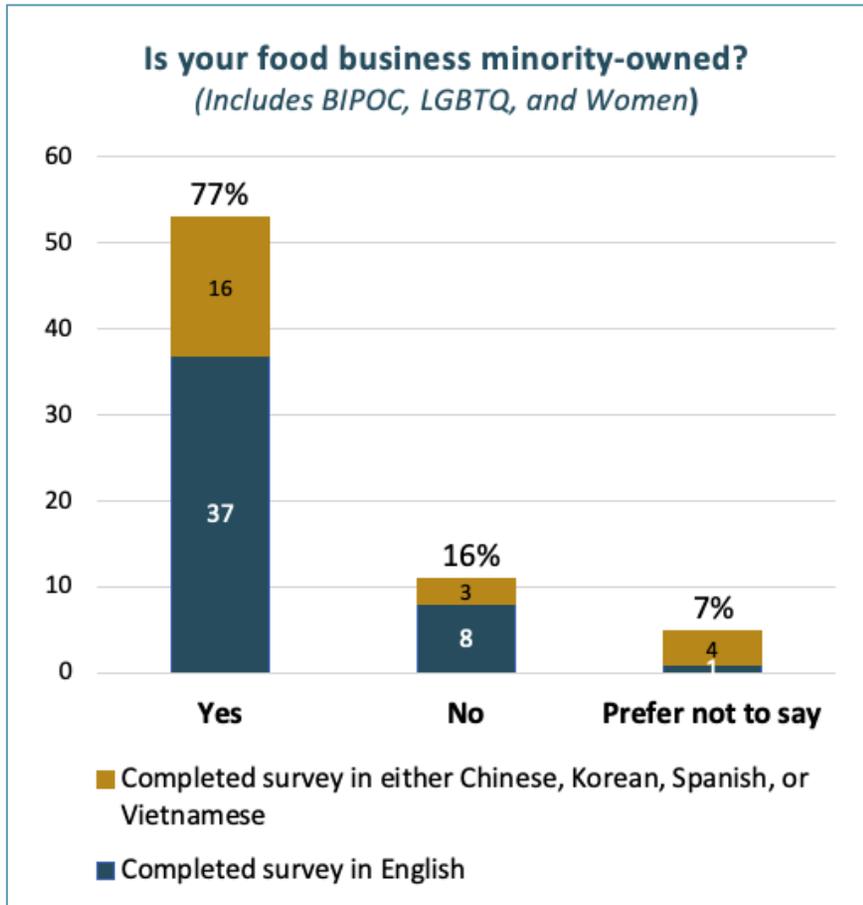


Figure 15. “Is your food business minority-owned?”, SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, February-March 2021

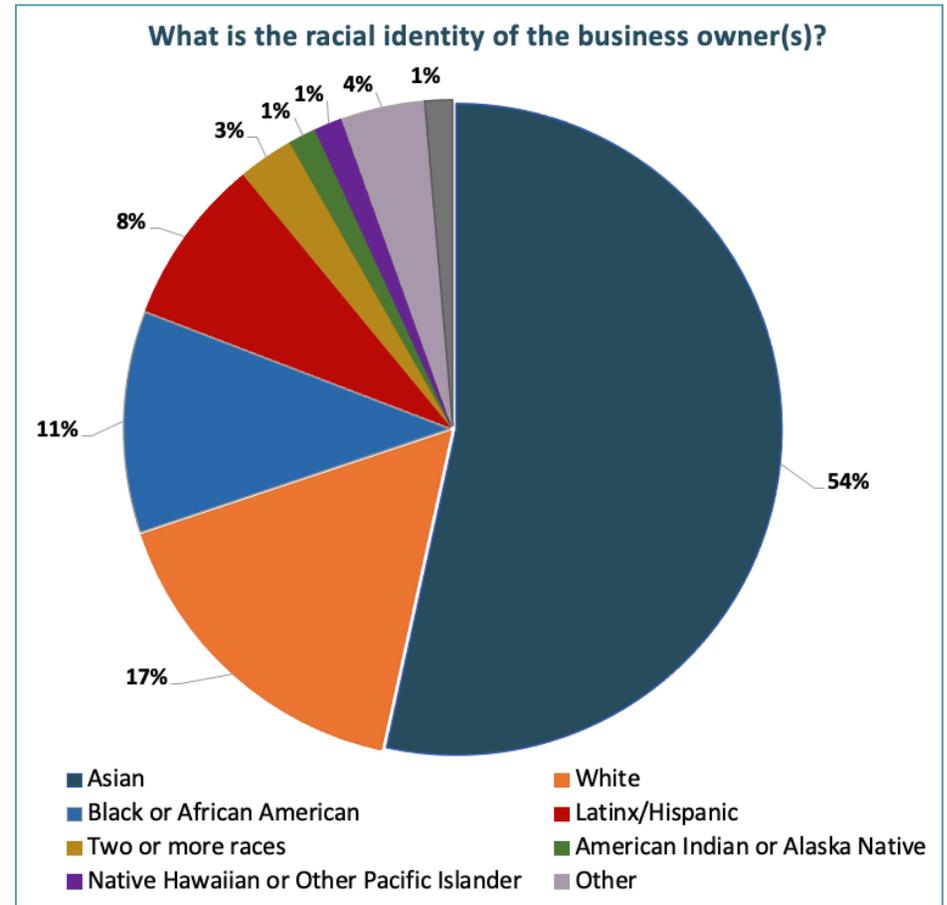


Figure 16. “What is the racial identity of the business owner(s)?”, SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, February-March 2021

The **majority** of survey participants identified their food business as **minority owned** (Figure 15). A few survey participants that completed the feedback survey in either Chinese, Korean, Spanish, or Vietnamese did not identify their business as minority-owned.

The **majority** (88%) of survey participants identified the business owner(s) as **part of the racial/ethnic minority group** (Figure 16). Interestingly, this is higher than the percentage of survey participants that identified the food business as minority-owned (77%).

The survey participants that identified “**Other**” as the racial identity of the business owner(s) specified Other as: **Middle Eastern, Turkish, and Afghan-American**.

RESULTS (continued)

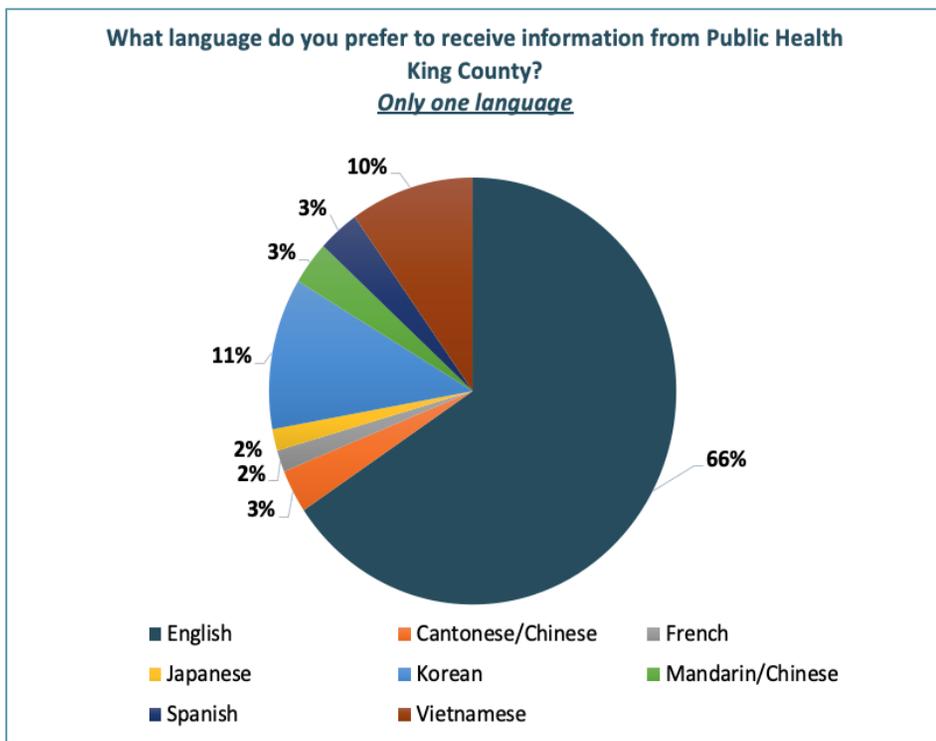


Figure 17. “What language do you prefer to receive information from Public Health King County?” (One language only) SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, n=61, February-March 2021

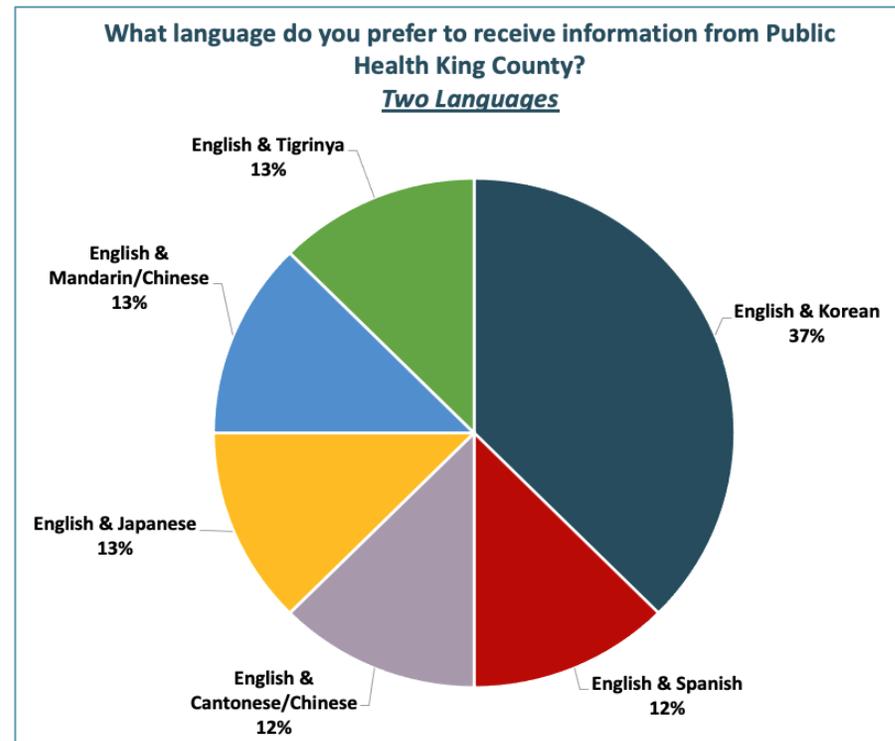


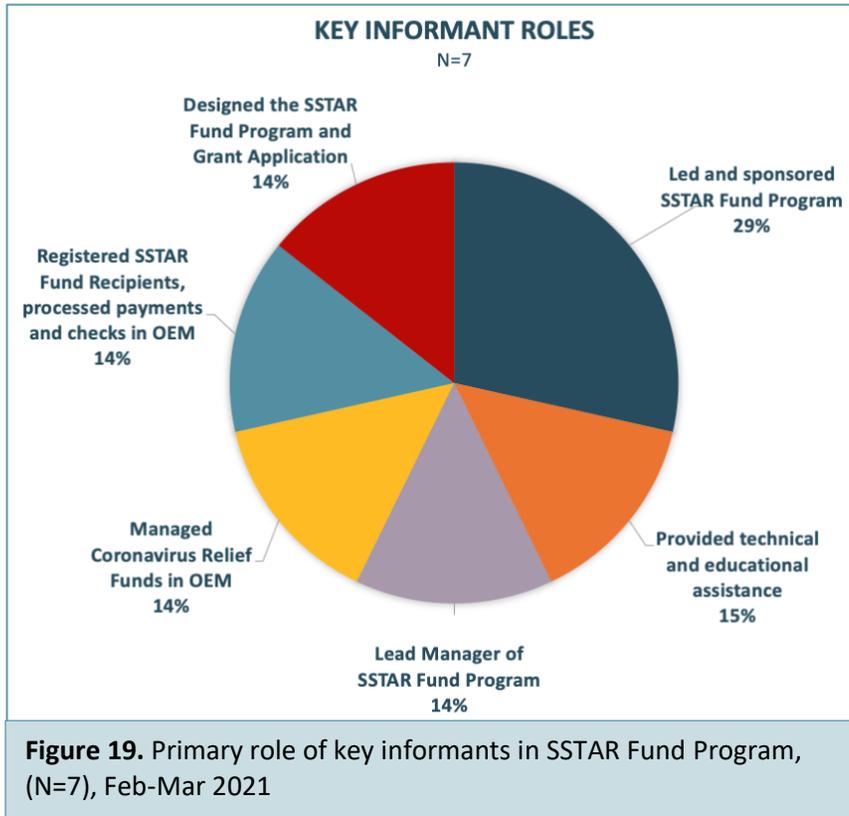
Figure 18. “What language do you prefer to receive information from Public Health King County?” (Two languages) SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey, n=8, February-March 2021

The majority of survey participants **specified one language** as their preferred language to receive information from Public Health King County (Figure 17). Most prefer to receive information in English. A couple of survey participants specified French and Japanese, which was not listed in the survey.

Some survey participants wanted **bilingual information** from Public Health King County. All included English in addition to one other language. A little over third of those who requested bilingual information prefer to receive information in English and Korean.

RESULTS (continued)

Key Informant Interviews



Regarding reducing grant application documents down to two pages.

"We didn't want to take more time out of [business owners'] busy schedule to pull together a comprehensive application and not get funded."
-Key Informant

"For me it [SSTAR Fund program] was one of 50...all in all, it was an incredibly pleasant experience and certainly my favorite program that I worked on."
-Key Informant

Successes of the SSTAR Fund Program

All key informants noted **great partnerships** between SSTAR and other stakeholders, including the community-based organizations (CBOs), OEM and Witt O'Brien's. Some key informants recognized the outstanding management of the program. A key informant appreciated Witt O'Brien's for addressing SSTAR team's concern with a lengthy 26-page contract being a barrier for our food businesses by reducing the contract to a two-page document. Another key informant mentioned that designing this program had the lightest touch they've ever seen, which helped get the money out to the community quickly while also complying with the office of the Inspector General. This would not have been possible without the great partnership that was established for this program.

Most key informants noted that the SSTAR Fund Program **lowered barriers for the business owners**, especially those with limited English proficiency (LEP). For example, by sending out announcements and forms in all 11 languages rather than sending them out in English first, this leveled the playing field for business owners with LEP. CBOs recognized this was the first time they've seen a government agency do this. Whereas with many other programs they had to advocate for translated materials. Some key informants pointed out that reducing the grant application down to a two-page document was instrumental to lowering barriers to applying for financial assistance

Some key informants shared that the **adaptiveness and flexibility of the program** helped with the success of the program. Leaving an "Other category" on the list of eligible reimbursable expenses allowed business owners to list other crucial expenses incurred due to COVID-19, such as replacement of failed equipment due to lack of operation.

Some key informants thought the program was successful in **achieving intentional targeted outreach**. Using a data-driven approach helped inform the targeted outreach to food establishments operating in areas negatively impacted by COVID-19 and long-standing inequities and health disparities (high priority zip codes).

RESULTS (continued)

Some key informants noted that this program allowed Public Health to **build a strong relationship with the food business community**. The SSTAR team, which included food inspectors that the restaurant community are familiar with already, provided a support channel for implementing the financial assistance. Key informants also emphasized the importance of listening to the food business community and what they need from Public Health. Listening to the community prevented the SSTAR team from ordering large quantities of tents and heaters, which may have not been useful for many food businesses.

Challenges of the SSTAR Fund Program

Many key informants shared that they **wished there was more time to implement the SSTAR fund program**. Distributing the COVID-19 CARES Act funding was described as trying to shove an elephant through a snake, where the elephant was the money and snake was the getting the money out in such a short period of time (~2 months). It was also difficult to ensure fairness during short period of time because there were several restaurants on the waitlist for funding but didn't get funding because there was not sufficient time to work with them to process their application, backup documents and checks by the CRF's December 30th deadline.

Some key informants found that some business owners had **some difficulty completing the forms and submitting proof of payment**. Some business owners did not keep their receipts or worked in a cash-based system and bought COVID-19 related equipment or items from friends or family and didn't have formal receipts to show proof of payment. A few key informants shared that upon receipt of the grant application and KC Substitute W-9 forms, there was a multiple back-and-forth process with many business owners to collect the appropriate information. It's challenging to fill out the forms when the business procurement language isn't familiar. There was also a challenge with receiving PDF fillable forms, which returned blank. Most business owners work off their smartphones, so completing the PDF form on phone was a challenge and required extra steps (e.g., saving the document on the phone) prior to emailing it.

A few informants said that **designing the program and eligibility criteria was a challenge**. It was a challenge to design the grant agreement form in a way so that it was not so intimidating to applicants so that they had high comfort in completing it. It was also challenging to figure out how and who to prioritize for funding. SSTAR wants to be able to fund all small, independently owned businesses, but a line had to be drawn (i.e. priority given to businesses who had \$500K or below in gross revenue in 2019). Defining the eligibility criteria and the process for collecting documentation from restaurants were also challenge.

Some key informants noted that SSTAR staff **capacity and high workload was a challenge**. One noted that it would have been ideal to combine financial assistance and educational visit by one of the food inspectors or SSTAR team. However, there wasn't enough capacity from SSTAR team to support this due to their busy scheduling working on the client side.

A few key informants shared that the **lack of standard documentation and process was a challenge**. A lot of time was spent trying to find documentation on how to process grant money and payments and calling many different people for information. Also, there is a gap in EHS Division's ENVISION database when trying to find email contacts for some businesses. This challenge was resolved by mailing out handouts and contacting businesses via Facebook or other social media platforms.

"I wish we had more time...it wasn't long enough...I think the biggest problem as it was with all the COVID-19 CAREs Act funding was you were trying to shove an elephant through a snake. The elephant being the money and the snake being the population and trying to get it through in the time period that we had to be approved for the money, develop the program, stand up the program, and get the money dispersed. It was quite a challenge for the program to get that done."

-Key informant

RESULTS (continued)

Value of Funding Small Businesses

Key informants shared that funding small, local, independently-owned businesses during this time was of great value because it with **allowed businesses to continue operating** during these times of financial hardship. By reducing some of the operating costs in a COVID environment, it allowed some of the food businesses to continue providing services in their communities.

The grant also provided value by supporting business owners and operators who depend on their business as a **core part of their family livelihood**.

"...they are oftentimes a family run business. So it is not like I lose my job and then somebody in the family actually brings in an income, but rather when they are closed, the entire family and the extended family suffer because there is no other source of income. This is their livelihood.

- Key informant

Some key informants also shared that the SSTAR fund recipients **had no other funding**, so this SSTAR fund grant was valuable in this capacity as well. Many food businesses don't get approved for certain grants because it's a random lottery style, like the PPP.

The intentional focus on small, independently owned and operated food businesses was valuable because it **reduced disparities and inequities**. Unlike larger national restaurant chains, these smaller businesses did not have the safety net of a corporation to support them during the pandemic. The targeted outreach to small businesses, especially ones operating in high priority zones, ensured prioritization of their financial hardships.

Finally, key informants shared another value of funding small, independent businesses was **supporting diverse communities**. A key informant noted that these businesses are the lifeblood of our community and diverse neighborhoods. Without supporting our small food businesses, they won't be able to provide services to their communities.

Lessons Learned

Key informants shared the following lessons they have learned after implementing the SSTAR Fund program:

A few key informants learned that working in the program opened up the **benefits of the partnerships and different skills** required to distribute financial assistance to the food business community. The pandemic forced some of them to think how their role can best support business owners. These roles were found to be very rewarding, especially working directly with the community. Also, a key informant noted that it takes some experience not only in grant management, but also programmatic experience working with community to make this program successful. Without the SSTAR and OEM partnership, this financial assistance program would not have been successful in getting out so much funding out the door so quickly.

"...this was my first time...for my role in King County, that I got to interact with the community, and I feel like I was being a good public servant helping out these businesses during this time, and that was very rewarding, so I really, really enjoyed that aspect of it.

- Key informant

A key informant shared that in hindsight, they wished they **requested and advocated for additional funding** to support businesses.

After seeing the missing email contacts in the EHS Division's ENVISION database, one key informant said that if they were to do this again, they would **mail out hard copy announcements a few days in advance** to ensure that businesses that don't have or check their email receive a hard copy letter about the financial assistance.

Another key informant noted that they would have **provided more support** if they started at 100% from the beginning, instead of starting at 50%.

RESULTS (continued)

Recommendations by Key Informants

Most of the key informants recommended that the next financial assistance program should have **standardized documentation and/or operating procedures**. Standardized processes will help make the program design and implementation, and the application process more streamlined for the SSTAR team and the businesses.

Most of the key informants also recommended that the next financial assistance program should **expand or include other eligible reimbursable items**. This specific SSTAR Fund program was constrained by only reimbursing COVID-19 related expenses, but it will be helpful to include financial support to cover other operating costs, like rent, utilities, payroll. In other words, the next financial assistance should support the business as a whole entity.

Some key informants recommended that the next financial assistance program should **reimburse those on the waitlist if there is leftover funding**. Due to the restrictions of the federal funding guidelines, some businesses that applied after the close of the application review process weren't able to receive funding despite having a little leftover funding.

A couple of key informants recommended that the next financial assistance should **consider the business owner's residence in high priority zip code in the eligibility criteria**. This program focused on whether or not the business itself was located in a high priority zip code. However, moving forward SSTAR should intentionally target business owners that operate and live in the communities highly impacted by COVID-19 and health disparities.

A key informant recommended that the next financial assistance should **limit funding to one business location per business owner**. Some SSTAR Fund recipients received funding for more than one of their business locations, such as independently owned franchises.

A key informant recommended that there should be an **extension for the application deadline or build in more time for future financial assistance implementation**. Additional time in general will ensure that more small businesses are aware of the funding opportunity and provide more time to complete and submit paperwork and proof of payment.

There was huge consensus among key informants that the next financial assistance program should **continue the targeted, equity-focused outreach approach**.

"...we're gonna need to continue to be mindful of equity and distributing funds also...if there is a longer period of funding that we're managing...figure out how to put some checks or internal controls in place to make sure that the funds are meeting our equity interests and not having this unintentional impact of going to businesses that are really not the ones that are most in need."

- Key informant

DISCUSSION

Collecting and analyzing data from business grant applications, key informant interviews, and multilingual online feedback surveys were crucial to evaluating the importance, challenges, lessons learned, and successes of the SSTAR Fund Program. The evaluation helps to determine if this program distributed financial assistance equitably to businesses with non-English speaking and minority-owned businesses and provide recommendations for future financial assistance programs.

SSTAR Fund Recipient Business Characteristics

A quantitative analysis of the SSTAR fund recipient applications and grant administration described the type of small businesses that were awarded and how the SSTAR fund team performed in screening and awarding the SSTAR fund recipients. The analysis showed that the SSTAR team's targeted and equity-based approach was successful in awarding small businesses that were owned/operated in high priority zip codes (97% of recipients), especially when they had a lower median gross revenue in 2019 (\$245K) than those that did not operate in high priority zip codes (\$323K). However, the dataset only included 11 SSTAR fund recipients that operate in non-high priority zip codes, which may have not been enough data to definitively conclude that they have higher gross revenue in 2019 than those operating in high priority zip codes.

The analysis also showed that it took more than a month (43 days) on average for SSTAR fund recipients to receive their reimbursement checks. While the overall program implementation was fast, the turnaround time for check receipt after receiving grant approval should ideally aim for a shorter duration, such as less than 30 days. The SSTAR fund recipient surveys and key informant interviews provided the explanations, such as how time-consuming it was to interpret, gather, and submit proof of payment, that likely contributed to the extended turnaround time.

SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey

About half of SSTAR fund recipients responded to the multilingual online feedback survey. The respondents appear to be a representative sample with 90% of survey respondents' zip codes located in high priority areas, compared to 92% of all SSTAR fund recipients operating in high priority zip codes.

The targeted email and letter announcements were successful in reaching small food businesses through referrals via health inspectors, friends, families, other restaurant owners, and other King County programs were crucial to the success of the targeted outreach approach.

The survey respondents had a mixed experience when applying for the financial assistance and gathering and submitting proof of payment. For those that noted their experience was very easy, all but one completed the survey in English, which indicates that the process for applying for the grant came much easier for those who have higher English proficiency. Although one SSTAR fund recipient appreciated the availability of documents in various languages, SSTAR may need to examine other strategies to close the gap between those that completed the survey in English and those that completed the survey in other languages.

The main challenges survey respondents shared was how time-consuming gathering and submitting proof of payment was and how they needed more time. Trying to run a business while running around finding and gathering receipts became a stressful experience, especially for those who work more in a cash-based system or did not already have records of invoices and receipts. SSTAR should consider finding another more efficient and less burdensome process of providing financial assistance that did not require submitting proof of payments, such as processes through the Washington State Commerce or the Small Business Administration.

The SSTAR Fund program was successful in awarding those most in need because the surveys indicated that the financial assistance was helpful to businesses. While the program aimed to reimburse costs incurred by COVID-19 supplies and PPE purchases, the grant allowed the recipients to cover other new expenses related to COVID-19 impact, such as payroll, utilities, rent, and overall financial hardship. Along with the grant amount itself, the SSTAR Fund team was very helpful to recipients by providing quick responses, technical and educational support, and assistance with the application and proof of payment submission processes.

The program was successful in their targeted equity-based approach by funding majority of recipients that identified their business as minority-owned. Regarding preferred language to receive PHSKC information, nearly all of the

DISCUSSION (continued)

languages selected reflect the languages of documents distributed to small businesses owners at the start of the program. Some survey respondents reported their preference for bilingual information. To continue an equity-based approach for future financial assistance programs, SSTAR should find a way to collect data on preferred language(s) to receive PHSKC information from food business owners/operators to ensure that food businesses receive information in their preferred language(s).

Key Informant Interviews

The key informants shared their perspectives on the value of the financial assistance program and the successes, challenges, and lessons they learned from the program and recommendations for future. All key informants shared that they appreciated the great partnership between stakeholders, which likely contributed to the overall success of the program. By working alongside and receiving input from primary contacts with the small food businesses through community-based organizations and SSTAR field and food program staff, the design and implementation of the program was successful in lowering barriers and increasing accessibility (e.g., using interpretive services and ensuring all documents are translated prior to distribution) for small businesses, especially those that identify as minority-owned businesses.

Findings from the key informant interviews complement the SSTAR fund recipient feedback surveys in how valuable the financial assistance was in helping small businesses cover costs incurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when the recipients had no other source of financial assistance. The SSTAR financial assistance program strengthened the relationship between Public Health and the restaurant community through the tremendous helpfulness of the SSTAR fund staff in the application process and the proof of payment gathering and submitting process.

The SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Program was new, so many of the skills and roles were new to some. The challenge of not having a standardized process of documentation established caused delays in reimbursing businesses and limited the number of businesses that could have received financial assistance.

If SSTAR is able to create another iteration of this financial assistance referral program, it is anticipated that processes and documentations will be standardized; therefore, more streamlined for the SSTAR fund team and partners.

Key informants provided many valuable recommendations for future financial assistance programs, some of which complement recommendations provided by SSTAR fund recipients, such as expanding what eligible items are reimbursable (e.g., rent, payroll, utilities, etc.). Recommendations by key informants appear to be aimed towards increasing the number of businesses that can be awarded, which may be achieved with redefining small businesses that are in the most need for financial assistance and established standard operating procedures and documents.

The SSTAR Fund program was important in providing financial assistance to food businesses that have been highly impacted by COVID-19 and racial and geographic health disparities. This pilot program was successful in helping food businesses owned and operating in high priority zones stay open longer and operate safely.

With any pilot program, there were some challenges and lessons learned. The primary challenge faced by both SSTAR Fund recipients (survey respondents) and key informants was not having enough time to implement the program. A potential resolution to this challenge is to have standardized processes and documentation, to make the program more streamlined and efficient for SSTAR team, community and department partners, and fund recipients. Another resolution is to remove processes that require gathering and submitting proof of payment.

Key informants learned that having a strong relationship with the food business community and partnerships with OEM are important to designing and implementing a successful financial assistance program. SSTAR should continue to incorporate equity-based approaches in future financial assistance programs, such as providing multi-lingual materials at all stages of the program and interpretive services and targeting communities that in most need of support. See Recommendations section for more recommendations for future financial assistance programs.

LIMITATIONS

A single evaluator (Graduate Student Intern), with the support of the graduate student's practicum supervisor/SSTAR staff, designed, implemented, and analyzed this evaluation study. Coding for the qualitative content thematic analysis, was performed by one person, which may reduce the validity of the evaluation. However, by triangulating the evaluation through a variety of data sources, such as the key informant interviews and online surveys, the validity of the evaluation findings are improved.

The key informant interview and feedback surveys were administered February-March 2021, which was months after the design and implementation of the SSTAR Fund program. Therefore, there is possible recall bias by SSTAR Fund recipients that completed the online feedback survey and by key informants that participated in the interviews. There were additional key players of this program that were not interviewed for the evaluation, which potentially limited additional insights and recommendations.

While there was a PDF version of the feedback survey that was administered to all SSTAR Fund recipients, only the online feedback survey were completed. There may be SSTAR Fund recipients that have limited technology proficiency. There were six respondents that indicated that the SSTAR fund grant amount was "very unhelpful"; however, their explanation for that response indicated that the grant was helpful. It is possible that there were survey entry mistakes due to misreading the question and Likert scale or unfamiliarity with Microsoft Forms or an online survey platform in general.

Although there was a high response rate of 50%, there may be potential selection bias among the survey participants. Feedback from the other 50% of SSTAR Fund recipients could have provided more insight to the evaluation and provided additional recommendations for future financial assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

King County Financial Assistance to Small Businesses

This guide is informed by existing procedures that were already implemented by the evaluated SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Program and by recommendations from key informants and SSTAR fund recipients that participated in the feedback survey.

SSTAR Team

- Manager(s) to continue advocating the program and funding for the small business community at the management level
- Ensure there is adequate field staff capacity to refer businesses to financial assistance program and provide technical and educational assistance.
- Ensure there is adequate staff to process and track grant applications, provide assistance on application process, process and distribute checks to recipients.

Outreach & Announcement

- Continue equity-based targeted outreach approach that was performed in this SSTAR Fund Program.
 - Consider adding translating documents in French and Japanese, which are languages that a few SSTAR Fund recipients prefer to receive information from PHSKC.
 - Create and distribute general informational flyer about how to apply for COVID-19 financial assistance and what information is important to keep on hand (e.g., tax identification number, filed tax information (gross revenue), bank statements, itemized receipts or documentation of related expenses, etc.)
- Establish a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the following:
 - Best strategies to send announcements to restaurant community
 - Send hard copy materials prior to sending in email. Not all business owners will check emails routinely or have working emails.
 - Send notification of financial assistance program via text messaging.
 - Contacting Community-Based Organizations and other King County departments
- Ensure the Food & Facilities Program captures and updates contact information and preferred language to receive PHSKC information from the permitted food businesses.

Instructions and Reviewing and Grant Applications and KC Substitute W-9 form

- Establish spreadsheet templates and SOPs on reviewing grant applications and data entry.
- Establish SOP on how to update business owner of status of their application.
- Create fact sheet with images to inform business owners on how to fill out applications
 - Where to find information for the application and W-9 form (e.g., where to find tax identification number)
 - Different methods of submitting application (e.g. mail, scan and email, take a picture and send via email).

RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

Screening and Eligibility Criteria

- Update high priority zip codes as informed by updated data from PHSKC APDE's Communities of Opportunity (COO) Equity Ranking, CD-Epi team's COVID-19 Equity Surveillance data, and other relevant data.
- Define different priority tiers of small businesses:
 - E.g. Tier 1: minority-owned, high priority zip code, <\$500K in gross revenue in 2019; Tier 2: minority-owned, any zip code, <\$500K in gross revenue in 2019; Tier 3: minority-owned, any zip code, <\$1M in gross revenue in 2019, etc.
- Consider incorporating business owner's place of residence in high priority zip codes in addition to location of business.
- Consider limiting grant funding to one business per business owner to ensure that there is maximum.

Office of Emergency Management

- Establish standard operating procedures for how to register businesses and process grants and payments.
- Continue to utilize Smartsheet for tracking and documentation.

Eligible Items for Reimbursement

- Provide flexibility on what items business owners need reimbursement and not limit to COVID-19 supplies expenses.
 - Consider reimbursement to cover payroll, utilities, rent and other operating costs.
- Non-reimbursement-based grant: administer flat grant amount to businesses or vouchers to businesses based on evidence of financial hardships (examples: grant programs administered by WA State Commerce and SBA's Restaurant Revitalization Fund).

Model equitable practices from other organizations and departments that lower barriers for financial support to small business, such as

- Washington State Department of Commerce: COVID-19 Emergency Grants for Small Businesses
- Small Business Administration (SBA): COVID-19 Relief Options
 - Restaurant Revitalization Fund
- King County Department of Local Services: Economic Development & Small Business Assistance (for businesses in unincorporated King County)

Appendix A: Equity-based Eligibility Criteria for Screening Applications

Equity-based Eligibility Criteria for Screening Applications

Priority was given to those that meet all criteria below (Tier 1). When there was leftover money, applicants that did not meet all criteria, but met the application deadline of November 16, 2020, also were also approved (Tier 2).

1. Locally owned small food business:
 - Has 10 or less full-time employees at the establishment; and
 - Does not exceed \$500,000 in gross annual revenue in sales in 2019
2. Operate in a high priority code identified by:
 - a. Communities of Opportunity Equity Rankings (PHSKC's Assessment, Policy Development and Evaluation Unit); or
 - b. [COVID-19 Equity Surveillance Data](#) (PHSCK's Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Program)
3. Facility has not received other financial assistance for the same expenses (such as: Federal SBA loans, KC DLS' mini-grants to small businesses, and Cities' financial assistance programs to small businesses)
4. Must also meet these additional requirements:
 - a. Food establishment with active PHSKC food permit
 - b. Not a cannabis or gambling business
 - c. Not a corporate chain food business

Appendix B: List of allowable expenses related to COVID-19

List of allowable expenses related to COVID-19 to **be used through Dec 30, 2020** that can be reimbursed:

Category	Types of Items
PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks • Face shields • Gloves
Supplies & Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitizers • Sanitizer station equipment • Thermometers (including touchless thermometers for employee screenings) • Disinfectants (e.g., Oxyvir Disinfecting Wipes; Hydrogen peroxide disinfectant; bleach; quaternary ammonium (quat); other 70% Alcohol Solution for disinfectant for guest and for high contact surfaces from EPA list of Disinfectants for COVID-19) • Spray bottles • Air filtration add-ons (e.g., HEPA filter) • Plexiglass, plastic or other barriers • Relevant signage or markers • Outdoor supplies (e.g., tents, heat lamps, outdoor dining furniture) • Take out container supplies • Food service towels (for disinfectant solutions) • Disposable paper towels
Services & Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted services (e.g., clean out front of business air circulation system) • Marketing fees and commission fees (e.g., delivery service platform’s marketing fees; Facebook ads) • Signage printing costs related COVID-19 messages • Reconfiguration costs that support social distancing
Other	If pre-approved or determined as needed by the Environmental Health Services Division to support businesses in following COVID-19 prevention measures.

List of expenses NOT allowed for reimbursement:

- Facility system upgrade or other permanent building upgrades/improvements
- Permit fees
- Rent or utilities

Appendix C – SSTAR Fund Referral Announcement Letter

October 16, 2020

Dear food business owner,

The Environmental Health Services Division's [Safe Starts for Taverns and Restaurants \(SSTAR\) Program](#) has a small fund to provide financial assistance to approximately 130 locally owned small businesses (up to \$3000 per business). We are now accepting requests on a rolling basis through December 20, 2020 or until funds run out.

Who is eligible?

If your food establishment meets all the criteria below, you are eligible to submit the [SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Form](#):

- ✓ Has an active Public Health-Seattle & King County Food Permit
- ✓ Has 10 or less full-time employees at the establishment right now (including self-employed or family-run business with no hired employees; or locally owned individual franchise)
- ✓ Does not exceed \$500,000 in gross annual revenue in sales in 2019
- ✓ Has a permitted seating capacity (both indoor and outdoor) of 50 chairs or less (see your Food Permit; this limit is different from the Fire Code occupancy)
- ✓ Has not received other financial support to pay for the same expenses requested here
- ✓ Operates in a high priority zip code based on King County's equity and COVID-19 data (see map of eligible zip codes for SSTAR Financial Assistance at <https://batchgeo.com/map/396f3425fc2459747200801bfedb43c1>)

This financial assistance is not for corporate-owned chain food businesses and not for gambling or cannabis businesses.

What can we reimburse for?

Financial assistance will cover reimbursements for PPE, supplies, equipment, services, and fees related to implementing COVID-19 preventative measures at food businesses (up to \$3000). **See the Referral Form for the list of allowable expenses.** The expenses must first be paid for by the business and used or implemented between March 1 to Dec 30, 2020. You must have proof of payment for the expenses. If approved, reimbursement is usually made within 30 days.

What can we not reimburse for?

We cannot reimburse for: facility system upgrade or other permanent building upgrades and improvements; permit fees; commission fees on delivery platforms; rent or utilities; and payroll or employee expenses.

Steps to request SSTAR financial assistance referral:

1. **Download Referral Form and complete Section 1** (available in [English](#), [Amharic](#), [Chinese \(Traditional\)](#), [Chinese \(Simplified\)](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tigrinya](#), and [Vietnamese](#)).

- Email the form with your signature to SSTARFund@kingcounty.gov or mail it to:
SSTAR Fund
Public Health – Seattle & King County
Environmental Health Services Division,
Suite 1100 401 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA
98104
- If you have questions or need assistance filling out the Referral Form, please contact SSTARFund@kingcounty.gov.
- If you need assistance in another language, please send a message to SSTARFund@kingcounty.gov with the name of the language and your phone number. We will respond within a few days, with an interpreter on the line.

2. After we have received your Referral Form, we will review it. If you are approved, we will follow up with you and let you know:

- If we need to schedule a short site visit with an Environmental Health field staff.
- After we notify you, we will give you a deadline (1-2 weeks) for when to submit the other required documents:
 - proof of payment for all expenses
 - King County-substitute W-9 form
 - Grant Agreement with Federal Terms (you will sign the English version, but this document will be available in other languages for your reference)
- If you send us the required documents after your deadline, we cannot process your reimbursement.
- We will contact you if your proof of payment or other required documents are incomplete.

3. **We will process your reimbursement after all forms and documents are complete.** Payment is usually made by check within 30 days. Please note that this payment will be considered taxable income.

SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Program

SSTARFund@kingcounty.gov

SSTAR Fund
Public Health – Seattle & King County Environmental
Health Services Division Suite 1100
401 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

Appendix C: SSTAR Fund Referral Announcement Letter (continued)

Links to the Referral Form, KC W-9 Form, Grant Agreement & Federal

Terms Instructions

[English](#), [Amharic](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tigrinya](#), and [Vietnamese](#)

Referral Form

[English](#), [Amharic](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tigrinya](#), and [Vietnamese](#)

King County-Substitute W-9 Form

[W-9 Form \(English only\)](#)

[Instructions for W-9 Form \(English only\)](#)

Grant Agreement

[English](#), [Amharic](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tigrinya](#), and [Vietnamese](#)

Federal Terms

[English](#), [Amharic](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tigrinya](#), and [Vietnamese](#)

Appendix D - SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Application

SSTAR Financial Assistance Referral Form Safe Starts for Taverns and Restaurants (SSTAR)



Business Owner: We are accepting requests on a rolling basis through December 20, 2020 or until funds run out. This financial assistance is in the form of a reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses paid by the business (up to \$3000). Fill out Section 1, sign and submit this form to SSTARFund@kingcounty.gov or mail to: SSTAR Fund, Public Health-Seattle & King County, Environmental Health Services, Suite 1100, 401 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98104

Referral No. _____
Received on: _____
Deadline: _____

SECTION 1: BUSINESS OWNER TO COMPLETE

Legal Name of Business _____

Business Street Address _____

City _____ ZIP Code _____

Mailing Address (if different from above) _____

Contact Name: First _____ Last _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

WA Unified Business Identifier (UBI) # _____

Public Health-Seattle & King County Food Permit # _____

- How many full-time employees do you have working at your food business today?** Full-time employee works 35 hours or more in a work week
- Do you have a permitted seating capacity (both indoor and outdoor) of 50 chairs or less?** See your Food Permit.
 Yes No
- What were your business gross sales in 2019?** This is your total sales before any deductions. See box 1/1a of your business tax return, or Schedule C of your personal tax return.
 \$

4. Which COVID-19 related expenses are you requesting reimbursement for? Expense must first be paid for by business and used or implemented between March 1 to Dec 30, 2020. You must have proof of payment for the expense. If approved, reimbursement is usually made within 30 days.

PPE

- masks, face shields
- gloves

Supplies & Equipment

- hand sanitizers
- sanitizer station equipment
- thermometers for employee screening
- cleaning solutions and disinfectants (e.g., disinfecting wipes, bleach, quat, disinfectants, etc.)
- spray bottles
- air filtration add-ons (e.g., HEPA filter)
- plexiglass, plastic or other barriers
- signage, markings (social distance), or printing
- outdoor dining equipment (e.g., tents, heat lamps, outdoor dining furniture)
- take out container supplies
- food service towels (for disinfectant solutions)
- disposable paper towels for cleaning

Services & Fees

- clean out air circulation system
- marketing fees (not commission fees) related to delivery service platform or Facebook ads
- signage or markings (including printing costs)
- space reconfiguration costs that support social distancing

Other COVID-19 Supplies, Services or Fees?

- Please discuss with an Environmental Health Staff to determine if they are allowable

SECTION 1 (CONTINUED)

5. As of today, how many of the expenses you checked off on #4 have you already paid for?

- None Some All

Note: If we approve, we will need your proof of payment for all expenses within 1-2 weeks. We will reimburse you for the approved expenses within 30 days.

6. How much money are you requesting from this SSTAR financial assistance program?

- Up to \$500
- \$501 -- \$1000
- \$1001 -- \$2000
- \$2001 -- \$3000

7. Have you received other Federal COVID-19 grants, loans, or other financial support for the same expenses in #4?

- Yes No

Certifications

I certify that the information submitted on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I am an authorized representative of this business. I understand that King County will rely on the accuracy of the submittals and certifications made with this application. Any misrepresentation or inaccurate information may result in forfeiture of financial assistance funds. I further understand I may be required to submit backup documentation proving the accuracy of my answers if I receive financial assistance.

- Yes No

Signature _____

Business Owner or Authorized Representative Date

SECTION 2: SSTAR & FOOD SAFETY FIELD STAFF

Date of most recent site visit: SSTAR: _____ or F&F: _____

Date of new site visit (if it has been more than a year): _____

Other items, services or fees approved by Environmental Health (not listed in #4):

EH Staff Signature _____ Date _____

EH Staff Name _____ Phone Number _____

SECTION 3: EH PROJECT OFFICER

Invoice date: _____ Invoice #: _____

Total costs invoiced (w/ proof of payment): \$ _____

Amount to be paid: \$ _____

Supplier Name: _____

Supplier #: _____

Payment type: _____ Note to AP: _____

P = _____

O = _____ Oracle Requisition #: _____

E = _____

T = _____ Oracle Receipt #: _____

A = _____ Oracle CPA: _____

EHS Project Officer Signature _____ Date _____

EHS Project Officer Name _____ Phone Number _____

Appendix E – Grant Agreement and Federal Terms & Conditions

GRANT AGREEMENT FOR RESTAURANT

Purpose of Agreement. The purpose of this grant agreement by and between King County, a municipal corporation (“the County”) is to set forth the terms and conditions under which the County will provide

_____ (“Recipient”) with \$ _____ as a grant to pay or reimburse necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 emergency for the period of March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020.

Scope of Eligible Expenditures. Grant funds may only be used to pay or reimburse eligible expenditures as described in **Attachment A** (“Federal Terms”), consistent with Ordinance 19103 and as detailed in **Attachment C** (“Program Scope of Work”). No grant funds may be used to pay or reimburse costs reimbursed under any other federal or state program.

Recipient Responsibilities. The grant funds provided herein are an allocation of the coronavirus relief fund, as created in section 5001 of H.R. 748, of the CARES Act. Recipient agrees to administer the grant proceeds consistent with this Agreement, in accordance with the applicable provisions of the CARES Act, any future applicable guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury and any other applicable federal provisions, as currently described at **Attachment A**.

Maintenance of Records. Recipient shall maintain copies of receipts for a period of six (6) years to ensure proper accounting for all grant funds and compliance with this Agreement. Recipient acknowledges that records may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW.

Repayment of Funds. If any funds provided to recipient were used in a manner that is not consistent or allowable as outlined in this agreement or in **Attachment A**, recipient shall return funds to County in the amount determined to be ineligible.

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington. The venue of any suit or arbitration arising under this Agreement shall be in King County, Washington and if a lawsuit, in King County Superior Court.

Duplication of Benefits Recipient certifies that they have not and will not accept financial assistance for the purpose described in the Program Scope of Work from any other source or program. If Recipient receives funds from any other source or program that duplicates any part of this grant, they will return that same amount to King County.

Indemnification; Recoupment. Recipient shall, at its cost and expense, protect, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the County, its directors, officers, employees, and agents, from and against any and all demands, liabilities, causes of action, costs and expenses (including attorneys’ fees), claims, judgments, or awards of damages, arising out of or in any way resulting from the acts or omissions of Recipient, its directors, officers, employees, or agents, relating in any way to the Recipient’s performance under the Agreement. These indemnification obligations shall survive the termination of the Agreement. Recipient further agrees that it is financially responsible for and will repay the County any and all indicated amounts following an audit exception which occurs due to Recipient’s failure, for any reason, to comply with the terms of this Agreement.

COUNTY	RECIPIENT
Name: _____	Name: _____
Title: _____	Title: _____
Signature: _____	Signature: _____
Date: _____	Date: _____

King County Coronavirus Relief Fund Grant Agreement

ATTACHMENT A – Federal Terms & Conditions

PROVISIONS REQUIRED BY LAW DEEMED INSERTED.

Each and every provision of law and clause required by law to be inserted in this Agreement shall be deemed to be inserted herein and the Agreement shall be read and enforced as though it were included therein, and if through mistake or otherwise any such provision is not inserted, or is not correctly inserted, then upon application of either party, the Agreement shall be physically amended to make such insertion or corrections.

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND, SECTION 5001 CARES ACT

The funds provided to Recipient are available under section 601(d) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 5001 of the CARES Act.

The Recipient certifies that the funds under this Agreement shall only be used to cover costs that:

1. Are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19;
2. [For governmental entities only] Were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020. A cost meets this requirement if:
 - a. The cost cannot lawfully be funded using a line item, allotment, or allocation within that budget, OR
 - b. The cost is for a substantially different use from any expected use of funds in such a line item, allotment, or allocation; and
3. Were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.

1. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES. The cost categories and their eligible cost sub-categories are as follows:

- a. Public health expenses such as:
 1. Expenses for technological assistance to local authorities or other entities on mitigation of COVID-19 related threats to public health and safety.
 2. Expenses for public safety measures undertaken in response to COVID-19.
- b. Any other COVID-19 related expenses reasonably necessary to the function of government that satisfy the fund’s eligibility criteria.

2. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES.

Non-allowable expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- a. Expenses for the state share of Medicaid.
- b. Damages covered by insurance.
- c. Payroll or benefits expenses for employees whose work duties are not substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- d. Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program.
- e. Reimbursement to donor for donated items or services.
- f. Workforce bonuses other than hazard pay or overtime.
- g. Severance pay.
- h. Legal settlements.
- i. Expenditures prohibited under the Health and Human Services requirements outlined in the next section.

UNIFORM GUIDANCE. The recipient understands that use of funds pursuant to this agreement must adhere to official federal guidance issued, or issued in the future, on what constitutes an eligible expenditure and to all requirements applicable to CRF funds including applicable requirements of 2 C.F.R. §200 (specifically including 2 C.F.R. §200.303 regarding internal controls, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.330 through 200.332 regarding subrecipient monitoring and management, and subpart F regarding audit requirements).

Appendix F: SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey Questions

SSTAR Financial Assistance Feedback Survey

Questions #1-9 are about your experience with the SSTAR financial assistance process.

1. What is the zip code(s) of your business that received the SSTAR financial assistance?

2. How did you hear about the SSTAR funding opportunity?

- Email or letter from Public Health SSTAR Fund
- Referral from friend, family, or other restaurant owner
- Referral from a Health Inspector
- Other, specify: _____

3. How difficult or easy was it to apply for the SSTAR financial assistance?
(Pick one answer)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very
difficult | Difficult | Somewhat
difficult | Neither
difficult nor
easy | Somewhat
easy | Easy | Very Easy |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Please explain your choice for Question 3:

5. How difficult or easy was it to gather and submit proof of payment to receive reimbursement?
(Pick one answer)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very
difficult | Difficult | Somewhat
difficult | Neither
difficult nor
easy | Somewhat
easy | Easy | Very Easy |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. Please explain your choice for Question 5:

7. How helpful was it to your business to receive the SSTAR grant amount?
(Pick on answer)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very
unhelpful | Unhelpful | Somewhat
Unhelpful | Neither
unhelpful
nor helpful | Somewhat
helpful | Helpful | Very
helpful |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Please explain your choice for Question 7:

9. What are your recommendations for improving the financial assistance process?

Questions #10-13 are about you and your business.

10. How has COVID-19 impacted your food business? (Please check all that apply)

- My business revenue significantly decreased
- I had to lay off my employee(s)
- My business closed temporarily due to the Governor's ruling
- I had to reduce payroll expenses (health insurance, retirement benefits, etc.)
- I had to reduce or suspend lease payments for my business location
- None of these choices applies to me
- Other, specify: _____

11. Is your food business minority-owned?

(Minority-owned includes: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ, and Women)

- Yes
- No
- Other, specify: _____
- I prefer not to say

Appendix F: SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey Questions (Continued)

12. What is the racial identity of the business owner(s)? *(Please check all that apply)*

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Latinx/Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- White
- I prefer not to say
- Other, specify: _____

13. What language do you prefer to receive information from Public Health King County?
(Please check all that apply)

- Amharic
- English
- Japanese
- Mandarin/Chinese
- Cantonese/ Chinese
- Khmer
- Korean
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tigrinya
- Vietnamese
- Russian
- Other, specify: _____

Screenshots of mobile version of Microsoft Form survey in English.

SSTAR Financial Assistance Feedback Survey (English)

Questions #1-9 are about your experience with the SSTAR financial assistance process.

1. What is the zip code(s) of your business that received the SSTAR financial assistance?

Enter your answer

2. How did you hear about the SSTAR funding opportunity?

- Email or letter from Public Health SSTAR Fund
- Referral from friend, family, or other restaurant owner
- Referral from a Health Inspector

5. How difficult or easy was it to gather and submit proof of payment to receive reimbursement?

Pick one answer

- Very difficult 😞
- Difficult 😞
- Somewhat difficult 😞
- Neither difficult nor easy 😐
- Somewhat easy 😊
- Easy 😊
- Very Easy 😊

6. Please explain your choice for Question 5.

Appendix G: Key Informant Interview Guide

SSTAR Financial Assistance Program Evaluation: Key Informant Interview Guide

- I. **Purpose:** To determine, importance, challenges, lessons learned, and successes of the SSTAR Financial Assistance Program. To capture recommendations for future similar programs or extension of SSTAR Financial Assistance program, and additional reflections.
- II. **Key Informants:** Internal Stakeholders involved with decision making, referrals, processing of payments in the SSTAR Financial Assistance program

III. Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this SSTAR Financial Assistance Program Evaluation interview.

(For those who do not know interviewer: My name is Elizabeth Nguyen. I am a master's student in Public Health at University of Washington, and I am a Graduate Student Intern with the SSTAR program at Public Health Seattle-King County. I am evaluating the SSTAR program, specifically the financial assistance portion.)

My goal today is to collect information about your role and experiences in the SSTAR Financial Assistance Program and collect any recommendations you may have for future, similar programs. This includes what went well or did not go well, how you think the SSTAR Financial Assistance Program helped small businesses, and any lessons you've learned or recommendations you would like to share for future programs.

You may refuse to answer any of the questions.

By participating in this interview, you agree that anything you include may be quoted in the program evaluation, any presentations, social media posts, or articles related to the SSTAR program.

Based on this information, do you agree to continue with this interview?

Yes- proceed to recording.

No- Not a problem. We do not need to proceed with this interview. I appreciate your time. (End meeting)

Recording: I plan to record this interview to capture a transcription of the information you shared, which will help me with data analysis. Before I hit the record button, are you ok with being recorded for data analysis purposes?

- Yes – Thank you, I will just ask you to agree to the interview and the recording again after I hit the record button
- No – Not a problem, we can continue to have our interview without recording and I will take notes of your responses manually.

IV. Questions

1. What is your role in the SSTAR Financial Assistance?
2. For your part in the fund distribution process:
 - i. What went well?
 - ii. What issues did you encounter? How were they addressed?
3. What is the value of providing this grant to independent, small food business owners during the pandemic?
4. What are some lessons learned?
5. If the SSTAR financial assistance were to continue or if there was future funding for small food businesses, what recommendations do you have for improving its process?
6. Any final comments to share?

V. End of interview

Thank you for your time and crucial information you have shared today. If you have any questions about the program evaluation, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. When the program evaluation is completed, I can send you a copy of the evaluation's summary.

Appendix H: Compiled SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey Responses

How difficult or easy was it to apply for the SSTAR financial assistance?						
Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Somewhat Easy	Easy	Very Easy
Im a small business and gathering all the receipts, taking pics of all of them and emailing took a long time. But totally worth it. Thanks	Electronic Signing	Take long time to get all receivers before to email it.	Having to find all the receipts was a bit stressful.	I followed the instructions. The instructions were very clear.	Ease was primarily due to my representatives' responsiveness to my application. It also helped that I had pretty good records.	Super simple process
I'm not good at computer and also not good at paperworks		The receipts were long, so took pictures and sent large amounts by e-mail	It was moderate since I had all my info ready just took a lot of time getting it together and filling it out .	Easy to apply.	The SSTAR staff assisted throughout the process.	Simple process, well explained. We were very grateful all around.
		Collect information such as receipts.	I need to find out the website link to apply for this grant, and the grant specialist is helpful for this grant.	Had to make a COVID plan. That was only a little hard	Simple to apply	The staff named Sinang working with us was very helpful and easy to communicate.
		A bit time-consuming	I had the blessing of working with the amazing Jasmine George, who help me through it all. Without her help I would have given up trying to get all my receipts. I can't thank her enough.	Very helpful people answered my questions	Because one of your stuff help me to apply	The instructions were clear, well organized.... and the organizers from King Co (Sinang Lee in particular, as she was my main contact) were so incredibly helpful ! Replied promptly and worked diligently to answer any and all of my questions. Such a smooth process. ... Furthermore, she was so responsive... If I asked a question, shared by others, she would then send our further instructions or notices so we could all benefit from a revised wording or ruling, etc. The County and Sinang were a real pleasure to work with.
			this is very clear and fair	A simple documentation was good	the questions were straightforward and application process and feedback is tumely	Easy questions for application
			It was pretty straightforward as to what they were needed, and because the COVID-19 pandemic impacted us, we pretty much had access to the list of the requested information.	It took a long time to find the receipts from the shopping list.	The application process was very straight-forward and easy to follow.	The application process was very straightforward
			It was time consuming to pulled out the PPE and To go container's receipts. Because it is so many small receipts. But it was easy to prove the food delivery company's commission.		Not hard, easy to do follow the instructions	print and send by mail. old fashion but it worked
			The application was straightforward.		it was easy to understand and read the application requirements and I received answers in reasonable time.	Application process was super easy and response was fast
			My son help for me		It was not hard to find.	The staff is very helpfull.
			It has given me accurate explanation for definite business eligibility requirements and qualifications subject to pay		Because they provide various languages and the staff are very helpful	i found the process very easy to follow. During application, No need to fill out excessively lengthy paperwork.
			At first, I could not understand the type of subjects which were to prepare the receipts but, I could prepare those quickly after I read explanation		All the documents required are pretty common	Application itself was easy to follow and user friendly.
			Language		My accountant helped me and it was easy just by checking the expenses.	Everything was organised in such a way that it was easy to fill out the form
			It's not difficult as I only need to fill in the form in its order and be accurate. It's not easy as sometimes, when I don't understand some details in the form, there's no one to help answer my questions.		I do not understand.	It was very easy to complete a form with business information, and email.
			It is necessary to follow the guiding procedure then it's accepted.			thanks to the support of this program staff

Appendix H: Compiled SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey Responses (continued)

How difficult or easy was it to gather and submit proof of payment to receive reimbursement?						
Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Somewhat Easy	Easy	Very Easy
Im a small business and gathering all the receipts, taking pics of all of them and emailing took a long time. But totally worth it. Thanks	"We did not keep the receipts for Costco. When we went to Costco customer service in person, they were giving us a hard time and said they will only do it for us one time. Places like Cash & Carry and Restaurant Depot were super easy, we were able to create an account and download what we needed. "	We did not keep the receipts for Costco. When we went to Costco customer service in person, they were giving us a hard time and said they will only do it for us one time. Places like Cash & Carry and Restaurant Depot were super easy, we were able to create an account and download what we needed.	At first, I could not understand the type of subjects which were to prepare the receipts But, I could prepare those quickly after I read the explanation	I created a spreadsheet documenting all the proof of payment items and attaching scanned receipts. It was quite a work but needed to clearly document the charges.	As I stated, the pandemic was prevalently affecting us all. Therefore the receipts and statements that we needed to support how we were able to get through and the things we purchased during this pandemic were readily accessible for us.	Again, this ease was only made possible by the helpfulness of Sinang and KC Health Dept..staff... I have a very small cafe with limited storage and cash flow.. So I have to go to stores almost daily for supplies. This results in tons of individual receipts.... and containing items approved for reimbursement but in different categories. I foresaw a nightmare of record keeping to present the receipts but Sinang was so helpful, allowing me to photograph all the receipts --upon which I highlighted approved items and provided explanation when/if needed. It worked out so much easier.
	Sometimes, it's not about bills and paperworks.	Gathering of the records and receipts	correct invoice and change to pdf file are little spend a time. but not difficult for us.	I saved all the receipts we purchased.	It was easy overall to send pictures of proof.	Just had to submit copies of my receipts.
		We had to digged through alot of expenses reports to locate receipts. It was worth it at the end.	It was just a pain collecting all those receipts! But I understand the need to show proof.	SSTAR staff was very helpful in this step.	Payment was process very fast	Submitting receipts for expenses incurred seems pretty easy to me.
		It was difficult, because I'm trying to run my business with limited help and trying to gather and highlight all the receipts that would be approved was a pain.	At first, I could not understand the type of subjects which were to prepare the receipts But, I could prepare those quickly after I read the explanation	Customer service helped. They reach out and help with the process.	Ease was primarily due to my representatives' responsiveness to my application. It also helped that I had pretty good records.	we just followed the instruction from the email and keep receipts of all our spendings, which is very easy.
		It was difficult to find all the receipts, as since purchases for different PPE, we have had to purchase from multiple sources, and with lack of funding, we had to pay for purchases on certain cards, so not everything was from one single account, making it harder to track down and gather, but still doable.	It was time consuming to pulled out the PPE and To go container's receipts. Because it is so many small receipts. But it was easy to prove the food delivery company's commission.	Normally I file all receipts for expenses but on this occasion as there was not enough \$ I used my personal money for some purchases and did not file them.	it was easy to submit proofs b cause you are given enough time to submit receipts and invoices.	We manage to scan receipts then send thru email. SSTAR fund Team was always available to support us on type of valid and allowable receipts. Thank you Sinang & Jasmine.
		Sometimes receipts don't say exactly what the item is, especially Costco.	Because of the credit card's record	Had difficulty with PDFs coming through properly.	The staff I worked with provided me with detailed instructions on how to gather those proof of payments	We manage to scan receipts then send thru email. SSTAR fund Team was always available to support us on type of valid and allowable receipts. Thank you Sinang & Jasmine.
		Short time	WE USED 2 DAYS TO GET IT DONE.	It was easy since my accountant had all my receipts in the office.	Easy because we keep the shopping receipts for book keeping	Email is a great option and I like knowing I was in contact with someone directly
		It took a long time to find all the past receipts.	It has given me an example of evidence for compensation.	It was gathered easy and somewhat not difficult.	Your Stuff helped	I have all the original receipts
		The documents were simple	It just took time but much easier than PPP forgiveness	collecting all receipts from past vendors	I had receipts and records of purchases so it was easy to present them	Scanned receipts and emailed them.
		Problem logging into the store's website to get receipts.	Because I had them		The fund covered the third-party delivery service fee	
		It's a must to find the previous documents. If any document is lost, it should be applied again.	We have to find all the existing receipts that we paid for the covid supplies.		I don't understand what you are asking.	
			Time-consuming.		Records have been available and I'm ready to supplement as requested	
					It's a must to submit all of the required documents, then it'll be accepted.	

Appendix H: Compiled SSTAR Fund Recipient Feedback Survey Responses (continued)

How helpful was it to your business to receive the SSTAR grant amount?					
Very Unhelpful	Somewhat Helpful	Helpful		Very Helpful	
Received money will help to pay a lot of expenses such as rent, electricity, water, supplies, etc.	Help to paid part of delivery service fee but lose amount still very large	We had extra fund to purchase our safety restaurant supplies and other supplies that need for restaurant.	It helped us covered all the extra expenses like take out boxes and cvoid safty products to keep employees and customers safe.	w we were able to use the Grant money to feeling some gaps in our budget	My restaurant is closed and my shop is open; however, due to COVID, sale is very slow so my family does not have income.
The funds helped in buying business supplies and eased us financially		I received the full amount of \$3000,it really helped out for that month with expenses.	It's been a very hard year financially, and this has helped us a bit!	It really helped to cover some of the costs as business has been slow	Helped to make reopening easier.
Helped us stay in business		It was appropriate compensation in the situation where expenditure on disposable containers, disinfectants, masks, and protective equipment has increased.	we use the fund to cover the extra cost that we made to ensure a safety dinning environment for our customers, which is of grate help.	Our restaurant was able to buy all the needed COVID related supplies with the grant amount. It was an unplanned expense and being a fairly new restaurant, grant was able to cover most charges. Thank you for the grant!	Be able to pay rent when business is not running well, be able to pay water, electricity bills, etc.
Be able to pay rent and staff salary.		the funds help our restaurant operating expenses.	Allowed us to pay for equipment to cover our outdoor seating during the wettest time of year.	A dollar is hard to come by. So we are grateful to get help. Thank you.	During this very difficult time, any financial support would be super valuable to us
In this difficult situation with no money coming in and spending money to complying with state laws and city government and county government SSTAR program was a life savers		It was difficult because of the sudden increase in expenditure, but it was very helpful to get the subsidy.	We probably wouldn't even still be in business without this grant! Covid has severely impacted my business.. All food services have been hurt, but cafes/coffee houses in particular, as going out for coffee is such a social thing.. Humans like to meet for coffee.. No indoor dining in the summer was less of an impact, but by winter with rain, cold, and wind.... it really put a damper on business (pardon the pun) SStar enabled my to get some outdoor heaters, a canopy, some lights.... Plus all the extra gloves, paper towels, sanitizers, etc.... Whew enormous expense. A box of Nitrile gloves were \$8 max before covid.. Now they are about \$25.. And we go through tons of them, completely unsustainable for a tiny cafe struggling to stay afloat..	The prices of take out containers/boxes are still going up because of demand, and certain sizes are still scarce. PPE is still widely needed and even though these are more readily available, the prices haven't come down at reputable sources. The grant helps to offset some of these costs and is much appreciated.	We are spending a lot of extra money for take out containers, gloves and sanitizer. this was very helpful. Thank you!
		3k paid my lease for 1 month	Every little bit of assistance helps to relieve the tremendous pressure caused by the Pandemic.	it came in a time of crisis and it was very helpful and useful and it couldn't come at a better time!	I used for payroll.
		It was definitely helpful as every little bit helps, and we do greatly appreciate it. Due to limited operations though, it has still just been extremely difficult to even break even from what all of our costs are.	It was the other grant our business received beside PPP loan. There's no words can describe how grateful we are to receive this grant.	Gloves, hand sanitizer cost were jumped. I didn't realize how much 'Take-out' container, condiments cost are raised,	TO receive the fund the staff is very helpfull during the process.
		It helps us to buy more supplies	Overall it was helpful to keep the business running, and allowing extra PPE equipment for costumers as well.	It was great timing for small business.	Because we use so much to go containers, cleaning supplies and safety equipment that we didn't have the budget for all this new things.
		It was very helpful.	I have received very little financial help. This was the first grant that I was awarded after being closed for a year.	IT WOULD HELP US TO TAKE CARE THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.	
		A stronger security service is available	A huge help in covering expenses to stay open.	Thank you so much for your assistance in times of trouble.	
		Used money to buy extra supplies.	Help me to adjust business to comply with Covid-19 requirements	Because when I had a hard time with no sales, I could get financial help	
		Every small help means a lot!	covered up all expense of my employees' essential gears	It was very useful, as I could recover some of the much we spent because of COVID-19.	
		It costs more to operate in disinfectant, gloves, and To Go Box etc.	Help us a lot about everything	Low customer traffic due to COVID-19	
		Thank you, yes. Continue.			
		Help fairly amount			