

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 9, 2021

Honorable Isabella Casillas Guzman
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman,

My constituents have relayed numerous horror stories to me about their experiences with the Small Business Administration (SBA) under your leadership as they have attempted to secure COVID-19 relief funding. The undue delay that the SBA has forced business owners around the country to endure is shameful and must be addressed.

Relief programs were passed with the obvious intent of providing relief to struggling businesses throughout the country. However, the SBA has clearly demonstrated that it was ill equipped to handle the volume of relief assistance applications that were submitted.

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this year that the SBA was overwhelmed and unprepared to process the surge of applications from businesses applying for COVID-19 relief. The *Journal* interviewed former SBA regional administrator Robert Scott, who emphasized that the agency “did a terrible job” in distributing disaster relief.¹ Scott described a lack of leadership from the SBA and repeated that, under your leadership, the agency has shown an absolute failure to adjust and meet the current demand.²

Yahoo! News has also frequently reported on the struggles that business owners around the country have encountered when working with the SBA to receive approval for the agency’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan program (EIDL). Reporting from *Yahoo! News* revealed multiple instances of small business owners receiving frustrating and vague responses when contacting the SBA to inquire about the status of their application.³ Struggling businesses recovering from COVID-19 lockdowns do not have the luxury of waiting several months with no clear guidance or communication from your agency.

The reporting from *The Wall Street Journal* and *Yahoo! News* confirms what I have repeatedly heard from constituents and business owners in Arizona. These business owners have consistently encountered delay and incompetency from officials within the SBA. One of my constituents waited nine months before his application for relief funding was rejected by the SBA. When he spoke with a representative from the SBA, he was told that the appeals process would take an additional 12-14 weeks.

¹ Amara Omeokwe & Ruth Simon, *Small Business Needed Federal Help. The Agency in Charge Fell Short*, WALL ST. J., June 17, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-agency-named-to-rescue-small-business-leaves-many-hanging-11623945978>.

² *Id.*

³ Dani Romero, *Small businesses face ‘very difficult’ process for COVID aid as Omicron looms*, YAHOO! NEWS, Nov. 27, 2021, <https://news.yahoo.com/small-businesses-scramble-for-sba-aid-but-face-very-difficult-process-120053736.html>.

This degree of delay and incompetence from your agency is entirely unacceptable. Small businesses throughout the country have struggled to stay afloat as they persevered through draconian COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Business owners must not be forced to wait months on end with little communication or clarification from SBA representatives.

The SBA's inability to adequately process and distribute COVID-19 relief to struggling businesses is incredibly troubling. I request that you immediately provide a response to my office on the measures that your agency is taking to ensure that COVID-19 relief funding is timely distributed to business owners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Biggs". The signature is stylized with a large "A" and "B".

Andy Biggs
Member of Congress