

WisDems: Trump's COVID-19 response has failed Wisconsin's small businesses

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(MADISON, WI) — Across Wisconsin, businesses have had to close their doors, sometimes permanently, due to Donald Trump's disastrous response to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the outbreak began, companies knew they were in for a tough time, but thought that the pain would be short-lived because they believed the federal government would have their backs and respond quickly. But that's not what happened.

Due to Trump's inaction, the infection and death rate skyrocketed, forcing state governments to shut their states down as a matter of public safety. Even after the initial spike, Trump refused to mobilize major manufacturers to produce the PPE gear needed on the frontlines and the testing and contact tracing program needed to slow and reduce the spread of Coronavirus. Even now, there is no national testing plan as the death toll has surged past 90,000 Americans. This has forced businesses to stay closed longer as well as prolonged stay-at-home orders. What's more is Trump has even gone so far as to encourage large-scale protests and cheered on states prematurely opening up, undoubtedly leading to a spike in infections and a prolonged re-opening that will further hurt local businesses.

Wisconsin businesses are bearing the brunt of Trump's failure.

[FOX 6: Wisconsin small businesses left waiting as corporations collect federal aid: 'Are we gonna survive?'](#)

"On Main Street in West Bend, the businesses don't have 500 employees — most have fewer than 100. Many of them tried to get PPP loans, but were told the money was all gone — all \$349 billion...Emails obtained by the FOX Investigators show that

the Marcus Corporation — with more than 10,500 employees and \$820 million in annual revenue — applied for PPP loans for its hotels and restaurants, including The Hilton, Saint Kate and The Pfister in Milwaukee.”

[Green Bay Press Gazette: Wisconsin companies tried to snap up small-business relief loans before the money ran out. Some were left waiting.](#)

“Cindy DeWitt has been in business for 13 years running The Funky Zebra, a boutique in Fish Creek. DeWitt applied for a PPP loan, as well as additional SBA loans, on the first day the Paycheck Protection Program opened. “Haven’t heard one word. Not a word,” DeWitt said. “Not only did I not get them, I haven’t heard a ‘We’re sorry, we ran out of money’ or anything. It’s frustrating for a small business like myself.” Her neighbors’ businesses haven’t heard anything, either. She expressed frustration some chain businesses received funding, while many small businesses haven’t. If DeWitt had the PPP loan, she could pay her two employees. “I think I’m going to end up going and taking a second mortgage out,” DeWitt said. “I’ve jumped through all the hoops, and it didn’t do me any good.”

[Up North News: Three Publicly Traded WI Companies Got Millions Through PPP](#)

“Three publicly traded Wisconsin companies received millions of dollars in federal coronavirus relief loans that were supposed to go to small businesses, according to data compiled by the Washington Post. Twin Disc, Telkonet, and Sonic Foundry received a combined total of more than \$11 million. They are just three of the roughly 300 public companies that got a combined \$1 billion in relief payouts from the Paycheck Protection Program, according to the Post.”

[WQOW: Eau Claire business starts GoFundMe to pay employees, cover costs](#)

“Tangled Up In Hue, a small business specializing in local arts, crafts and gifts, recently started a GoFundMe page after having a hard time securing any business loans or financial assistance. The owners hope to use the money to pay employees, and keep the popular Eau Claire spot up and running.”

[WSAW: Small businesses search for a safety net after some PPP funds go to large institutions](#)

“At the Wausau World Market, a once-bustling store where rice flew off the shelves sits mostly empty of customers, rice piled high. It’s especially difficult since overseas products are becoming more expensive to stock. Owner Chungsou Shawn Her tells me they’ve adapted by starting to make and sell cloth face masks and natural remedies like ginger. A hand sanitizer station sits at the front with boxes of gloves, and signs ask people to social distance. But he’s not sure how much longer

his and his wife's business can stay open. "I don't know what to do, I don't know what tomorrow will stand," said Her."

"Wisconsin's economy and business community continues to suffer because Donald Trump failed to adequately address the COVID-19 pandemic with any real plan that would get us back to some sense of normalcy," Democratic Party of Wisconsin spokesperson Philip Shulman said. "Main Street businesses will continue to shut their doors forever because Trump and his enablers continue to ignore the needs of working people while prioritizing rich corporations. If our economy is going to recover and Wisconsinites are going to get back to work, we need Joe Biden in the Oval Office to make that happen; Trump simply doesn't care about what is happening to hard working people in Wisconsin and across this country."