

Opportunity Wisconsin: Report highlights how American Rescue plan is supporting Wisconsin small businesses

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MADISON, Wis.— Opportunity Wisconsin today released a [new report](#) today highlighting how the American Rescue Plan is providing meaningful relief for Wisconsin small businesses. Last week, Opportunity Wisconsin and Main Street Alliance [hosted a press conference with U.S. Representative Ron Kind](#) and local small business owners sharing their stories of struggle during the pandemic.

“This has been an incredibly hard year, especially for those in the service industry, whether it’s the Smokehouse or Pearl Street Brewery, they’ve been devastated from all of this,” said Rep. Kind. “And the CARES Act last year that we passed, now the American Rescue Plan was again meant to provide some short-term assistance to the small businesses to keep their operations going until we can get this economy fully firing again.”

“When I heard about the American Rescue Plan, more specifically the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, that’s taking a massive step into funneling funds to the hospitality industry, which has been so heavily impacted that it will take many, many years to recover. I’m really excited about what this is going to bring,” said Tami Plourde, co-owner of Pearl Street Brewery in La Crosse.

“We have a plan now. We’re not out of the woods yet, but it looks much brighter now than it did a year ago, even six months ago. We’re experiencing an uptick in our numbers as far as customers coming back, due to vaccinations that are taking place. It’s an exciting time,” said [Darren Price](#), owner of BP Smokehouse in Tomah and Opportunity Wisconsin steering committee member.

A copy of Opportunity Wisconsin’s [new report](#) is posted below.

Report: How the American Rescue Plan Helps Small Businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, but they have been left to fend for themselves during an extremely difficult year. The American Rescue Plan lends a helping hand to struggling businesses and ensures that they will be the engine of the American recovery.

Restaurant Revitalization Fund

This fund provides grants to one of the hardest hit industries. The \$28 billion in this fund is specifically designed for any establishment where food or drinks are sold, and the grants do not need to be repaid. Restaurants can receive grants up to \$10 million, and will be calculated based on their lost revenue during the pandemic.

Impact on Wisconsin

- The Wisconsin restaurant industry [employs](#) 284,600 people, representing 9% of all employment in the state.

- 1 in 10 restaurants have [closed](#) due to the pandemic.
- Restaurant sales were [down](#) 30% in Wisconsin last year.
- 83% of Wisconsin restaurants say they are operating with fewer staff than usual.
- Before passage of the ARP, 13% of restaurants [said](#) they would most likely close without federal aid.

Paycheck Protection Program

The Paycheck Protection Program, which offers loans to cover payroll expenses, was created as a lifeline for struggling small businesses at the start of the pandemic. Even as the economy begins to recover, those same businesses are not out of the woods yet. That is why the ARP increased PPP funding and expanded eligibility to additional forms of nonprofit organizations and internet publications.

Impact on Wisconsin

- All small businesses (having 500 employees or fewer) in Wisconsin are available to [apply](#) for two loans via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), receiving up to 2.5 times their monthly payroll costs, up to \$10 million in total for their first loan and \$2 million for the second.
- 158,148 Wisconsin businesses have [received](#) PPP loans.
- The dairy industry has received the most PPP loans in Wisconsin, with an average loan of \$32,347. WI has the second [largest](#) dairy industry in the country, producing half of Wisconsin's agricultural economy. Producing dairy

creates 154,000 [jobs](#) in Wisconsin.

- 5,903 restaurants in Wisconsin have received PPP loans.

Save Our Stages

The Save Our Stages Act, passed in December, allows theaters, venues, and museums to apply for Shuttered Venue Operators (SVO) grants. The ARP allocates an additional \$1.25 billion in grants to the program, while also expanding eligibility to include businesses that received a PPP loan in 2021.

Impact on Wisconsin

- 96 Wisconsin venues recently [received](#) small grants from the state government. They will now be eligible for SVO grants.

EIDL Program

Much like the PPP, the Economic Injury Disaster Loans program is a SBA initiative that provides money to small businesses impacted by the pandemic. Unlike the PPP, EIDLs do not need to be paid back. Businesses can receive up to a maximum of \$10,000 from this program. The ARP restarts this extremely successful program and allocates an additional \$15 billion for these grants.

Impact on Wisconsin

- Last year, 67,000 small businesses in Wisconsin [received](#) \$252.61 million in funds from the EIDL program before it ran out of money.

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About Opportunity Wisconsin

Opportunity Wisconsin is a coalition of Wisconsin residents fighting for an economy that works for working people. Through our stories, we're elevating the real consequences of the destructive economic policies that put the wealthy few first and leave the rest of us behind. Together, we're demanding our elected officials focus more on growing the economy for middle class folks and expanding opportunity for all Wisconsinites. To learn more about Opportunity Wisconsin, visit OpportunityWisconsin.org or stay connected on Twitter at [@OpportunityWI](https://twitter.com/OpportunityWI) and on Facebook at Facebook.com/OpportunityWI.