



Anne Arundel County
Digital Services Grant Program
Final Report

October 27, 2021

Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation

2660 Riva Road

Annapolis, MD 21401

Executive Summary

A year and a half into the COVID-19 pandemic and businesses are still being impacted. While many businesses and industries have seen some relief through previous grant programs, there have been a few small business types that were not eligible. The Maryland Department of Commerce under the state RELIEF Act designated federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) to implement a program to help Anne Arundel County small businesses that had not yet received grants.

The AAEDC Digital Services Grant (DSG) was open to businesses such as retail stores, beauty and health personal services, adult and children's activity centers (such as gyms, dance, yoga and martial arts studios, and arts and crafts businesses), and nonprofits. To be eligible for this grant, businesses in these categories have to have been open prior to March 9th, 2020; have a brick and mortar location; be in good standing with the State of Maryland and Anne Arundel County; have between 1 and 20 employees; and priority was given to those that had not previously received a COVID-19 relief grant funded by the State of Maryland.

Grant proceeds could be used toward email and mobile marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), customer rewards/loyalty programs, ecommerce (online ordering/sales) and website and social media advertising. The DSG application period opened on Monday, September 20th and applications were accepted through Friday, October 1st, 2021.

AAEDC awarded 144 applicants grants of \$3,200 each for a grand total of \$460,800. Businesses with less than ten employees received 77% of the grants awarded and 60% of the grants went to woman-owned businesses. Minority-owned businesses accounted for 23% of the grants and veteran-owned businesses accounted for 8%.

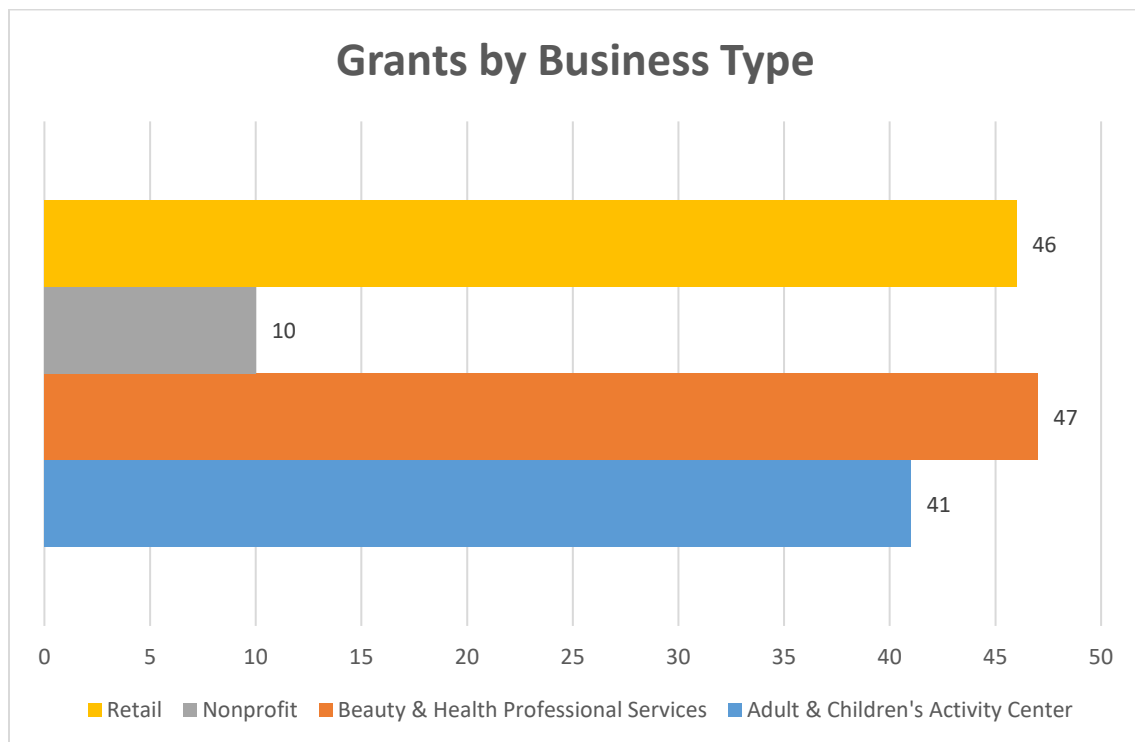
More than half of the applications received were from businesses that did not meet the grant requirements and therefore were not eligible. Many of those ineligible had received grants in previous grant programs specific to their industry (such as restaurant and food services, child care providers, or nonprofits). Per guidelines set by the Maryland Department of Commerce, priority was given to those businesses that had not received prior relief funding.

Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation was proud to partner with Anne Arundel County and the State of Maryland Department of Commerce to develop this Digital Services Grant Program that quickly and efficiently disbursed the allocated federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to these businesses as they continue to adapt to conducting business during a pandemic.

Financial Summary

- 303 – Number of Applications
- 144 – Number of Digital Services Grants (DSG) Awarded (48% of total applicants)
- \$3,200 – Grant Amount Awarded
- \$460,800 – Total Amount of all Grants Awarded
- 159 – Number of Applications Denied (52% of total applicants did not meet the eligibility requirements for the grant or did not provide required documentation)

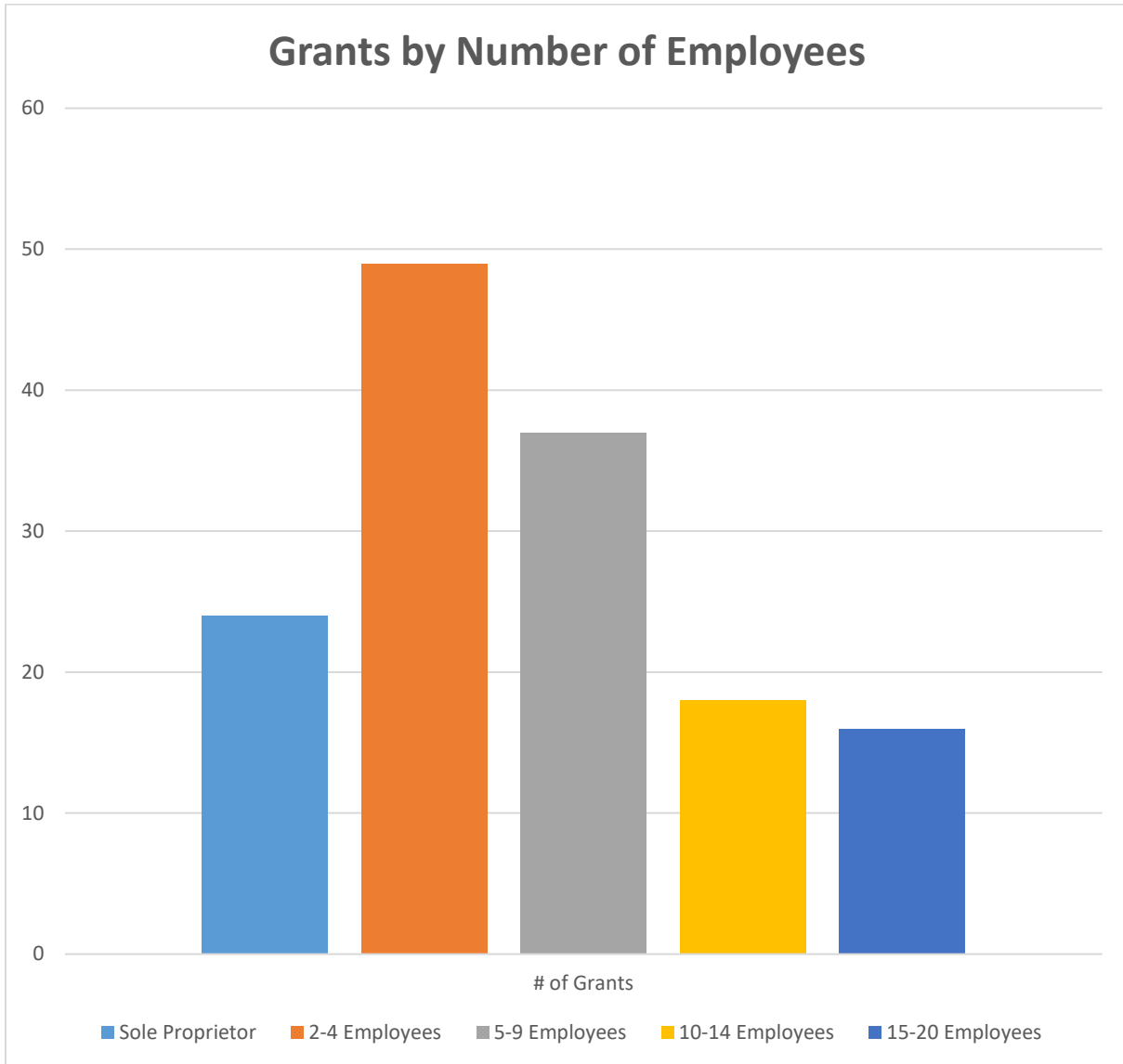
Breakdown by Business Type



Business Type	# of Grants	Amount of Grants	% of Grants
Adult & Children Activity Centers	41	\$131,200	28%
Beauty & Health Professional Services	47	\$150,400	33%
Nonprofit	10	\$32,000	7%
Retail	46	\$147,200	32%

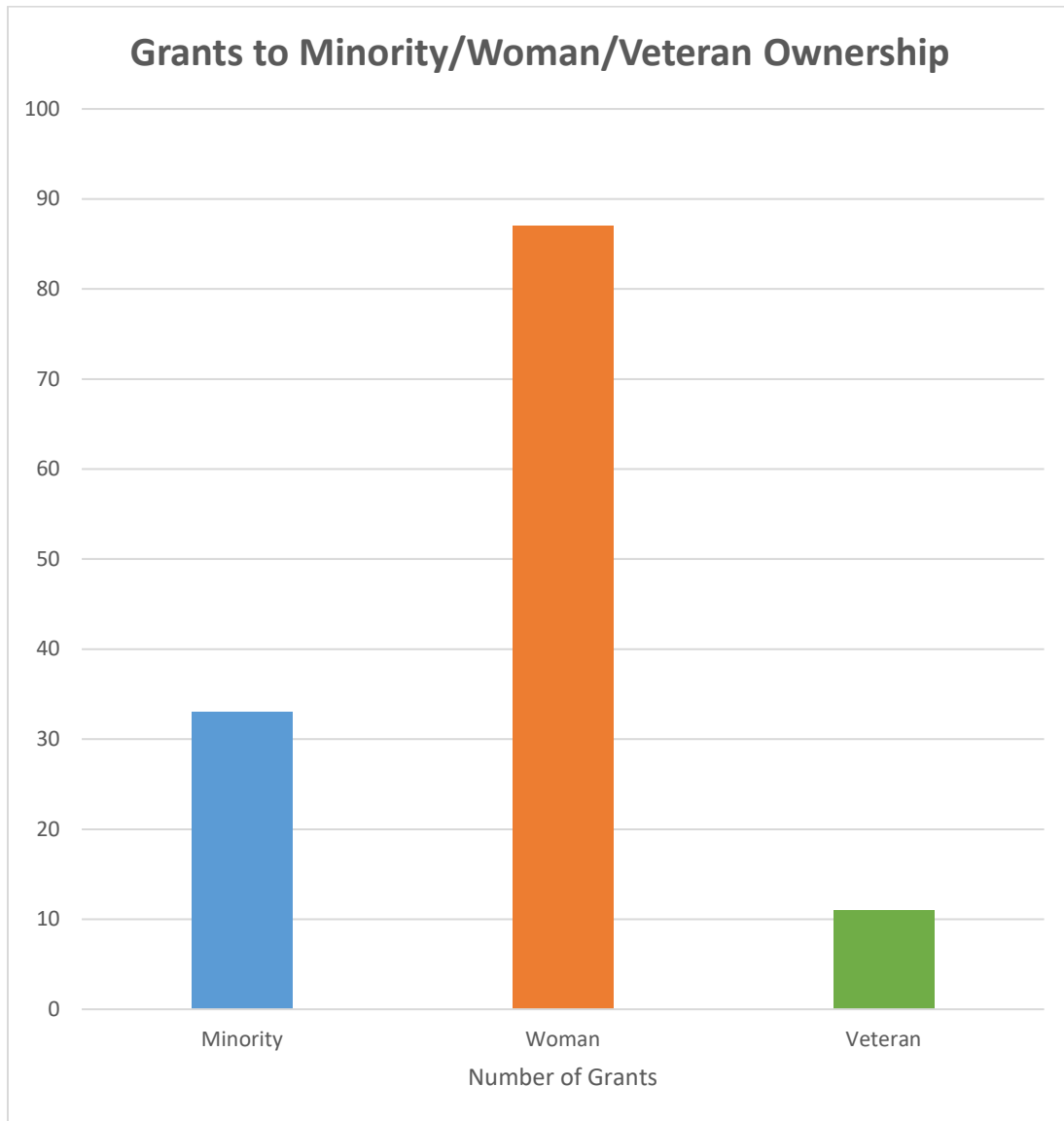
*Note: Adult & Children Activity Centers include gyms, dance, yoga, and martial arts studios, arts and crafts businesses

By Business Size



Category	# of Grants	Amount of Grants	% of Grants
Sole Proprietor	24	\$76,800	17%
2-4 Employees	49	\$156,800	34%
5-9 Employees	37	\$118,400	26%
10-14 Employees	18	\$57,600	12%
15-20 Employees	16	\$51,200	11%

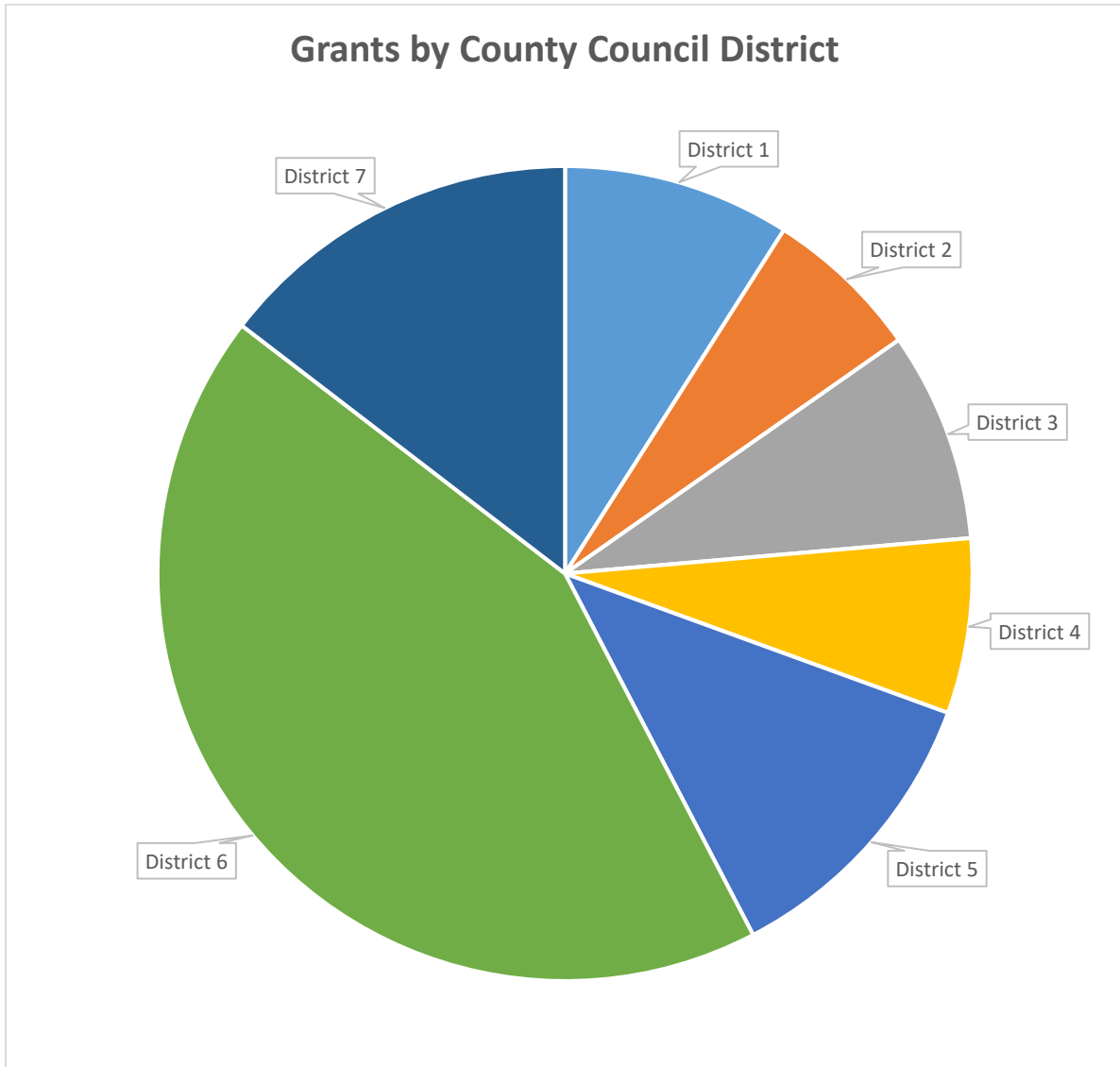
By Minority/Woman/Veteran Ownership*



Category*	# of Grants	Amount of Grants	% of Grants
Minority	33	\$105,600	23%
Woman	87	\$278,400	60%
Veteran	11	\$35,200	8%

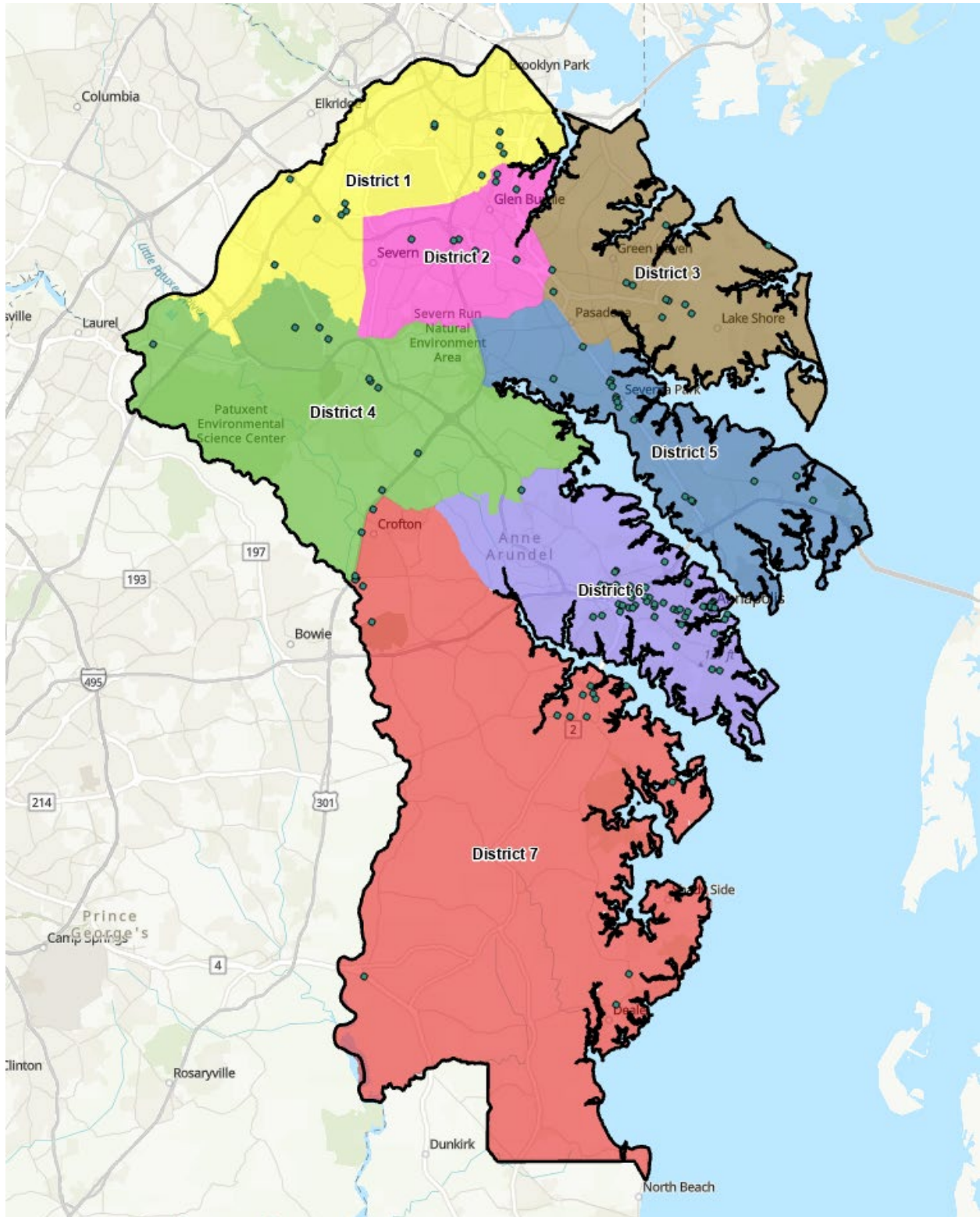
*Note: Information provided by the applicant at time of application; some applicants counted in multiple categories (example: Minority & Woman; Woman & Veteran; Minority, Woman, & Veteran)

By County Council District

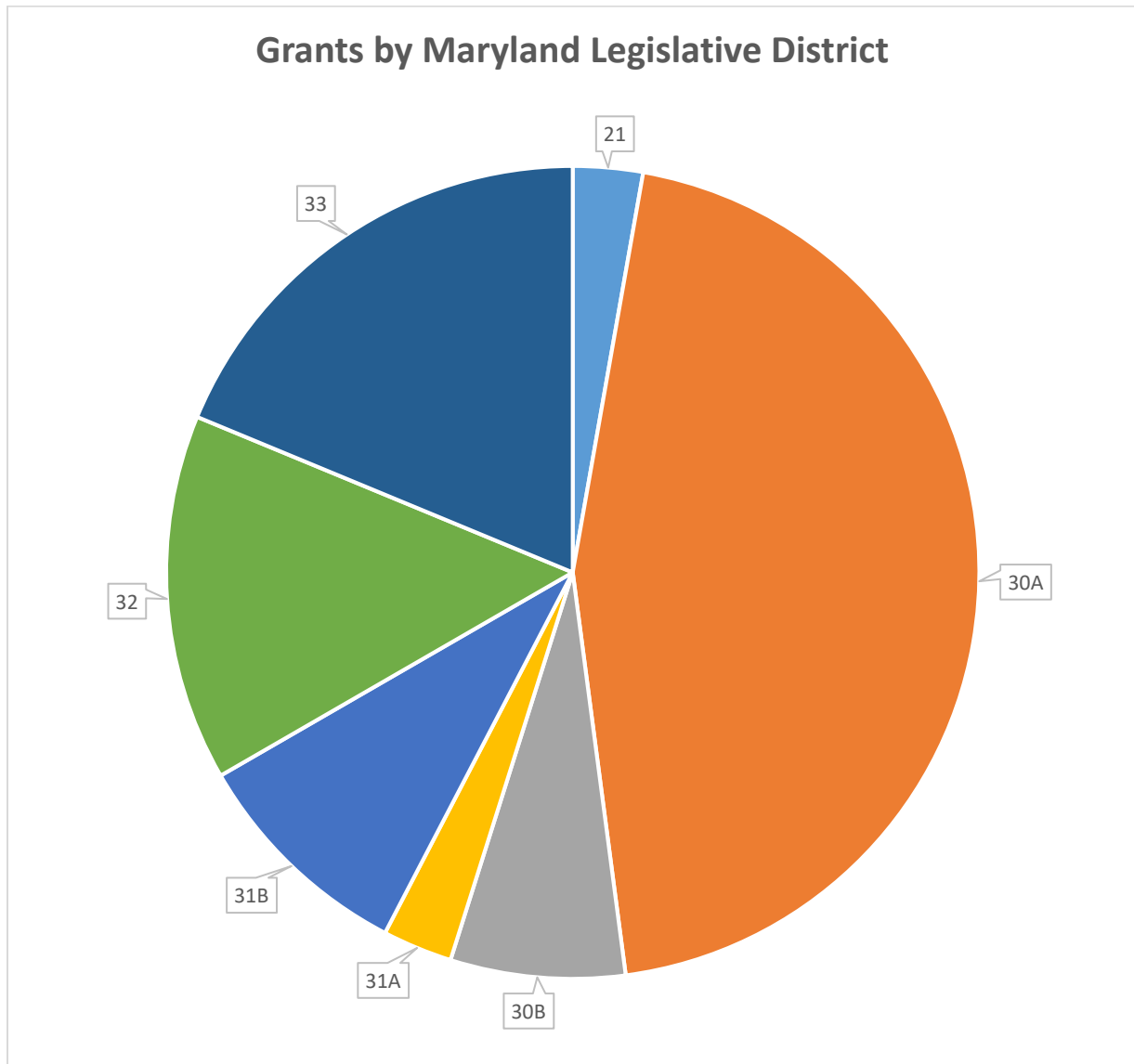


County Council District	# of Grants	Amount of Grants	% of Total Amount
1	13	\$41,600	9%
2	9	\$28,800	6%
3	12	\$38,400	8%
4	10	\$32,000	7%
5	17	\$54,400	12%
6	62	\$198,400	43%
7	21	\$67,200	15%

Distribution by County Council District

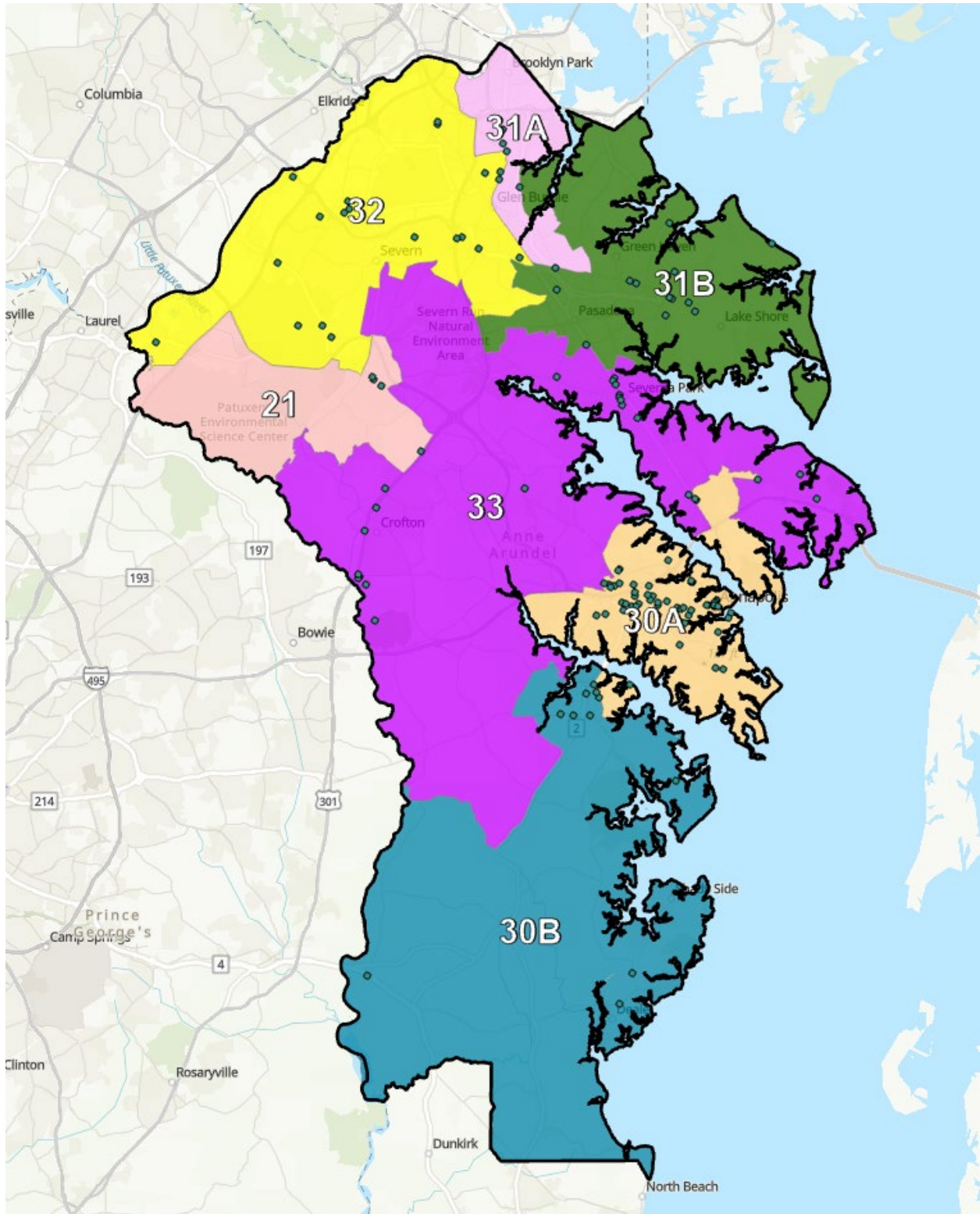


By State Legislative District

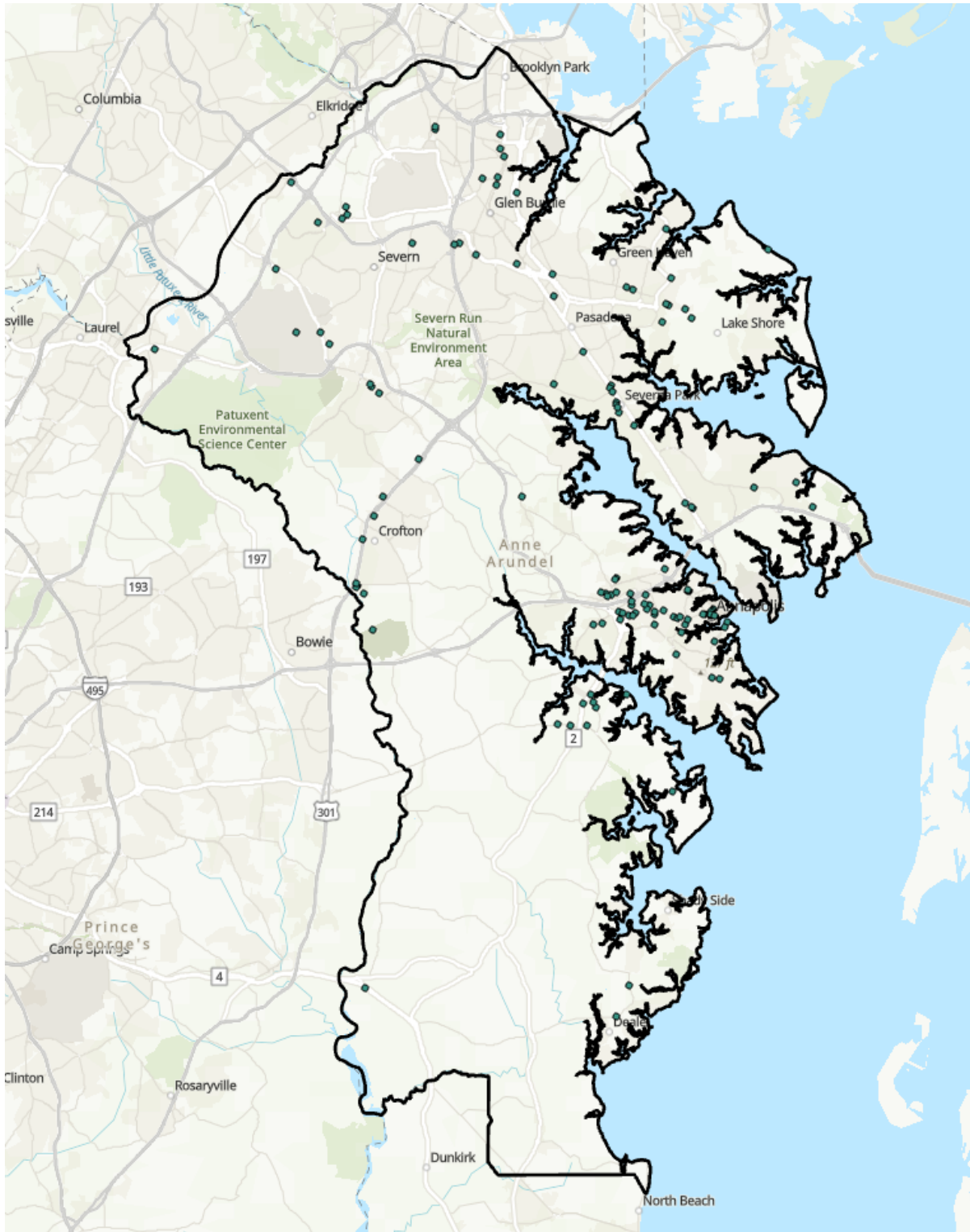


State Legislative District	# of Grants	Amount of Grants	% of Total Amount
21	4	\$12,800	3%
30A	65	\$208,000	45%
30B	10	\$32,000	7%
31A	4	\$12,800	3%
31B	13	\$41,600	9%
32	21	\$67,200	14%
33	27	\$86,400	19%

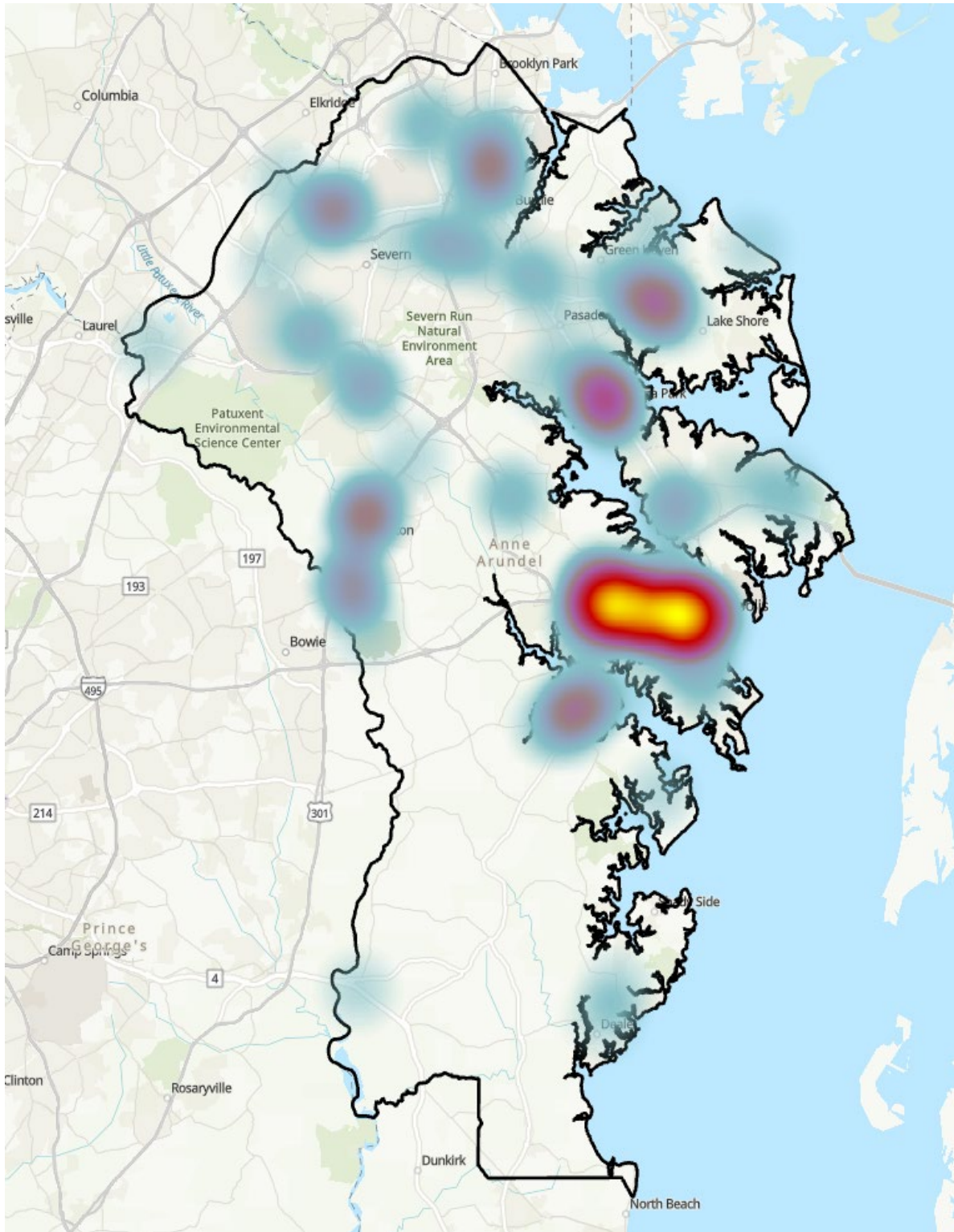
Distribution by Legislative District



Point Distribution of Grants



Heat Map of Grants



Testimonials

Ryan Moschell, Get Out of Shape LLC

Since the COVID-19 pandemic stopped the world it has been very hard on our local economy. As a small business owner in AACo with a one-on-one hands on practice I have struggled to stay in business. The digital services grant will help me to be able to afford to transition part of my business online and reach out to clients virtually. I am very grateful and hope to find new and inventive ways to be resilient in our ever changing pandemic economy.

Alison Harbaugh, ArtFarm

ArtFarm is so thankful for the generous grant from the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation! With this grant we are finally able to create a solid marketing plan to launch a new year in 2022 with new offerings, classes, and services for our community. In the past, paying for ads on social media and local print media has been an afterthought as it was not in the budget, but this grant allows us to create beautiful content and get it out to a larger community so that we can recover after two rough years due to Covid.

Thank you so much for supporting small businesses in Anne Arundel County!

Judee Jo Georgeles, Makeup by Judee Jo, LLC

Dear Team at Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation ...a heartfelt thank you for the approval for a Digital Services Grant for my business, Makeup by Judee Jo in Annapolis.

I am very excited for this opportunity to help grow my business with new tools like (finally)! Taking online orders for products through my website and expanding my brand through social media advertising. Thank you again!

Katie King, Studio 180 Dance

I wanted to offer this testimonial - I received a digital services grant, thank you! The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation has been a small business life-saver throughout COVID and even far before the pandemic. The program supports small businesses so they can not only survive, but thrive, which in turn increases employment and makes our county better. It has been hugely helpful as I continue to run my small business, and I am grateful the program exists and for all of the support it provides!

Harvey Gendleman, Solace Salon

I can only express my gratitude for being supported for this digital grant. As with so many small businesses, the pandemic has been brutal. The support you have provided has made a significant impact on our ability to transition our business to a more modern, digital approach which we hope will drive future customers to visit. It is without question a great program and adds to the evidence that our government has been working with and for the community.

Thank you for all you do.

Mary Orzano, Pic N Paint Pottery

Thank you so much! This grant came just in time and process to fill out the grant application was so easy. Once I was approved, which didn't take long at all, the funds were deposited right into my business account. Thank you for looking out for us little guys, sometimes we are forgotten about. Thank you again, I truly appreciate it.

Chuanda Mason, RTB Cycle

I'd like to thank the AAEDC again for helping my business RTB CYCLE in Odenton. This grant will lessen the financial burden on my business as well as help with the expansion of my online classes for new and existing customers. I was able to survive the beginning of the pandemic because of the VOLT Fund grant and now I am maintaining, but this grant will help me drive more customers and revenue to my business. I am forever grateful to everyone at the AAEDC. Once again, looking out and helping the small businesses, like myself. Thank you.

Rachelle Polk, Naturally InBalance

I'm so excited that I have been accepted for yet another Grant for assistance during what continues to be the toughest times for my new business. Being just 2 years into business and hit by a pandemic and weather, I'm ever so grateful to having been given an opportunity to spread the word about our programs at BeBalanced digitally. This will help us hopefully get on the other side of this happy, thriving and balanced! Thank you!

Partners In Care Maryland, Inc. ---"Upscale Retail Boutique"

Thanks soooooo much for not only helping to leverage new technology to connect PIC's senior volunteers to staff our Retail Boutique. Equally, if not more important, it greatly helps our seniors to stay connected to each other, and to add new meaning and dignity to their free time during retirement! Your \$3200 is small step toward helping us to automate our Boutique operation, but priceless in its value to connecting seniors to us and one another!!

Tom Ruder, Symmetry Salon Studios®

As a small business navigating our current COVID environment, we greatly appreciate the financial support and leadership by Anne Arundel County by supporting our CRM, social media efforts and website upgrades. The speed and clarity of the process made this an easy application and quickly benefit our small team of employees.

Lance LeTellier, Foundation Fitness of Annapolis

I just want to write and say how grateful I am for the grant our business has been approved for. Working to transition a business to the new hyper-digital/hyper-automated world has been and continues to be a huge hurdle. It is greatly appreciated that AAEDC recognizes this challenge and has done something to help small businesses get through it. Thank you!