

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2302

March 31, 2021

The Honorable Isabel Guzman
Administrator
US Small Business Administration
409 3rd St SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman,

Congratulations on your recent swearing in as the new Administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA). As the previous director of California's Office of the Small Business Advocate, you have seen firsthand the immense struggles our Main Street businesses have faced, along with our community lenders as they continue to navigate the complexities of lending programs in response to COVID-19. We look forward to working with you to help small businesses and lenders across the country as we continue to mitigate and recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you begin your role as Administrator implementing the American Rescue Plan, we want to ensure SBA is fully prepared to deliver on the promises made to the American people. As you may be aware, the House Small Business Committee recently held a hearing on the next steps for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) where Members heard program feedback from community lenders. One issue raised was the lack of communication with community lenders – possibly due to understaffing at SBA – and how it has been a continuous challenge as they process PPP loans.

Upon the recent passage of the PPP Extension Act, it is vital that the agency be fully capable of handling the persistent demand for the program through its new deadline. For the SBA to work through its entire queue and ensure all PPP applications filed timely have an opportunity to be funded, we must ensure the SBA is prepared with exceptional procedure and staff.

We believe that in order to stand up the programs we have invested in under the American Rescue Plan, SBA needs to assess its hiring practices and potentially hire more full-time employees dedicated to assisting community lenders and small businesses. To that end, we respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. The historical FTE count for the Office of Field Operations has been approximately 800 employees, we learned at a hearing in 2020 that the number dropped to below 700. How many employees does SBA currently have in regional and district offices?
2. How many vacancies are there in regional and district offices?
3. What is SBA's plan to fill these vacancies and staff the agency to best serve lenders and small businesses, and match the increase in service requests?

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4. How can the House Small Business Committee support your efforts to staff the SBA and deliver on the promises made in the American Rescue Plan?
5. What is SBA's current process for providing assistance to lenders seeking it?
6. Does SBA have any office or other organized body specifically dedicated to serving the needs of community lenders participating in SBA's business loan programs, including PPP?

We are grateful for SBA's collaboration over the past year and look forward to a productive working relationship to help small businesses as we pass a year since the COVID-19 pandemic altered American life. We eagerly await your responses to the questions set forth above as we work to best equip SBA with processes and staff who are ready to serve our lenders and entrepreneurs.

Sincerely,

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Marie Newman
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress