

TO: H. Philip Paradice, Jr., Lee Mertins, and Bertha Partin

FROM: William Noble, Facilities Director, Breathitt County Schools

DATE: May 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Regarding EDA's Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)  
Recovery Assistance for EDA Control No. 114448

Please consider our previous application under the terms of the CARES Act Addendum to the FY20 Recovery Assistance program.

Breathitt County recognized several years ago that workforce training and development are extremely important to improving our situation. We have an Area Technology Center (ATC) that provides daytime CTE to high school students and nighttime opportunities for adults. It was built in 1967 and having never been renovated, it is in a state of disrepair. We want to build a new facility as a catalyst for upward economic mobility.

As a community struggling to advance economically prior to the pandemic, it is going to be nearly impossible for us to move forward without intervention. Furthermore, other tax revenue from economic activity that we rely on to provide jobs is being greatly diminished. Most retail sector businesses (including restaurants), which make up about half the jobs here, have laid off between 20-50% of their employees. The local hospital, the second largest employer in the county, has begun laying off employees as all elective and non-emergency medical procedures have been cancelled. Even more alarming is that around 30% of working adults in the county commute 70-100 miles away to work in high paying jobs each day<sup>1</sup>, and those larger businesses have had to close their doors in response to the pandemic. A large mattress factory and one of the nation's largest Toyota plants have closed for the foreseeable future.

Our current ATC has piloted a New Skills for Youth initiative to provide distance learning opportunities to surrounding counties for the last two years. In sad serendipity, we have been forced to move all our instruction for our in-county students online for the last quarter of the year. It proved mostly successful in spite of our limited facilities and equipment to support the endeavor. We planned on expanding the distance learning opportunities in a new ATC with facilities more conducive to live streaming and recording instructional content. We have no idea how much longer this pandemic will last, but we do know that a new ATC would help us raise the quality of our online learning so that we would be a leader in online learning in the event of another pandemic in the future.

With these factors in mind, please consider our former application under the new CARES Addendum. We've been actively trying to help ourselves, but we need your help to move forward in the face of this economic-suppressing coronavirus.

  
Phillip Watts, Breathitt County Schools Superintendent

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<sup>1</sup> According to data provided by the KY Center for Statistics in 2016