

Community Excellence Award

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

City of Kalamazoo and the
Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence

THE CITY OF



Kalamazoo
Foundation for
Excellence

The Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence works hand-in-hand with the City of Kalamazoo to make a better future.

We exist to
**support the goals of the City of Kalamazoo,
fund aspirational investments in the city, and
empower Kalamazoo residents**
to achieve the lives they want for themselves and their families.



Being Nimble: Responding to COVID-19

As with most communities, COVID-19 presented unprecedented challenges to our community and provided us with unique opportunities to create impact.

We focused our response on projects designed to meet the most urgent needs locally:

- **support of our non-profit community and their services**
- **the survival of our local small business community**
- **educational access and supports during remote learning**



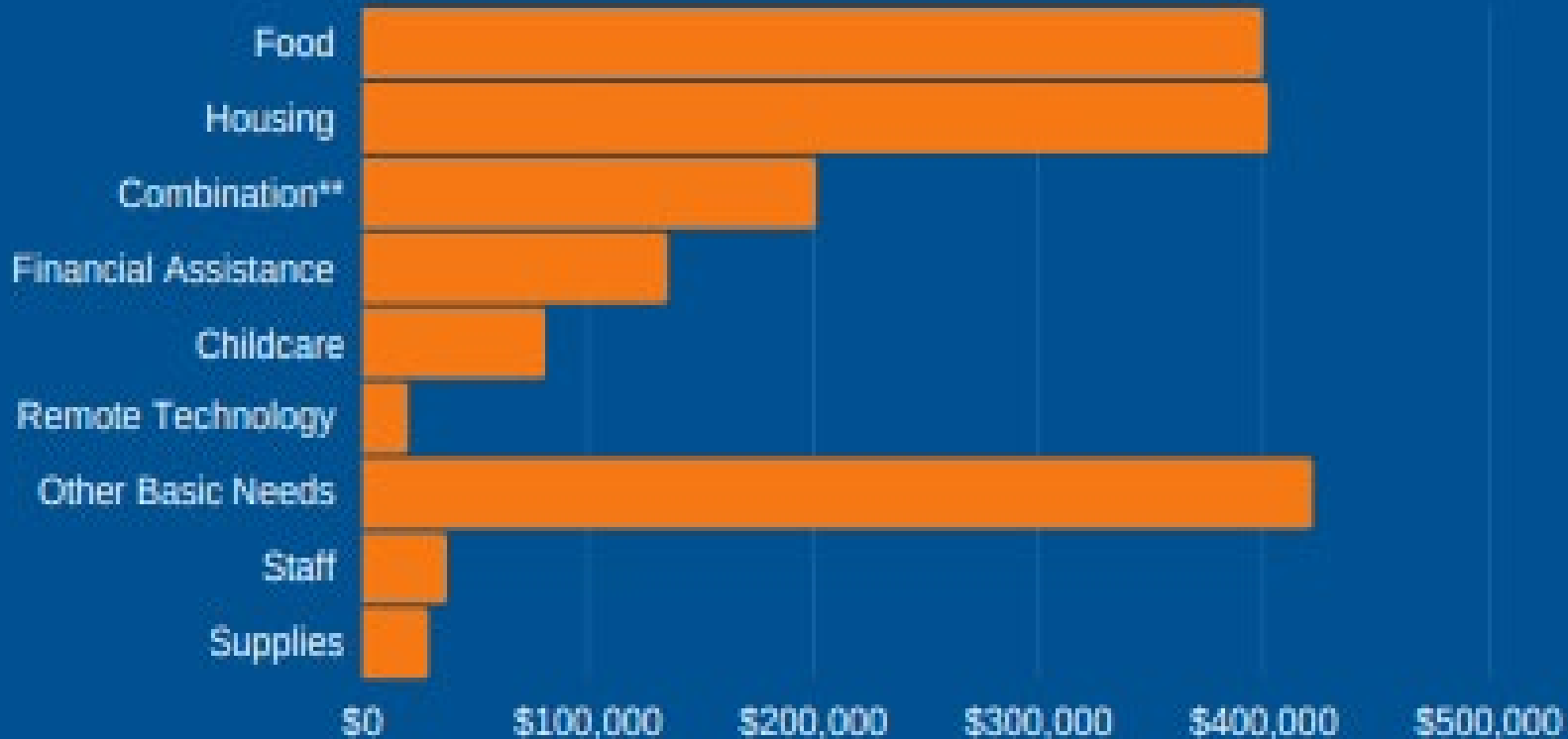
Disaster Relief Fund (DRF)

This partnership was created within weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide direct support to help our residents access food, shelter or housing, and healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. Major local funders (including the United way, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, and the City of Kalamazoo) created a unified and simplified process.

- In 2020, **over 50 non-profits and organizations** received local funds from the DRF to provide direct support to our local community
- **18% of DRF funding came** from Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence
- In 2020, **more than \$1.725 million granted** – work continues today

Disaster Relief Fund (DRF)

Areas of Need Funded



The DRF was created, funded, and distributed locally, making grants as early as March 2020 **with 100% of the funding coming from local sources.**

Major Kalamazoo funders, including the Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence and the City came together to avoid duplication, simplify the funding process, and meet immediate needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This work continues today.

Small Business Loan Fund

A partnership with the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region was created to support our local small business community. Funding is intended to serve as a bridge loan while our local businesses had time and opportunities to seek other assistance programs. **The funding was also intentionally focused on reducing disparities in BIPOC and women-owned business communities.**

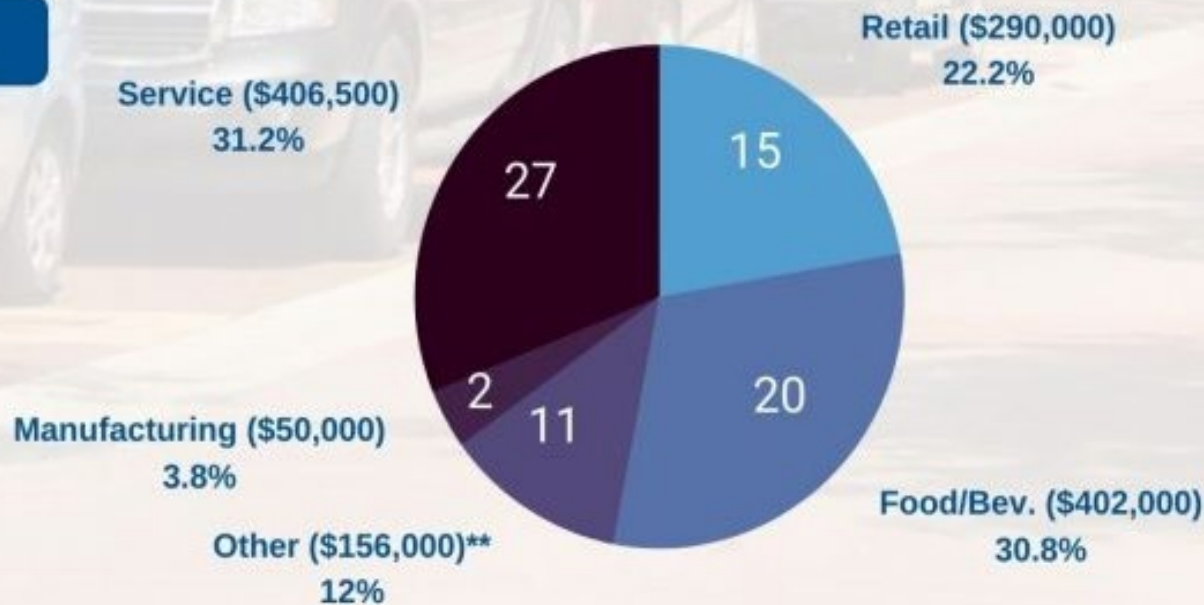
- \$1.35 million has been loaned to-date in 2020
- 82% of eligible businesses were funded
- 55% of those approved for funding women and/or minority-owned
- Kept businesses alive with fastest aid dollars and simplest processes

Small Business Loan Fund

\$ Investment Summary



Funding by Industry*



*Includes businesses approved & accepted

“The Loan Fund was a huge help for my business. I would not have made it through without this loan. I was able to keep my staff employed and pay my rent and expenses...I am still pushing forward to keep my six employees working. I opened a second location to help with social distancing and I am determined to make it through this pandemic.

I am extremely thankful for the loan to help me provide for my business, my families that have stuck with me during this and my amazing team. Most of all being able to continue doing what I love.”

Digital Access for All (DAFA)

As the Kalamazoo Public School District (KPS) went remote in March of 2020 and remained remote through the 2020-2021 school year, the City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence partnered with KPS, the Kalamazoo Public Library, the Kalamazoo Promise, and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to **meet our student's newfound and existing learning needs**. Together we are providing:

- Free high-speed Wi-Fi Internet access for one year for 1,250 KPS households
- More equitable access to distance learning

Learning Hubs

The background image shows a classroom with several young students sitting at their desks. They are wearing face masks and appear to be engaged in a learning activity. The room has a red wall and some educational posters.

Even with internet, many of our students needed a safe place to learn, nutritious food, and supervision while their parents work. In partnership with several local organizations, we are offering Learning Hubs, safe and socially-distanced sites for students to learn and receive the support they need. City of Kalamazoo facilities and sites are hosting these students five days a week.

- **Through the 2020-2021 school year, we have hosted at least 400 students, ages K-12, in fourteen different City locations.**
- Priority given to students with a disability, ESL learning needs, unsafe home environments (homeless, for example), and equity cohorts.

Kalamazoo Strong In COVID-19

The City of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence are proud of our work to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Our responses were only effective because of strong, local partnerships and the engagement of diverse organizations. **We were able to make a direct impact on our community and its residents – students, families, local businesses and non-profits who serve them – as early as March 2020.**

By the end of 2020, **we allocated more than \$2.64 million to this work.** We moved quickly, created specific and targeted responses, developed strong partnerships and helped our community through a time of crisis.

That work continues today.