

Letter from Bar Owners in Albuquerque

Hello,

Our names are Kyle Kinney and Mark Travis, and we own a country western night club in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Dirty Bourbon Dance Hall and Saloon has been in business over 11 years and we cater to people of all types and ages with emphasis on dancing with our large dance floors and live music that can be heard every week. We win yearly local awards based on popularity and quality. We take pride in our establishment as we built and operate it ourselves.

We're writing to you today because Covid saw us forcefully shut down as we were classified as "night clubs" which entails large groups of people with social distancing being nearly impossible to impose. As difficult as it was, we followed the government orders to the letter and shut down. We understood the potential risk a business like ours posed and did what was asked of us. It was devastating for us to lay off more than 35 employees who have worked with us for many years. They were hard working and loyal employees who were just as scared during those uncertain time as we were.

We were shut down for 14 months in total. As such, we racked up a massive amount of back rent and debt. Just because we were shut down didn't mean that our bills went away. Currently, we have worked out an amortized payment plan with the landlord over the remainder of the lease period. This large increase in monthly and yearly rent is something we can barely cover even when operating at our absolute peak profitability. Essentially, the purpose of our businesses is to now pay themselves off and to try to climb out of this hole that we did not create. The over \$500k in accrued debt we racked up doesn't include prior existing debts to family, bank loans, and neither our own personal investments we've had to put into the businesses over the years. Once it's all tallied up, continuing appears nearly impossible.

During the pandemic we were very diligent on making sure that we applied for every possible grant and loan when it became available. This basically turned into a full-time job, however, we were determined to reopen once we were able to. Our main goal was to make sure that we weathered the storm and came out on the other side during a time we witnessed many others in our industry unable to do so.

Whenever there was a federal grant such as the PPP we made sure that we got our applications in right away so we made sure we had a chance to receive any and all funds. Although most of the grants such as the first round PPP did not really help us due to the fact we were still closed, it did help us pay some rent and allowed us to keep a manager on staff. We also applied to every small local grant as well. We even took out more debt when money became available because all our reserves were exhausted paying other bills while we were closed.

Some of the other Federal aid such as the ETC (Employee Tax Credit) did not help us due to the fact we just had one employee on and that's all we could afford. In addition, some of the State aid that we missed out on was the tax holiday which we were only able to take advantage of for one month as opposed to other businesses that were still able to operate and were able to take advantage of all four months.

But continue we shall. Mark and I aren't quitters, quite the opposite actually. In order to continue paying our debts, especially those to our family members that lent us money to pursue our dream, we will continue to work and we will do so for free if necessary. There's no way we will declare bankruptcy and leave our family (and other creditors) out in the cold. That's not us. Due to this situation, Mark and I have had to take on other jobs on top of our primary commitments to our businesses in order to survive. The strain of working for free and working other jobs simultaneously, all while still needing to fulfill obligations to our families, is absolutely crushing.

What we are asking for, if not begging, is any support to help us climb out of debt since the efforts to replenish the "Restaurant Revitalization Fund" have been unsuccessful thus far. Mark was exemplary in following up with how the fund was going to work and what to do to apply for it. In fact, he had our application submitted within 25 minutes of the opening time that applications could be received.

We did everything we could to make sure that if we weren't at the front of the line, then at least we were near the top. The Current RRF news came as a devastating blow. We know other venue owners in town that didn't put in nearly as quickly as us who received their money (and we're glad they did) but we are begging for our opportunity as well. Mark and I have always believed in personal hard work. We don't take handouts and we work hard to provide for our families. We don't think the government should pay people for no reason, but this is different. This very government that forcefully closed us down is the government that won't help us make up for the catastrophic effect it created.

So please. PLEASE. Please support us and other places that did not get relief from the RRF so we can put this behind us and continue to operate our business, employ our staff, and make a living as hard working American citizens.

Thank you,

Kyle Kinney and Mark Travis