



HARRISON'S TRAVELS

Orangeburg Area SBDC Client
Minority-Owned Business
Woman-Owned Business
HUBZone Certified

\$12,500

PPP LOAN

\$34,000

EIDL LOAN

\$25,000

SC CARES ACT GRANT

"My SC SBDC consultant Pamela Free helped me locate the extra funding I needed for my business during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is always accessible and offers assistance in any way possible."

~**SHAWNTA HARRISON**
OWNER, HARRISON'S TRAVELS

PRE-CORONAVIRUS BUSINESS SITUATION:

Before the pandemic hit, business was pretty good," said Harrison's Travels owner Shawnta Harrison. In actuality, it was thriving: her SBA HUBZone-certified boutique travel agency was expanding beyond the borders of her local community, clients were increasingly more interested in traveling abroad and she was serving a niche market with pre-packaged group tours. "Gross sales were at an all-time high," Harrison said. "I was expecting 2020 to be our best year to date."

CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

The onset of the pandemic and the ensuing travel restrictions threatened to wreak havoc on Harrison's business and the loyal customer base she worked so hard to build. To keep afloat, Harrison tapped into all financial resources immediately available to her. But she needed more.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY:

In search of financial aid, Harrison contacted the Orangeburg Area SBDC where business consultant Pamela Free explained the finer points of the EIDL and PPP funding programs. "Pamela also told me about the SC CARES Act relief grant, something I didn't know existed," said Harrison.

Fortunately, Free had been closely monitoring the pandemic emerging overseas and advised Harrison to start updating and assembling essential business documents. This foresight enabled Harrison to submit her application packets to all three funding programs soon after they were publicly announced, receiving a combined total of \$71,500.

Throughout this ordeal, Free encouraged Harrison to think beyond the immediate COVID-19 crisis and helped her prepare a business plan--based on sound market research--that would chart a successful and sustainable course for Harrison's business in the years to come.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK:

Harrison projects a bright outlook for her industry and, in particular, her agency. "I am proud to say that travel will rebound within the next 6-12 months," she said. "My phone is ringing constantly with existing clients rebooking their trips."

Free agrees that her client has a bright future. "Shawnta is quite business savvy and has taught me a lot about the travel industry," she said. "Her business has grown tremendously and is a 'true gem' tucked away in Blackville, SC."

