



Gilbert offers free education to those impacted by COVID-19



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New pilot program offers free education to those impacted by COVID-19.



By: [Megan Thompson](#)

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GILBERT, AZ — Tourism, hospitality, restaurants and many more positions in the service industry are all struggling to rebound amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Many people in Arizona have lost jobs because of this or the way the job is done is different.

The town of Gilbert is looking to ensure the community can re-skill themselves or get a new career altogether with a free program called [#GilbertTogether Resident Career Training Scholarship](#).

"For a portion there, my business was null, like... it stopped," said Gilbert resident Jackie Wheeler. "It completely just like... stopped."

That is because her business is built on connection and strong visuals.

"So that's personal shopping, wardrobing, packing, creating an amazing image for my clients," said Wheeler.



She runs [JackieStyle Image and Branding Agency, LLC](#). For more than two decades, she has helped empower women through their in-person style and their social media platforms.

"It was definitely impacted by the pandemic," Wheeler explained.

She wanted to upgrade her skills and find ways to keep her business going in the midst of the pandemic, as well as far beyond.

"Social media is an ever-changing, ever-evolving, lots of new things are happening," Wheeler said.

So, she applied for one of the [#GilbertTogether Resident Career Training Scholarships](#).

"These job-training scholarships are available for our residents and business owners who are interested in enhancing, you know, their skillset and pivoting into high-demand professions," said Dan Henderson.

Henderson is the town of Gilbert's Economic Development Director and he said, the council decided to allocate about \$2 million of AZ CARES money to an educational opportunity through multiple community colleges and initiations in Maricopa County.

"These programs can include anything from entry-level to upskilling opportunities... for individuals," Henderson explained.

"You come here... let's explore your passions," said Michael Voss. "Let's let you know what you didn't even know what was possible and see if we can get you into a first step that makes a lot of sense for you that will



Voss is the Dean of Instruction at Mesa Community College.

He said applicants can choose from countless programs of study in business, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing and trades.

The timeline for completion varies depending on the program. But it is all online and can be flexible to a participant's schedule.

"I hope that we help create a spark for them," Voss said.

The goal is to get more people into higher-paying and more in-demand jobs, which can help boost the economy too.

To be eligible, a participant needs to live in the town of Gilbert or have a business in the town and describe how COVID-19 has impacted them in the online application.

"If you're willing to do the work and put the time aside then I would say, do it," said Wheeler.

To learn more and start the application process, [click here](#).

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