



Davidson County Creative Enterprise Microgrant Program

Grant Guidelines

Administered by Arts Davidson County

The Davidson County Creative Enterprise Microgrant Program provides small business grants to help strengthen local businesses through targeted investments in equipment, technology, inventory, marketing, e-commerce, accessibility, and other business growth needs.

The program is designed to support business capacity, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunity throughout Davidson County.

Grant Awards

Approximately nine Davidson County businesses will be selected to receive grants.

Individual grant awards: 1,000–5,000

Grant awards are competitive and are not guaranteed. The amount requested does not guarantee the amount awarded.

Who Can Apply?

To be eligible, a business must:

- Be a for-profit business
- Be located in Davidson County, North Carolina
- Have fewer than 100 employees
- Demonstrate a specific business need or opportunity that can be addressed through a capital investment

- Propose an investment that supports business growth, capacity, sustainability, efficiency, or market opportunities

Businesses of different sizes, industries, and stages of development are encouraged to apply if they meet the eligibility requirements.

What Can Grant Funds Support?

Grant funds may be used for investments that strengthen business operations or create opportunities for growth.

Equipment

Purchase or upgrade equipment needed to operate, improve, or expand the business.

Technology

Technology upgrades, software, hardware, or other digital tools that improve business operations.

Inventory

Inventory purchases that support business growth, increased capacity, or customer demand.

E-Commerce

Website, online sales, digital ordering, or other tools that expand access to customers.

Marketing & Branding

Marketing tools, branding materials, or other investments that help a business reach customers and expand its market.

Point-of-Sale Systems

Point-of-sale equipment or systems that improve transactions, customer service, or business efficiency.

Accessibility

Improvements that increase accessibility for customers or employees.

Other Business Growth Investments

Other specific investments may be considered if they directly support business growth, capacity, sustainability, efficiency, or market opportunities.

Applicants should clearly explain how the requested investment will benefit their business.

What Funds May Not Support

Grant funds must be used for the approved business investment described in the application.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Payroll or employee wages
- Rent
- Utilities
- Personal expenses
- Owner distributions or personal compensation
- Existing debt or loan payments
- Expenses incurred before the grant is awarded and approved
- Political activities or contributions
- Activities that are not directly related to the eligible business
- Costs that are not included in the approved grant budget without prior written approval

If you are unsure whether a proposed expense is eligible, contact Arts Davidson County before submitting your application.

Financial Information

Applicants will be asked to provide basic financial information and one recent business financial document as part of the application.

Applicants may provide one of the following:

- Most recent business Profit & Loss statement
- Most recent business tax return
- Current year-to-date Profit & Loss statement
- For businesses operating for less than one year, a current revenue and expense summary

Applicants will also be asked to briefly describe their current business circumstances and why the proposed investment is important at this time.

If Your Business Does Not Maintain Formal Financial Statements

We understand that small businesses use different accounting and recordkeeping systems. If your business does not have a formal Profit & Loss statement or another listed document, provide the financial information available to you and explain your situation in the application.

Financial information will be used to help reviewers understand the business's current circumstances, demonstrated need, and the potential impact of the proposed investment.

Please do not submit personal financial information unless specifically requested.

What Makes a Strong Application?

Applications will be reviewed based on the strength and potential impact of the proposed investment.

A strong application will clearly explain:

1. The Need

What does your business need, and why is this investment important now?

2. The Investment

What specifically will you purchase, develop, or implement?

3. The Business Impact

How will the investment improve your business?

4. The Expected Results

What will be different as a result of the investment?

5. The Budget

How much will the project cost, and how will the grant funds be used?

6. The Financial Circumstances

How does your current business situation demonstrate the need for the proposed investment?

You do not need to be an experienced grant writer. We are looking for a clear understanding of your business, your need, and how the proposed investment can help you move forward.

Application Requirements

Applicants will be asked to provide:

- Basic business information

- A description of the business
- The amount requested
- A description of the proposed investment
- An explanation of the business need
- Basic financial information
- One recent business financial document
- A project budget
- Expected results and outcomes
- Information about other funding sources, if applicable
- Interest in business development training or technical assistance
- Applicant certification

Applicants may also be asked to provide supporting documentation, such as estimates, quotes, or other information that helps demonstrate the proposed project cost.

How Applications Are Reviewed

Applications will first be reviewed for eligibility and completeness.

Eligible applications will then be evaluated using the following criteria:

Review Area	Points
Business need and demonstrated financial need	20
Strength and relevance of proposed investment	25
Potential business growth or increased capacity	25
Community and local economic impact	15
Feasibility and project budget	15
Total	100

The review process is competitive. Funding is limited, and not every eligible application can be funded.

Review Process & Conflicts of Interest

Applications will be reviewed by individuals selected by Arts Davidson County.

Reviewers will be expected to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest involving an applicant. A reviewer with a conflict will not participate in the evaluation or decision regarding that application.

Arts Davidson County will oversee the application, review, award, and reporting process.

Award Decisions

Approximately nine businesses are expected to receive funding.

Award notifications will be issued by December 1, 2026.

Selected businesses will receive instructions regarding required documentation, grant agreements, eligible expenses, technical assistance, reporting requirements, and next steps.

An award is not final until the required grant agreement and documentation have been completed.

Grant Agreements & Required Documentation

Before funds are distributed, selected businesses will be required to complete applicable grant documentation.

This may include:

- Signed grant agreement
- W-9 or other required tax documentation
- Verification of business information
- Approved project budget
- Payment information
- Other documentation required for grant administration

Grant recipients must use funds only for the approved purpose.

Changes to an approved project or budget may require prior written approval from Arts Davidson County.

Business Development & Technical Assistance

Participation in business development training and/or technical assistance is a component of the Davidson County Creative Enterprise Microgrant Program.

Grant recipients will be required to participate in designated business development training and/or technical assistance activities.

Potential topics include:

- Business planning
- Financial management
- Budgeting and cash flow
- Pricing
- Marketing and branding
- Social media
- Website development
- E-commerce
- Digital tools
- Customer development
- Market expansion
- Operations

Arts Davidson County will provide recipients with information about required training or technical assistance activities after awards are announced.

Grant Project & Use of Funds

Grant recipients must use funds only for the approved project and eligible expenses.

Recipients should not make grant-funded purchases before receiving written approval from Arts Davidson County.

Any significant change to the approved project, budget, or use of funds must receive prior written approval from Arts Davidson County.

Recipients are responsible for maintaining documentation related to grant-funded purchases.

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to complete a Final Grant Report at the conclusion of the grant project.

The final report may include:

- A description of how grant funds were used
- Documentation of eligible expenditures
- Receipts, invoices, or other supporting documentation
- Confirmation that the approved project was completed
- Progress toward the proposed goals
- Business outcomes resulting from the investment
- Changes in business capacity or efficiency
- Changes in customers, sales, products, services, or markets
- Jobs created or retained, if applicable
- Other information needed to evaluate the program

Recipients may also be asked to provide photographs or a brief business success story that may be used to demonstrate the impact of the program.

Recipients must retain receipts and other supporting documentation related to grant-funded expenditures for the period specified in the grant agreement.

Arts Davidson County may request additional documentation reasonably necessary to verify eligibility, expenditures, project completion, or program outcomes.

Failure to Comply

Grant recipients are expected to comply with the grant agreement and program requirements.

If grant funds are used for an ineligible purpose, required documentation is not provided, materially inaccurate information was submitted, or other significant grant requirements are not met, Arts Davidson County may require repayment of some or all of the grant funds, as provided in the grant agreement.

Important Dates

October 1, 2026
Applications Open

November 13, 2026 at 11:59 PM
Application Deadline

December 1, 2026
Award Notifications

December 2026
Grant agreements and required documentation

January 2027

Grant implementation begins

Dates are subject to change if necessary for program administration.

Before You Apply

Before beginning your application, be prepared to explain:

What does your business need?

What will you use the grant to purchase or implement?

Why is this investment important now?

How will it strengthen your business?

What results do you expect?

How much will the project cost?

What does your current financial situation tell us about the need for this investment?

You should also have a recent business financial document available to upload.

A clear, specific proposal will help reviewers understand the value of your request.

Questions?

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Davidson County Creative Enterprise Microgrant Program

Administered by Arts Davidson County

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