



Program Guidance

I. Introduction

Central Maine Growth Council's (CMGC) Waterville Region Small Business Grant is designed to provide financial assistance to mid-Maine businesses and entrepreneurs impacted by COVID-19 with direct grants in the amount of up to \$2,000. This includes businesses that have remained open, have furloughed some or all of their employees, and businesses that have closed temporarily. This program is not intended to substitute for the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and/or Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) or financing through the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). However, if a business has received \$15,000 or less in financing from Federal or State COVID-19 relief programs, it will receive priority eligibility for CMGC's Waterville Region Small Business Grant (WRSBG).

(1) How to Apply to the Online WRSBG Application

The online application is available at www.centralmaine.org/covid-19. As the online application is a Google Form, applicants must create a Google account (available at accounts.google.com/signup). A PDF application form is available upon request (see *Contact*).

WRSBG is a rolling grant application that does not include a due date. However, as a competitive funding grant application, it is expected that grant funds will be drawn down quickly. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

II. Program Guidelines & General Eligibility

1. Grants will be offered in amounts of up to \$2,000.00 and will be offered on the following basis:
 - Direct cash grants will be awarded on a competitive and rolling basis;
 - There is no grant due date, however it strongly encouraged applicants apply as soon as possible;
 - There is no matching requirement, however applications that contribute matching funds for the grant project or purpose will receive priority in scoring;
 - Each applicant may only be awarded one grant;
 - All projects must be completed by October 1, 2020, unless special arrangements are made and approved by CMGC.

2. General Eligibility

- Funding is available to businesses, entrepreneurs, and/or sole proprietors located in either Fairfield, Oakland, Waterville, or Winslow;
- Funding for a specific initiative, purpose, or project is available to current businesses owners and new entrepreneurs looking to retain, expand, and/or start a business in either Fairfield, Oakland, Waterville, or Winslow;
- Businesses with up to 20 employees may apply;
- Businesses that are home-based may apply;
- Businesses that received financing through COVID-19 Federal or State programs are eligible;
- Priority will be given to applicants of businesses and entrepreneurs that received \$15,000 or less in financing from Federal or State programs, that applied and were denied, or applied and never heard back are eligible.

III. Eligible Activities & Use of WRSBG Grant Funds

A. COVID-19 Funding Relief

- Any business-related expenses including payroll (exclusive of owner compensation), rent, utilities, business related debt services, mortgage payments, insurance, or similar expenses, and products directly used in production of a product for sale;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and equipment or renovations that assist with adhering to CDC guidance (e.g. countertop shields);
- Funding cannot be used for non-business-related purposes and expenses such as private debts or for the physical capital improvements to the building or space.

B. Technical Assistance

- Hiring a consultant to help with business planning and development;
- Hiring 3rd party vendors, a consultant and/or advisor;
- Website create and e-commerce tools;
- Marketing and design;
- Professional development, attending a course, and/or engage a mentoring opportunity;
- Professional services and/or hiring a specialist (e.g. legal support);
- Planning and engineering costs (e.g. hiring an architect, engineer, or planner).

IV. Application Process & Timeline

1. To apply for WRSBG, fill out the application as a google form, you must login to a google account to fill out the form. If you do not have a google account you can create one here. Alternatively, you can submit the form by filling out the PDF application, scanning all attachments, and sending via email to director@centralmaine.org;

2. Additional images, tear sheets, and/or descriptive information on the nature of the proposed grant purpose / project may be used by including attachments within your application;
3. Successful applicants may begin implementing the grant at the time of receiving their official notice and associated grant funds;
4. No work begun prior to award notifications are eligible for grant funding;
5. Grants will be reviewing on a competitive and rolling basis until the WRSBG fund balance has been depleted;
6. Applicants will be notified of the state of their grant application within 2-4 weeks of submission;
7. Upon notification of a successful grant application, grants funds will be deployed immediately;
8. All funded grant projects and initiatives must be completed by October 1, 2020, unless special arrangements are made and approved by CMGC.

V. Scoring Criteria

Each WRSBG application will be scored according to the following criteria:

1. Compliance with the program guidelines (15 points)
2. Potential impact of the grant on business/entrepreneur (15 points)
3. Priority of eligible activity (20 points)
4. Potential impact on the ability of the business to remain in operation and/or expand (25 points)
5. Amount and status of financial assistance received from Federal and State COVID-19 programs (10 points)
6. Ability of the proposed grant funded activities to make the business/entrepreneur more resilient and sustainable (15 points).

CMGC anticipates that there will be more demand than available funds. Funding will be provided to those applications receiving the overall highest scores until the grant fund is exhausted. The WRSBG Advisory Committee reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant who does not comply with the required or suggested guidelines. Should there be a lack of qualified applications, all remaining grant funds may not be awarded.

VI. Reporting Requirements

Successful WRSBG applicants will be required to submit a grant report by the deadline of November 1, 2020. If an awarded grantee does not submit a fully completed grant report, including proof of the appropriate use of grant funds, the grantee will be responsible for returning a portion or all of the WRSBG grant funds to CMGC within 60 days of the WRSBG report deadline.

The WRSBG report will require successful applicants to provide CMGC the following information, not limited to:

- A brief summary of the original goals and objectives the grant funding achieved

- Statement of how the WRSBG grant funding impacted your business and/or initiative
- Description of how grant funds were spent
- Copies of receipts and relevant images confirming grant spending
- Any relevant statistics (if available)

VII. Contact

Prospective applicants may browse www.centralmaine.org/covid-19 for additional resources related to COVID-19, and may contact CMGC with any questions or challenges completing the application at 207-680-7300 or director@centralmaine.org.