

CEI

Women's

Business Center

# Small Business Grant Resource Guide

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Visit us online: [ceimaine.org/women](https://ceimaine.org/women)

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Welcome to the CEI Women's Business Center's guide for small business grants in Maine. We realize that as a small business owner, it may be difficult to invest in the type of innovation, transformational equipment, renovation, professional development, or research that will propel your business forward. Fortunately, there are several local, statewide, and federal funding programs that will provide grant funding.

We invite you to use this guide as you plan for business startup and expansion [that will yield new products and create jobs]. And remember, our advisors are always available to help you determine which of these grant opportunities may be the right fit for you.

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# Tips for the Grant Search

**Timing is Everything** – Most grant deadlines are scheduled between January and May, although some opportunities are rolling (e.g. no deadline), and some are available on a monthly basis. However, in many cases, the grant application will not become available until 14 days before the deadline. In other instances, you may be required to submit a brief Letter of Interest (LOI); if approved, you will be invited to submit a full application that is due 1-2 months after approval. Deadlines also change without warning. You should plan to frequently monitor the websites of any grants for which you might apply.

**Beware of Scams** – Do not apply for grants that require an entry fee. Always read the Official Rules and confirm that the rules state that no entry fee is required and that a purchase does not improve an applicant's likelihood of receiving funds. Please note that this caveat does not apply to the grant opportunities that are available only to members of credible organizations like the National Association for the Self Employed, which may require paid memberships. Additionally, be sure you know who you're sending personal business or financial information to. For example, any official email from the SBA (Small Business Administration) will end in @sba.gov. Be leery of outside organizations posing as the SBA, or other funders.

**Understand Who Is the Eligible Applicant** – With many state and federal grants, the official applicant must be the Town or City in which your business is located, even if the project benefits you as a business. Before applying, contact your municipal office to discuss the grant opportunity and the process your municipality has for grant applications. You may need to ask your Town or City Council for approval and advertise a Public Hearing for local input.

# Tips for Applying

**Prepare Your Application Ahead of Time** – Grant applications require extensive financial and organizational documentation as well as a compelling narrative that explains why you are requesting funding. This can take time to prepare, especially when you are running a business, so do not wait for the application open period to begin your application. Search for the previous year’s grant application to familiarize yourself with the requirements and questions. Typically, the applications do not change substantially year to year, and you’ll have plenty of time to adapt to any changes once the new application is available.

**Get an Extra Set of Eyes to Read Your Application** – Funders do not know your business as well as you do, so it can be helpful to get an outside perspective. Is your application easy to understand? Does it convey the importance of funding for your business growth and local economic development? Ask an advisor, savvy friend, or fellow business owner to help; you don’t need to pay someone to do this review for you.

**Incorporate A Broader Context** – Use relevant statistics, U.S. Census data, industry studies, and news reports to lend authority to your narrative. Keep the data focused, not too broad – choose local or statewide facts over global statistics. How widespread or severe is the problem affecting your business within Maine? Who does your business serve in Maine? How has your proposed solution to the problem been used successfully by others in your industry? For example, if you are requesting funds to improve your façade, reference a study that describes how consumers are influenced by attractive storefronts. If you are an employer, use U.S. Census statistics to compare your workers’ wages with the median wage in your county.

**Know Your Funder** – Understand what is important to your funder and tailor your application to it. You can find a funder’s mission and values on the funder’s website. While you’re researching, look at the types of projects the funder has previously funded and ensure that your proposed project aligns well with them. Sign up for their e-newsletter and follow them on social media to understand what current issues they’re talking about.

# Vocabulary

**Match:** Many grant programs require matching funds, or match. This is additional funding to supplement the grant funds and complete the project. Depending on the organization, eligible sources of match may or may not include: your own investment; other grants; loans; in-kind donations, time, services (e.g. a graphic designer agrees to work for free for you); or your own labor and investment. In addition, a funder may require that the match not be expended before you receive their grant funds. It's important to understand how each grantor defines match – review the grant application carefully for details.

**TIF:** Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool to encourage investment in under-developed, blighted areas. Administered by each municipality, a TIF district allows developers of properties within the district to recover a portion of the property tax increase that their development generates. For example, if a developer redevelops a blighted building, the property tax valuation increases from \$5 to \$10. Under a Credit Enhancement Agreement (CEA) signed with the municipality, the developer may recover a portion of the \$5 increase in order to offset some of the expenses of development. The remaining property tax gain will go to a TIF fund designed to support designated economic development projects.

**Note:** *This resource was last published in July of 2021. Grant opportunities are fluid and likely to change, and we're doing our best to keep this list current. If you are aware of information that needs to be updated or corrected, please email the CEI Women's Business Center at [wbc@ceimaine.org](mailto:wbc@ceimaine.org)*

# Grants for Small Businesses

The following list of grants for small businesses is organized by how the grant funds may be used. Please note that the deadline may change year to year; we encourage you to research these grant opportunities using the given websites for updated information.

## Research, Development, and Innovation

### Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center

**Description:** Grants to encourage industry development by promoting applied aquaculture research.

**Funding Amount:** \$5,000 - \$50,000

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** By invite only

**Eligibility:** Project must relate to aquaculture research.

**How to Apply:** Visit [MAIC's Grants webpage](#) and contact MAIC at [www.maineaquaculture.org/contact](http://www.maineaquaculture.org/contact) to determine if your research project is a good fit.

# Research, Development, and Innovation *(continued)*

## **Maine Dept. Economic & Community Development – Domestic Trade Program**

**Description:** Grants and contracts for project partners for state trade promotion opportunities for Maine companies.

**Funding Amount:** See “How to Apply” for more information

**Match:** See “How to Apply” for more information

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply” for more information

**Eligibility:** See “How to Apply” for more information

**How to Apply:** Visit [maine.gov/decd](https://maine.gov/decd) and select the “Grant Programs” drop-down menu for more information and forthcoming announcements

## **Maine International Trade Center - State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)**

**Description:** Funding to support Maine companies working internationally.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$20,000.

**Match:** 25% of total project costs.

**Deadline:** December 15, 2023

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a small business with at least 51% of its operations located in Maine. Eligible expenses include international business development, export skills development, export marketing assistance, and international e-commerce and digital marketing.

**How to Apply:** Visit [MITC's webpage](#) for details

# Research, Development, and Innovation (*continued*)

## Maine Technology Institute

**Description:** Grants for businesses and individuals to support Maine's innovation economy.

**Funding Amount:** Meet with an MTI Advisor to discuss an appropriate funding request.

**Match:** 1:1 match (100% of requested investment amount)

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Your business must fit within these seven targeted sectors: biotechnology; composites & advanced materials; environmental technology; forest products & agriculture; information technology; marine technology & aquaculture; and precision manufacturing.

**How to Apply:** Complete an Online Intake Form at [mainetechnology.org](http://mainetechnology.org) and meet with an MTI advisor.

## Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)

**Description:** Grants to support scientific excellence and the commercialization of technological innovation through the investment of federal research funds to support a strong U.S. economy.

**Funding Amount:** Determined each year; generally Phase I is \$250,000 and Phase II is \$750,000.

**Match:** Yes

**Deadline:** Determined by each government agency that participates in SBIR

**Eligibility:** Small business with high-tech innovations

**How to Apply:** Contact [MTI](http://MTI), Maine's official SBIR/STTR support organization

# Artistic Project Creation/Continuation

## Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Residency

**Description:** Provides light-filled studio space and a monthly stipends for residency at the Lincoln Street Center in Rockland.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,200 monthly stipend (for one-, two-, or six-month residencies)

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Fall/Winter deadline is April 1; Spring/Summer deadline is October 1

**Eligibility:** Artist is at least 18 years old and a U.S. resident.

**How to Apply:** Visit [ellis-beauregardfoundation.org](http://ellis-beauregardfoundation.org).

## Maine Arts Commission – Creative Aging

**Description:** Grants to supports the collaboration between artists and community organizations in developing high-quality, participatory, arts programs for older adults.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** A full-time, non-student Maine artist who is listed on the Creative Aging Teaching Artist Roster and is partnering with a nonprofit organization.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainearts.maine.gov](http://mainearts.maine.gov), create a Maine Arts Commission account, and complete the online application.

## Artistic Project Creation/Continuation (*continued*)

### Maine Arts Commission – Project Grant

**Description:** Grants to assist individual artists with the creation of new artistic work, the continuation of existing practices, or professional development.

**Funding Amount:** \$2,500

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** A full-time, non-student Maine artist seeking funding for supplies, exhibition or installation costs, or the documentation of work or workshops. See full list online.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainearts.maine.gov](http://mainearts.maine.gov), create a Maine Arts Commission account, and complete the online application.

### Maine Arts Commission – Springboard Artist Grant

**Description:** Grants to assist individual artists who have *not* been previously funded by the Maine Arts Commission. Funds may be used toward the creation of new artistic work, the continuation of existing practices, or professional development.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,500

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** A full-time, non-student Maine artist who has not been previously awarded Maine Arts Commission funding (excepting apprenticeships and Resilience Artist grants).

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainearts.maine.gov](http://mainearts.maine.gov), create a Maine Arts Commission account, and complete the online application.

## Artistic Project Creation/Continuation *(continued)*

### Maine Community Foundation - Leonard & Renee Minsky Fund for Arts Education

**Description:** Grants to support professional visual and/or performing arts artists to work with teachers to bring arts into the classroom.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,000 (at least 75% of funds will support the artist's fee)

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** December

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a school in Washington or Penobscot County, applying for grades 3-5.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainecf.org](http://mainecf.org) and complete the online application.

### Space 538 – Kindling Fund

**Description:** Grants to support artist-organized projects that engage audiences and incorporate the visual arts in inventive and meaningful ways.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,500 - \$5,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Application will open in Fall 2022

**Eligibility:** Must be an artist in the state of Maine.

**How to Apply:** Visit [space538.org/kindling-fund](http://space538.org/kindling-fund)

# Marketing and Storefront Improvement

## Maine Downtown Center – REvitalizeME Grant Program

**Description:** Grants toward the development, pre-development (i.e. engineering & architectural plans), or energy efficiency projects on historically-significant properties.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$200,000

**Match:** Up to 25%, depending on population

**Deadline:** March

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be owner of a non-residential, non-religious property located in a downtown community served by Maine Development Foundation ([list on page 4](#)), that is currently, or eligible to be, listed on the National Registry of Historic of Historic Places.

**How to Apply:** Visit the Maine Development Foundation’s [REvitalizeME Grant Program page](#).

## New Ventures Maine Mini Marketing Grant

**Description:** Grants to strengthen access to markets for small businesses by supporting the development of professional, well-planned marketing tools, materials, and activities.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,000

**Match:** 25% of the funding request amount

**Deadline:** May 6, 2022

**Eligibility:** Small business with 5 or fewer employees, sales in the current year, and gross annual sales of no more than \$150,000.

**How to Apply:** Find more information and contact your local NVM office by visiting [newventuresmaine.org/programs/start-a-business](http://newventuresmaine.org/programs/start-a-business).

# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

Many towns and cities in Maine offer grant funding to businesses and property owners for the restoration of downtown storefronts. If this list does not include the town or city in which your business is located, we recommend that you visit your town/city's website to see if they are starting a grant program. As well, many façade grant programs are temporary and may not be available in several years.

### **Augusta – Sign Grant**

**Description:** Grants toward the cost of new signage for new or existing businesses in downtown Augusta.

**Funding Amount:** \$500

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Located in downtown Augusta; sign design must conform with city codes.

**How to Apply:** Visit [augustadowntown.com/opportunity](http://augustadowntown.com/opportunity) and e-mail [director@augustadowntown.com](mailto:director@augustadowntown.com) to request an application.

# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

### **Augusta – Awning Grant**

**Description:** Grants toward the purchase or restoration of an awning for new or existing businesses in downtown Augusta.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Located in downtown Augusta

**How to Apply:** Visit [augustadowntown.com/opportunity](http://augustadowntown.com/opportunity) and e-mail [director@augustadowntown.com](mailto:director@augustadowntown.com) to request an application.

### **Bangor – Façade Improvement Grant**

**Description:** Grants toward the renovation, restoration, and preservation of business facades and storefronts in Bangor. Façade must be visible from the primary means of travel at street level.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$15,000

**Match:** 50% of grant amount

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** Located in a commercial area of Bangor as specified on the grant's [online map](#). Applicant must be the property owner.

**How to Apply:** Visit [bangormaine.gov/facadegrant](http://bangormaine.gov/facadegrant) for guidelines and application.



# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

### **Bath – Façade Grant Program**

**Description:** Grants toward the renovation, restoration, and preservation of the exterior of commercial and mixed-use properties located in core commercial areas of Bath.

**Funding Amount:** 50% of total project cost, up to \$10,000

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** December

**Eligibility:** Located in a commercial area of Bath. Applicant must be property owner.

**How to Apply:** Visit [the City of Bath’s website](#) for guidelines and application.

### **Caribou – Façade Improvement Grant Program**

**Description:** Grants to improve commercial and mixed-use property facades.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$7,500

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply”

**Eligibility:** Located within Caribou’s Downtown TIF District. Applicant must be property owner.

**How to Apply:** Print and complete [the application](#) and contact [citymanager@cariboumaine.org](mailto:citymanager@cariboumaine.org) for more information.

# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

### **Ellsworth – Heart of Ellsworth Downtown Grants Program**

**Description:** Grants for start-up or expansion projects to help entrepreneurs and support economic opportunities in the City of Ellsworth.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$1,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** November

**Eligibility:** Located within downtown Ellsworth

**How to Apply:** Visit [Downtown Grant Program page](#) and contact [cara@heartofellsworth.org](mailto:cara@heartofellsworth.org) for more information.

### **Fairfield – Façade Improvement & Marketing Assistance Program**

**Description:** Grants to enhance the viability of local commercial businesses in Fairfield through façade improvements or advertising & branding efforts.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$25,000 for façade improvements | up to \$3,000 for marketing project

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Located within the Town of Fairfield. Total marketing project cost must exceed \$1,000.

**How to Apply:** Visit the Town of Fairfield's [Business Resources webpage](#) for the application.



# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

### Houlton – Façade Grant Program

**Description:** Grants encourage private investment improving downtown Houlton’s historic facades.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$5,000

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Located within the Houlton Downtown TIF District

**How to Apply:** Visit [houlton-maine.com/departments/economic-development](http://houlton-maine.com/departments/economic-development) for application and contact information.

### Lewiston – Façade Improvement for Commercial Buildings Program

**Description:** 100% deferred loan to enhance the appearance of the commercial area, encourage private investment in storefronts, and assist business owners with rehabilitating storefronts. Eligible activities can include exterior renovations, including the entryway, exterior lighting, signage, window repair/replacement, masonry, repointing, painting, and awnings.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$35,000 for owners | \$2,000 for tenants

**Match:** 1:1

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply”

**Eligibility:** Property owner or tenant business improvements must either create jobs for LMI individuals or provide 51% of services to LMI individuals, or improve a blighted commercial storefront. Must be commercial business or property in Lewiston.

**How to Apply:** Visit [lewistonmaine.gov](http://lewistonmaine.gov)



# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

### **Saco – Downtown Façade Grant Program**

**Description:** Grants to support economic development and community revitalization through a variety of façade improvement activities.

**Funding Amount:** 50% total project costs, up to \$15,000

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** Rolling until March 31, 2022

**Eligibility:** Located within Saco’s Downtown TIF District.

**How to Apply:** Visit [sacomaine.org](http://sacomaine.org) and contact [jberna@sacomaine.org](mailto:jberna@sacomaine.org).

### **Skowhegan – Technical Assistance**

**Description:** Grants to support business growth and startup operations for entrepreneurs and business owners in Skowhegan.

**Funding Amount:** \$2,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** 2023 round will be announced in May 2023.

**Eligibility:** Located within the Town of Skowhegan.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainstreetskowhegan.org/ta](http://mainstreetskowhegan.org/ta).

# Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

## Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

### **Waterville – Downtown Façade & Building Improvement Grant Program**

**Description:** Grants to assist in the redevelopment, renovation, restoration, and repair of commercial buildings in Waterville’s downtown district.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$10,000 though a “special projects” category may review higher funding requests.

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply”

**Eligibility:** Located within downtown Waterville.

**How to Apply:** Visit [centralmaine.org/façade](http://centralmaine.org/façade)

### **Westbrook – Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program**

**Description:** Grants to assist businesses and property owners in making physical improvements to their building exterior.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$15,000

**Match:** 50% of total project cost

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply”

**Eligibility:** Located within Westbrook’s downtown district.

**How to Apply:** Visit [westbrookmaine.com](http://westbrookmaine.com) and contact Ashley Rand at [arand@westbrook.me.us](mailto:arand@westbrook.me.us) for more information.



# Capital Acquisition and Infrastructure Upgrade

## Efficiency Maine – Hospitality Retrofits

**Description:** Incentives to accelerate a hospitality business’s conversion to energy-efficient equipment, including HVAC, lighting, and refrigeration.

**Funding Amount:** Up to 100% of the total materials cost

**Match:** Yes (depends on project)

**Deadline:** May 1, 2023

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a motel, hotel, inn, or B&B with fewer than 100 beds OR a restaurant. Must be located in Maine and not be owned/franchised from a national/international chain. AirBnBs are not eligible.

**How to Apply:** Visit [efficiencymaine.com](http://efficiencymaine.com) to learn more and apply.

## Island Institute – Spark! Grant

**Description:** Grants to support broadband, energy, sea level rise, and working waterfront infrastructure planning projects.

**Funding Amount:** \$4,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Rolling (first come, first served basis)

**Eligibility:** Based in Maine’s island and/or coastal communities; eligible applicants include working waterfront businesses and entities such as: processing facilities, co-op buildings and offices, shared equipment/storage sheds/workshops, fishing vessels, and docks and yards.

**How to Apply:** Visit [islandinstitute.org](http://islandinstitute.org), contact organization to confirm proposed project is a good fit, and complete the online application.



# Capital Acquisition and Infrastructure Upgrade (*cont.*)

## **Maine Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Economic Development Program**

**Description:** Grants to provide gap funding for the purchase of equipment or working capital to create jobs for low-to-moderate income individuals.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$30,000 per job created, up to \$250,000

**Match:** 50% total project cost

**Deadline:** LOI due in April, full application due in June

**Eligibility:** At least 51% of the jobs created by the project must be held by low-to-middle income (LMI) workers. Applicant must be the municipality.

**How to Apply:** Visit [maine.gov/decd](http://maine.gov/decd) and contact your local municipality to discuss a potential application. In most municipalities throughout the State, the municipality (not the business owner) is the applicant for this grant. The exception is specific municipalities, called “entitlement communities”, that receive their own allocation of CDBG funds, in which case the business must apply with the municipality. This includes Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, and all other municipalities of Cumberland County except for Brunswick, Casco, and Frye Island.

# Capital Acquisition and Infrastructure Upgrade (*cont.*)

## Maine CDBG – Micro-Enterprise Assistance Grant Program

**Description:** Grants to address the needs of micro-businesses in non-entitlement areas; funds may be used for working capital, purchase of inventory, supplies, and equipment.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$10,000

**Match:** See “How to Apply”

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** Must have no more than 5 employees (including owner); owner must be within the low-to-moderate income range.

**How to Apply:** Meet with your nearest [Small Business Development Center](#) or the [CEI Women’s Business Center](#) to discuss eligibility. Find more information at [maine.gov/decd](http://maine.gov/decd).

**Entitlement Area:** In Maine, entitlement communities (which are not eligible for this application) include Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, and all other municipalities of Cumberland County except for Brunswick, Casco, and Frye Island.

# Capital Acquisition and Infrastructure Upgrade (cont.)

## Maine Regional Planning Organizations – Brownfields Grants

**Description:** Grants to assess and remediate potential environmental contamination concerns to enable the reuse, redevelopment, or expansion of that site.

**Funding Amount:** Varies according to region and phase of project

**Match:** Varies

**Deadline:** Varies

**Eligibility:** Site must be considered “blight” and unable to be redeveloped because of perceived or actual environmental contamination concerns. Applicant may need to be the municipality.

**How to Apply:** Contact your Regional Planning Organization – find yours [here](#). You may also find more information about Brownfields on the [Maine Dept. Environmental Protection webpage](#).

## Northern Borders Regional Commission – State Economic & Infrastructure Development

**Description:** Grants to support economic development and infrastructure projects that yield job creation and reduce poverty, unemployment, and outmigration.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$1 million for infrastructure, up to \$350,000 for non-infrastructure

**Match:** 50-80% of qualified project costs, depending on location

**Deadline:** LOI due in April, full application due in June

**Eligibility:** Located in a county that is NOT Cumberland, York, Sagadahoc, nor Lincoln. Applicant must be a 501(c) organization, a municipality, or state government.

**How to Apply:** Visit [nbrc.gov](#) and contact your municipality to discuss a potential application.

# Capital Acquisition and Infrastructure Upgrade (*cont.*)

## USDA – Rural Business Development Grant

**Description:** Grants to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas. Funding is also available for business renovation and capital equipment.

**Funding Amount:** N/A (smaller grants given priority)

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** February 28, 2023

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a municipality or nonprofit corporation. Must be located in a rural area; that is, outside the urbanized periphery of a city with more than 50,000 residents. Business must have fewer than 50 employees.

**How to Apply:** Visit [rd.usda.gov](https://rd.usda.gov) and contact your municipality to discuss a potential application.

# Workforce, Job Creation, & Entrepreneurship

## Community Concepts – Workforce Training

**Description:** Short-term reimbursement for all or partial wages of a job candidate matched to you through Community.

**Funding Amount:** Varies

**Deadline:** N/A

**Eligibility:** See “How to Apply”

**How to Apply:** Visit [ccimaine.org/employer](http://ccimaine.org/employer) and contact for more information.

## City of Lewiston – Micro-Enterprise Grant

**Description:** Grants to help entrepreneurs and existing businesses build capacity, develop business in the target area, and increase the tax base. Eligible uses include: financial start-up support such as equipment, initial product, working capital, rehabilitation of space to ready for business; general owner support such as transportation, child care, counseling, peer support; technical assistance; and training to increase capacity.

**Funding Amount:** \$2,000

**Match:** 25%

**Deadline:** N/A

**Eligibility:** Business must employ 1-5 people, one of which is owner. Jobs created/retained must be for individuals with low-to-moderate income.

**How to Apply:** Visit [lewistonmaine.gov](http://lewistonmaine.gov) for more information.

## Workforce, Job Creation, & Entrepreneurship (*cont.*)

### City of Portland – Growing Child Care Grant

**Description:** Grants to encourage the start up of home-based child care businesses and assist existing home-based child-care, center-based child care, and before/after-school child care.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$15,500

**Deadline:** Rolling until funding is exhausted

**Eligibility:** New businesses must be located/planned to locate in Portland with capacity for 3-12 children (12 preferred). Existing businesses must be located in Portland, serve fewer than 50 children, and be currently licensed.

**How to Apply:** Visit [portlandmaine.gov](https://portlandmaine.gov) to apply.

### Maine Dept. Labor – Maine Industry Partnership for Workforce Development

**Description:** Grants for proposals that expand/create industry-driven partnerships --via industry associations, groups of employers, and other collaborations-- that organize and address the employment needs of industries impacted by COVID-19.

**Funding Amount:** \$300-700k

**Deadline:** June 28, 2022

**Eligibility:** Lead applicant must describe a partnership of at least 4 employers within the sectors of: clean energy; Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries; healthcare and social assistance; information; infrastructure; leisure and hospitality; manufacturing; education, retail. For other eligibility requirements, see "How to Apply".

**How to Apply:** Visit the [Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan](#) website.

# Workforce, Job Creation, & Entrepreneurship (*cont.*)

## Maine Early Childhood Consultation Partnership Stipend

**Description:** Stipends offered to licensed child care providers who participate in the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) in order to increase access, quality, and workforce.

**Funding Amount:** \$5k per classroom or family childcare program

**Deadline:** Open through September 2023 or until funds are exhausted. Stipends may be retroactively awarded through January 1, 2021.

**Eligibility:** Licensed child care facilities and licensed family child care providers may participate. Stipends are awarded after completion of the ECCP Core Classroom Services or Family Child Care Provider Services.

**How to Apply:** Visit [maine.gov/dhhs](https://maine.gov/dhhs), call 1-877-680-5866, or email [ECCPProgram.DHHS@maine.gov](mailto:ECCPProgram.DHHS@maine.gov)

## Maine Quality Centers

**Description:** Grants to support workforce training of new or incumbent employees.

**Funding Amount:** Contact for more information and to build a customized plan.

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Must be hiring or currently employing workers.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mccs.me.edu/workforce-training](https://mccs.me.edu/workforce-training) to apply or fill out a contact form.

# Workforce, Job Creation, & Entrepreneurship (*cont.*)

## Maine Quality Centers – Put ME to Work

**Description:** Grants to support the establishment of training programs for high-wage jobs.

**Funding Amount:** Contact for more information and to build a customized plan.

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Must agree to hire successful program graduates and pay them at least \$2.50 above the minimum hourly wage, or at/above median wage for the relevant occupation.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mccs.me.edu/workforce-training](https://mccs.me.edu/workforce-training) to apply or fill out a contact form.

## Maine State Child Care Infrastructure Grant

**Description:** Funding to help start new child care businesses and to expand the number of children served by existing child care providers.

**Funding Amount:** Varies according to project; generally 50-75% of approved project costs, up to \$8,500. If adding a dedicated child care room to an existing home, you may apply for \$25,000. Some applicants are also eligible for a \$2,000 stipend.

**Deadline:** Rolling through May 2024

**Eligibility:** Licensing regulations apply; see “How to Apply” for more details. Must demonstrate that the project will yield an increase in child care capacity.

**How to Apply:** Visit [ceimaine.org/maine-grants](https://ceimaine.org/maine-grants) for more information and to apply.

# Workforce, Job Creation, & Entrepreneurship (cont.)

## Maine Technology Institute – Maine Entrepreneurial Resource Corps (MERC)

**Description:** Financial support for approved projects conducted with a vendor listed in MTI’s database of vetted consultants in 40+ areas of expertise.

**Funding Amount:** 50% of approved project cost, up to \$10,000.

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Company is within MTI’s seven technology sectors and earns less than \$2M in annual revenue. Projects should be short-term (ideally three months or shorter) and cost no more than \$20k. Businesses must complete a VIRAL assessment (see “How to Apply”).

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainetechnology.org/mti-funding/merc](http://mainetechnology.org/mti-funding/merc) – both consultants and businesses seeking consultants may apply.

## Maine Technology Institute – PRIME Ecosystem Fund

**Description:** Grants to organizations who support Maine’s targeted technology sectors by providing advice, mentoring, and other guidance to Maine entrepreneurs and startups in these sectors. Grants will support new programs from new and established Maine organizations that aim to address the negative economic impact of the pandemic, support innovation, and provide a catalyst for startups.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$750,000

**Match:** 50%

**Deadline:** November 15

**Eligibility:** Org. is registered with the Maine Secretary of State and has a Unique Entity Identifier.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainetechnology.org](http://mainetechnology.org) to apply online.



# Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Operations

## CEI Tastemakers

**Description:** Funding to help established food & beverage companies expand production capacity and create jobs.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$20,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Application window opens in 2023

**Eligibility:** Business must produce food/beverage products for human consumption, source from Maine agriculture, aquaculture, or fisheries, and be based & incorporated in Maine.

**How to Apply:** Visit [ceimaine.org](https://ceimaine.org) – Find an Advisor tab.

## Maine Dept. Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry – Agriculture Development Grant

**Description:** Grant funding to conduct market promotion, market R&D, value-added processing, and new technology demo projects.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$50,000

**Match:** 25% of total project costs

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** Must be a Maine-based company operating within the food, beverage, agriculture, or aquaculture industries.

**How to Apply:** Visit [maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants](https://maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants)

## Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Op. (cont.)

### **Maine Dept. Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry – Maine Farms for the Future Grant**

**Description:** Grants to farm business owners to conduct research and strategic business planning on their “*Ideas for Change*” that might increase farm vitality.

**Funding Amount:** Phase 1 (Business plan development) maximum is \$6,000 | Phase 2 maximum is \$25,000

**Match:** 75% for Phase 2 project costs

**Deadline:** December (Phase 1) and January (Phase 2)

**Eligibility:** Must be a Maine-based agriculture farm that has been in commercial operation for at least 24 months.

**How to Apply:** Visit [maine.gov/dacf/ard/business\\_and\\_market\\_development](https://maine.gov/dacf/ard/business_and_market_development)

### **Maine Farmland Trust – Blue Hill Peninsula Community Food Grant**

**Description:** Grants to increase food sustainability, improve health & well-being of residents, create a more just and sustainable food system through food production, education, or related projects.

**Funding Amount:** \$3,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** March

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be located on the Blue Hill peninsula and may be an individual, nonprofit, school, business (including farm), or community group.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainefarmlandtrust.org](https://mainefarmlandtrust.org).

# Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Op. (cont.)

## National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association – Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant

**Description:** Grants to promote, develop, and market U.S. fisheries and/or develop technologies that promote sustainable seafood production and harvesting.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$300,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Pre-proposals due July 18, 2022 | full proposals due October 31, 2022

**Eligibility:** U.S. Citizens, corporations, partnerships, associations, or other non-federal entity.

**How to Apply:** Visit [fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/saltonstall-kennedy-grant-competition](https://fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/saltonstall-kennedy-grant-competition)

## USDA – Farmers Market Promotion Program

**Description:** Grants to develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally- and regionally-produced agricultural products by developing, coordinating, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance for market opportunities.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$750,000

**Match:** 25% of total project costs

**Deadline:** May

**Eligibility:** Applicant may be an agricultural business, producer network or association, a community-supported agriculture (CSA) network, nonprofit, or local government. However, project cannot benefit just one business – it must be collaborative.

**How to Apply:** Visit [rd.usda.gov](https://rd.usda.gov) and contact the Maine USDA office at (207) 990-9127.

# Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Op. (cont.)

## USDA – Local Food Promotion Program

**Description:** Grants to develop, coordinate and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$750,000

**Match:** 25% of total project costs

**Deadline:** May

**Eligibility:** Applicant may be an agricultural business, producer network or association, a community-supported agriculture (CSA) network, nonprofit, or local government. However, project cannot benefit just one business – it must be collaborative.

**How to Apply:** Visit [rd.usda.gov](http://rd.usda.gov) and contact the Maine USDA office at (207) 990-9127.

## USDA – Value-Added Producer Grant

**Description:** Grants to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The program intends to create new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$250,000

**Match:** 50% of total project costs

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** Applicant may be an agricultural producer (independent or group), farmer or rancher cooperative, or a majority-controlled producer-based business venture.

**How to Apply:** Visit [rd.usda.gov](http://rd.usda.gov) and contact the Maine USDA office at (207) 990-9127.



# Outdoor Recreation

## **Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife – Youth Conservation Camp Grants**

**Description:** Grants to support scholarships to youth conservation education programs.

**Funding Amount:** \$400 per camper per week of camp

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply”

**Eligibility:** Must demonstrate the ability and documented experience to provide the following Basic Conservation Camp curriculum through either a residential or day camp experience for Maine resident boys and girls ages 8-17.

**How to Apply:** Visit [maine.gov/ifw](http://maine.gov/ifw) for more information and to apply.

## **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish & Wildlife**

**Description:** Grants to private landowners to restore and conserve fish and wildlife habitat for the benefit of federal trust resources.

**Funding Amount:** \$750,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Rolling through September 2022

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be private landowner; preference for projects in priority areas.

**How to Apply:** Visit [fws.gov/partners](http://fws.gov/partners) for more information and to apply.

# Economic Recovery Grants

## **FAME Maine – Thrive Maine**

**Description:** Forgivable loans to cover pandemic-related losses or increased expenses not previously covered by prior pandemic relief funding. Eligible items include: cash flow losses (loss of EBITDA), increased expenses, and increased capital costs.

**Funding Amount:** \$10,000 to \$2 million

**Match:** N/A

**Deadline:** Next round opens in 2023

**Eligibility:** Must be a Maine business with fewer than 500 employees, at least 50% of whom must be in Maine.

**How to Apply:** Visit [famemaine.com](https://famemaine.com) for more information and to apply.

## **Island Institute – Business Resilience Grants 2.0**

**Description:** Grants to promote the resilience of small businesses located on outer islands.

**Funding Amount:** \$1,500

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** Rolling; closes March 31, 2023

**Eligibility:** Must be located on one of or more of Maine's 15 unbridged year-round island communities.

**How to Apply:** Visit [islandinstitute.org](https://islandinstitute.org)

## Economic Recovery Grants *(continued)*

### Maine Technology Institute – Forest Recovery Initiative, Phase 2

**Description:** Grants to help Maine’s forestry industry address challenges and long-term threats, and improve productivity and competitiveness. Projects shall tackled global market shifts in supply and demand, supply chain disruptions, and new technologies.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$2M, subject to change

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** October 18, 2022

**Eligibility:** Business must involve the harvest, transportation (earning more than 50% of its revenue from forestry operations) or processing of forest products utilizing timber, OR must offer a process or technology that could mitigate damage to the Maine Forestry industry caused by the pandemic. Your business must be incorporated before January 1, 2022.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainetechnology.org](http://mainetechnology.org) to apply online.

### Restaurant Disaster Relief Fund

**Description:** Grants to support restaurants impacted by natural disasters like fires, floods, and hurricanes.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$10k

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** December 30, 2022

**Eligibility:** An independently-owned small business with fewer than 50 employees and annual revenues lower than \$3M per location. Must have 3 or fewer locations. The disaster must be declared a natural disaster by the state or federal government.

**How to Apply:** Visit [helloalice.com/grants/doordash](http://helloalice.com/grants/doordash) to apply online.

# National Grants

## FedEx Small Business Grant Contest

**Description:** Grants to support innovative small businesses.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$50,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** February

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a U.S.-based small business owner

**How to Apply:** Visit [fedex.com/en-us/small-business/grant-contest](https://fedex.com/en-us/small-business/grant-contest) for more information

## HelloAlice – Small Business Growth Fund

**Description:** Grants to help small business owners make their next big move.

**Funding Amount:** \$25,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** January 6, 2023

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a U.S.-based small business owner with less than \$1M in annual revenue.

**How to Apply:** Visit [helloalice.com](https://helloalice.com) for more information

## National Grants *(continued)*

### HelloAlice/Nextdoor – Keep It Local

**Description:** Grants to support entrepreneurs of color in achieving their business goals.

**Funding Amount:** \$10,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** December 16, 2022

**Eligibility:** Business must be majority owned and/or operated by a person(s) of color.

**How to Apply:** Visit [helloalice.com](https://helloalice.com) for more information

### J.W. Couch Foundation

**Description:** Grants for general operating support or to help social entrepreneurs get new products off the ground in one of three areas: preservation, education, and wellness.

**Funding Amount:** No maximum

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** March, June, September, December

**Eligibility:** Applicant business must align with the priority areas of preservation, education, and/or wellness.

**How to Apply:** Visit [jwcouchfoundation.org/apply](https://jwcouchfoundation.org/apply) for more information

## National Grants *(continued)*

### **IFundWomen – Universal Grant Application**

**Description:** Enter into grant applicant database for notification and invitation to apply to eligible grant opportunities to support woman-owned small businesses.

**Funding Amount:** Varies

**Match:** Varies

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a self-identified woman entrepreneur with at least 50% ownership in the business.

**How to Apply:** Visit [ifundwomen.com/grants](https://ifundwomen.com/grants)

### **Ladies Who Launch – Launch Program**

**Description:** Grants to support early-stage female and non-binary entrepreneurs.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$25,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a self-identified female or non-binary owner of a small business that has been in operation for over 24 months. Annual revenue generation also contributes to eligibility (see “How to Apply”).

**How to Apply:** Visit [ladieswholaunch.org/launch-program](https://ladieswholaunch.org/launch-program)

## National Grants *(continued)*

### McBride Sisters – Yes She Can Fund

**Description:** Grants to support professional advancement and career growth of high-potential, professional women, with a particular focus on women of color, in the wine & spirits, hospitality, and finance industries. 2022 focuses on certification course and exam scholarships.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$5,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** June 15, 2022

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a female professional with at least three years' experience in the wine & spirits, hospitality, or finance industries.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mcbridesistersfund.org/grants](https://mcbridesistersfund.org/grants)

### NAACP – Power Forward Small Business Grant

**Description:** Grants to create a lasting impact through the economic empowerment of Black-owned small businesses across New England.

**Funding Amount:** \$25,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** April

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Black-owned small business located in New England with 25 or fewer employees.

**How to Apply:** Visit [naacp.org/find-resources/grants](https://naacp.org/find-resources/grants)

## National Grants *(continued)*

### **NAACP – Backing the B.A.R.**

**Description:** Grants to support Black-owned businesses in the alcohol beverage service, sales, and hospitality industries.

**Funding Amount:** \$10,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** July

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Black business owner with a liquor license or plans to acquire one.

**How to Apply:** Visit [naacp.org/grants/backing-the-bar](https://naacp.org/grants/backing-the-bar)

# Pitch Competitions & Business Planning Programs

## Big Gig

**Description:** Funding to create a supportive network and to bring positive change and economic growth to the communities of Maine's Penobscot River Valley.

**Funding Amount:** \$500 with the opportunity to compete for \$5,000

**Deadline:** Monthly

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Maine entrepreneur with a business idea or early-stage business.

**How to Apply:** Visit [biggig.org](http://biggig.org)

## Downeast Business Boot Camp & Pitch-Off

**Description:** A nonconsecutive six-day intensive training and prep program for early stage business owners, who will strengthen their business confidence in a collaborative environment as they compete in a final judged pitch event.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$5,000

**Deadline:** See "How to Apply"; next bootcamp will be held in 2024.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a small business in Hancock or Washington County that has been in operation for 1-3 years with fewer than 10 employees and no more than \$500,000 in annual revenue.

**How to Apply:** Visit [ceimaine.org/bizcamp](http://ceimaine.org/bizcamp)

# Pitch Competitions & Business Planning *(continued)*

## **Gorham Savings Bank – LaunchPad**

**Description:** Funding to support Maine ingenuity, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.

**Funding Amount:** \$50,000

**Deadline:** March

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a legally-registered, Maine-based business or a legal resident of Maine at least 18 years of age.

**How to Apply:** Visit [gorhamsavings.bank/launchpad](http://gorhamsavings.bank/launchpad)

## **Greenlight Maine**

**Description:** A competitive reality television show for Maine startups.

**Funding Amount:** \$100,000 for regular competition, and \$10,000 for collegiate competition

**Deadline:** See “How to Apply”

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Maine entrepreneur with an early-stage business.

**How to Apply:** Visit [greenlightmaine.com](http://greenlightmaine.com) for more information.

# Pitch Competitions & Business Planning *(continued)*

## Maine Center for Entrepreneurs – Top Gun

**Description:** A 15-week business accelerator program that combines hands-on mentoring with high-impact weekly gatherings. At the culmination of the program, participants may compete for a cash prize.

**Cost:** \$500

**Prize:** \$25,000

**Deadline:** December 14, 2022

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Maine-based entrepreneur.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mced.biz/top-gun](https://mced.biz/top-gun)

## Maine Farmland Trust – Business of Farming

**Description:** A business workshop for farmers that will help you uncover the story your financial records are telling you, and develop your ability to make strategic business decisions that move you in the direction of your goals.

**Cost:** Sliding scale from \$25-\$500; you will receive the full amount back upon program completion.

**Funding Amount:** \$500 as a seed grant at the culmination of the program.

**Deadline:** Registration closes December 16, 2022

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be an experienced Maine-based farmer who wants to analyze their current business model and use the information for decision making.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainefarmlandtrust.org/farm-network/workshops](https://mainefarmlandtrust.org/farm-network/workshops)

# Pitch Competitions & Business Planning *(continued)*

## **Maine Farmland Trust – Farming for the Long Haul**

**Description:** A two-year business planning program for experienced farmers to achieve long-term viability.

**Funding Amount:** Receive up to \$2,750 per year for individualized technical assistance; may apply for a \$65,000 implementation grant.

**Deadline:** Registration closes December 11, 2022.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Maine-based farmer currently serving wholesale accounts.

**How to Apply:** Visit [mainefarmlandtrust.org/farm-network/workshops](https://mainefarmlandtrust.org/farm-network/workshops)

## **Maine Venture Fund – Maine Startup Challenge**

**Description:** A business plan competition for Maine’s startup ecosystem, designed to encourage participation and entrepreneurial thinking across all ages.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$5,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** September 30, 2022

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a Maine-based early stage business or startup; may be pre-revenue or in the idea stage. Ideas must be original and your own.

**How to Apply:** Visit [maineventurefund.com](https://maineventurefund.com)

## Pitch Competitions & Business Planning *(continued)*

### StreetShares Foundation – Military Entrepreneur Challenge

**Description:** Funding to create access to capital opportunities for military veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs who seek to start or grow a business venture.

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$15,000

**Match:** No

**Deadline:** October

**Eligibility:** Applicant must own at least 51% of the business and be a low-income veteran or reserve member, a spouse or child of a veteran, or a Gold Star family member. Must be at least 21 years of age.

**How to Apply:** Visit [streetsharesfoundation.org](https://streetsharesfoundation.org)

CEI

Women's

Business Center

Visit us online: [ceimaine.org/women](https://ceimaine.org/women)

Sign up for our newsletter: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/dAj9OTc>

Send us an email: [wbc@ceimaine.org](mailto:wbc@ceimaine.org)

Follow us on Instagram: [instagram.com/CEIWomensBusinessCenter/](https://www.instagram.com/CEIWomensBusinessCenter/)

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Visit us online: [ceimaine.org/women](https://ceimaine.org/women)