Inclusive Backing Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

General Program Questions

When is the application open? How can I apply?

Applications will be accepted beginning at 9am CT on February 15, 2022, through 11:59 PM CT March 1, 2022. You can find a link to the online application [here](#).

Who should be filling out this application?

This application is designed to be completed by the business owner. If someone is assisting the business owner in the physical completion of the application form, please be sure to include their name and email address in the application when asked. This will ensure this person also receives updates and information pertaining to this program and your application.

Eligibility Questions

What businesses are eligible for Cycle 2?

In partnership with American Express, the second grant cycle will provide grants to service-based businesses, including aromatherapy services; barber shops; beauty & day spas; cobbler; cosmetologists; cosmetology & personal hygiene; dressmaker/seamstress; drycleaner; facial cosmetology; hair salons; nail salons/manicures & pedicures; massage parlor & steam bath services; massage therapy; tanning salons; or tailors.

Businesses must have a "bricks-and-mortar" location and operate in an older or historic main street, downtown, or commercial district in the United States. We define this as a contiguous commercial district with businesses and mixed-use buildings along a commercial corridor, which **does not** include businesses in strip malls, residences, or shopping malls.

Priority will be given to businesses that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and preference given to businesses owned by underrepresented groups, including People of Color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, veterans, and women.

I do not own a service-based business. Can I still apply to Cycle 2?

Cycle 2 of the Inclusive Backing Grant Program will provide grants to small service-based businesses, as described above. If you do not own a service-based business, you are not eligible for Cycle 2 of the Inclusive Backing Grant Program.

There will be two additional cycles of this grant program; each dedicated to supporting a series of specific identities and communities. Please check back to see if you qualify for a subsequent cycle, or
My business is not owned or owned in part by someone who identifies as a member of an underrepresented community. Can I still apply to Cycle 2?

Cycle 2 of the Inclusive Backing Grant Program will give preference to businesses owned by underrepresented groups, including People of Color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, veterans, and women.

There will be two additional cycles of this grant program; each dedicated to supporting a series of specific identities and communities. Please check back to see if you qualify for a subsequent cycle, or add your email to Main Street America’s small business mailing list to receive Inclusive Backing grant updates right to your inbox.

My business is in a strip mall, residence, or shopping mall. Is my business eligible?

No. For this program, businesses must be in an older or historic main street, downtown, or commercial district. We define this as a contiguous commercial district with businesses and mixed-use buildings along a commercial corridor. This does not include businesses in strip malls, residences, or shopping malls.

My business is outside of the United States. Can I still apply?

No, businesses must be in the United States.

I own multiple businesses. Can I apply for more than one?

Please only apply for one business.

Are nonprofits eligible?

No, nonprofits are not eligible.

Are franchises eligible?

No, franchises are not eligible.

Are sole proprietors eligible for the grant?

Yes, sole proprietors or business owners with no employees are eligible to apply.

I applied for an Inclusive Backing grant in Cycle 1. Can I apply for this round or future rounds as well?
If you meet the eligibility criteria for any additional cycle, you may apply again for an Inclusive Backing grant.

I have a business that started prior to January 2020, but we opened our brick-and-mortar location after January 2020. Am I still eligible for the grant?

Your business must be able to provide financial information about sales since at least January 1, 2020. If you were operating before January 1, 2020, and can provide financial information dating to that time, you are eligible to apply.

Do I have to be a member of Main Street America to apply?

No, you do not have to be a member to apply.

My business employs a mixture of full-time and part-time employees. How does the requirement that the business employ 20 or fewer full-time employees, including the owner, apply to me?

If you employ a mixture of full-time and part-time employees, calculate the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) hours for all of your employees. FTE hours are an employee’s scheduled hours divided by the employer’s hours for a full-time workweek. If the FTE hours for all your employees is fewer than the equivalent of 20 full-time employees, your business is eligible.

Application Questions

Can I save a draft of my application?

Your application will auto-save as you move through the form on our application platform, Submittable. You can save a draft within the application submission platform, but we strongly encourage you to also save your application in a separate document as back-up.

I can’t log into my application, or I’m having other technical issues.

Please contact Submittable (the company that hosts our application) for help logging into your account or if you have any other technical issues. You can find answers to frequently asked questions about using Submittable here. You can contact Submittable customer support here.

How will I know if my application has been submitted?

Once you hit “submit,” you will receive an email notification from Submittable notifying you that your application has been received. Automatic emails from Submittable occasionally get caught in spam filters, so please check your junk folder.

Can I change my application once it has been submitted?

You cannot make any changes to your application once it has been submitted.
What does it mean to operate “in an older or historic main street, downtown or commercial district in the United States”?

We define an “older or historic main street, downtown or commercial district in the United States” as a contiguous commercial district with storefront businesses and mixed-use buildings in a city or town’s commercial corridor or downtown. This does not include businesses in strip malls, residences, or shopping malls.

Can you provide links or definitions of what a “service-based business” is?

For our purposes, a service-based business is:

- Aromatherapy services
- Barber shops
- Beauty & day spas
- Beauty shops
- Cobbler
- Cosmetologists
- Cosmetology & personal hygiene
- Dressmaker/seamstress
- Dry cleaner
- Facial cosmetology
- Hair salons, stylists, and hairdressers
- Nail salons, manicure/pedicure services
- Massage parlor & steam bath services
- Massage therapy
- Tanning salon
- Tailor

When will I be notified about the status of our application?

We will notify all applicants about the status of their submission in April 2022, via the email provided in your application. Be sure to check your email regularly, including your junk folders. Email updates to all applicants will come from Submittable. If someone assisted you in the physical completion of the application form, please be sure to include their email address when asked. This will ensure they are able to receive a copy of the status email as well.

Grant recipients will receive next steps from SmallBizGrant@savingplaces.org. Failure to reply promptly to next steps may result in disqualification from the grant program.

Do grant funds need to be repaid?

No, grant funds do not need to be repaid. However, all taxes associated with the acceptance and/or uses of cash awarded are the sole responsibility of the individual grantee. Cash awarded will be reported by Main Street America to the IRS as Main Street America deems necessary according to applicable law. It is further the policy of Main Street America that all grantees be advised to consult with their own tax professionals and/or legal counsel to ascertain the tax impact of the cash awards.

Have additional questions?

For other questions, email SmallBizGrant@savingplaces.org or call 312.610.5613 to leave a voice message. Please allow up to 2 business days for a response.