ON TODAY'S CALL

+ Welcome & Introductions
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  – About Main Street America

+ About the Backing Small Businesses Grant Program
  – Eligibility
  – The Application

+ Questions
  – Use the Q&A form

Elisa Lyew, owner of Elisa’s Love Bites in New York, NY, was a grant recipient in the fourth cycle of Backing Small Businesses in 2022. Photo courtesy of Elisa’s Love Bites Dessert Atelier.
About Main Street America
Main Street America leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

Our network of more than 1,600 grassroots organizations and 46 State, County, and City-level Coordinating Programs are united by a commitment fostering strong local economies and enhancing the distinctive character that makes communities attractive to residents, visitors, and businesses.

The Main Street Approach—our time-tested framework for community driven revitalization — equips local leaders with a practical, adaptable, and balanced approach to achieving economic health and quality of life outcomes.
Since 1980, over 2,000 programs have used the Main Street Approach™, resulting in:

+ **$101.58 Billion** Reinvested in Communities
  + **$6.25 Billion** Reinvested in 2022
+ **746,897** Net New Jobs
  + **29,174** Net New Jobs in 2022
+ **168,693** Net Gain in Businesses
  + **7,657** Net New Businesses in 2022
+ **325,119** Buildings Rehabilitated
  + **10,688** Buildings Rehabbed in 2022
+ **33.7 Million** Volunteer Hours Leveraged
  + **1.5 Million** Volunteer Hours in 2022
The Main Street Approach emphasizes a focus on holistic community transformation through the identification of transformation strategies.
Backing Small Businesses
Grant Program
Launched in 2021 to help under-resourced and economically vulnerable small business owners recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and grow their businesses

- First year: $1.65 million awarded to 330 small business owners
- Second year: $2.3 million awarded to 350 small business owners

This year: Anticipating $5.75 million to support under-resourced and economically vulnerable small business owners in building their economic vitality and fostering a thriving community.

- Initial Grant: 500 recipients each selected to receive $10,000
  - 5,000 application maximum
- Enhancement Grant: A limited subset of 25 recipients selected to receive an additional $30,000
Eligibility
ELIGIBILITY

+ Applicant must be an owner of the business.
+ Applicant must be at least age 18 years or older.
+ The business must be an independent business and not part of a franchise.
+ The business must employ less than 20 full-time employees.
+ The business must be in good standing in the state in which it was formed and the state in which it does business.
+ The business must have an active business license, if required by state or local government.
The business must be in a "brick-and-mortar" location and operate in an older or historic main street, downtown, or commercial district in the United States.

The business must have been open on or before January 1, 2023, and have occupied their current brick-and-mortar location on or before January 1, 2024.
Non-Eligible Businesses

- Non-profits
- Online/virtual
- Home-based
- Mobile
- Franchises
- Stalls within co-working spaces
- Businesses in office parks
- Businesses in shopping malls
- 2023 grant recipients
ELIGIBLE GRANT EXPENSES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

+ **Accessibility Upgrades**
  - Examples: ramp, menu translation, accessible website redesign for visually impaired people, etc.

+ **Community Events and Programs**
  - Examples: open mic night, public educational/training workshops, hosting community fundraisers, partnerships with other small businesses

+ **Equipment and Inventory**
  - Examples: point of sale device/software, purchasing of items for sale, display cases, kitchen equipment

+ **Marketing**
  - Examples: investing in social media campaign, building a website, etc.

+ **Operational Strategies**
  - Examples: purchasing accounting software, business coaching, or other types of support that would increase the viability of your business
ELIGIBLE GRANT EXPENSES (CONT.)

+ **Physical Improvements**
  - Examples: signage, awnings, painting facade, new shelving, new lighting, etc.

+ **Sustainability Upgrades**
  - Examples: solar panels, rain garden adjacent to business, investing in reusable/compostable/recyclable packaging alternatives, etc.

+ **Technology Upgrades**
  - Examples: building an online storefront, online ordering system, or other e-commerce platform

+ **Utilities**
  - Note: Must not be more than $2000 or 20% of the requested funds

+ **Insert Your Great Idea Here!**

*Note: Payroll is *not* an eligible grant expense.*
The Application
**KEY DATES**

+ **Mar. 14, 9am CT:** Application opens
+ **Apr. 7, 11:59pm CT:** Application closes
  - Unless 5,000 application maximum reached sooner
+ **April-May:** Review and follow-up
+ **Mid June:** Recipients announced and funds awarded
+ **Sep. 9, 11:59pm CT:** Spending deadline
+ **Sep. 16, 11:59pm CT:** Grant report due
Accessing the Application

+ Application link will appear on our website
  https://www.mainstreet.org/backingsmallbusinesses

+ Create a Submittable account

+ Check email for verification link
  - notifications@email.submittable.com

+ Page translatable with Google Translate

+ Application filled out in English

+ Eligibility Form, Main Application Form

+ Save draft, no edits after submitting
HAVE AT THE READY

+ Photos/videos of your business
  − Storefront
  − Street/area around business
  − Main interior spaces
  − Before photos for accessibility/physical repair projects
+ Recent business tax return (for reference only)
+ Sole proprietors: Copy of business license
+ Certificate of Good Standing (verify online only)
HOW DO I CHECK IF I’M IN GOOD STANDING?

Website is different for every state!
- Usually through Secretary of State
- Google: “Business Entity lookup” or “Business Entity search” in your state
- secstates.com > Select state in list at bottom of page > Click link under (1)

Sole Proprietor/Single-Member LLCs may not be listed on the website

If you are marked as “Inactive,” “Delinquent,” or “Noncompliant”
- Often due to a missing annual report or fee, can often be filed/paid online
- If not clearly indicated on the website, contact the state office

You do not need to download/purchase a Certificate
APPLICATION QUESTIONS

+ Eligibility Form
+ Basic owner and business information
  - Refer to tax returns for accuracy
  - Possible upload required of business license
+ Photos/video of business (interior and exterior)
+ Business overview (e.g. open date, # of employees)
+ Website/social media links

**Legal Entity Name (Corporations and LLCs taxed as Corporations) * **

Please make sure this matches EXACTLY what would appear on Form 1120 or 1120-S on your business tax return, including punctuation and abbreviations such as "L.L.C.", "Inc" or "INC.". Providing inaccurate information could cause future payment delays.
APPLICATION QUESTIONS (CONT.)

+ Short answer questions (250 words or less)
  – How you started your business
  – What products/services you currently offer
  – How does your business engage with your community?

+ Project description and short budget
  – Bullet point budget
  – Detailed, not necessarily itemized
  – Optional file upload

+ Optional questions (will not be seen by reviewers)
  – Demographics
  – Application assistant contact info
  – Connected to local Main Street program?

Example Budget:
• 2 new Square POS Terminals - $800 each
• Printing new menus - $400
• Flooring repairs (to be completed by Joan’s Flooring and Construction) - $4000
• New window decals – 2 windows, $250 each
• Local newspaper advert - $500
• Inventory (produce, drinks, etc.) - $3000
Eligibility

Feasibility:

– Proposed project must be completed with $10,000 grant by September 9, 2024.
– Do you know your suppliers/contractors?
– Will you need permits? Have they been obtained?

Need:

– What are the business’s net sales?
– Is the business in a low-income census tract?
– What are some of the systemic challenges the business is facing? Applicants will be asked to explain the context of the business. For example: is the business experiencing skilled staffing shortages, supply chain issues, and/or high bank loan interest rates?
DETERMINATION CRITERIA (CONT.)

+ Impact:
  - Viability of business and sustainability
  - Help to leveraging sales, grow their customer base, explore new opportunities

+ Community Reach:
  - How involved is the applicant’s small business in their community?
  - Does the business provide a sense of identity to a neighborhood/town/area?
  - How much would the business serve a community-specific need through a grant?
QUALITIES OF A STRONG APPLICATION

+ Pictures/video highlight a typical day at the business
  – Before photos for physical/accessibility improvements

+ Pride in your business and neighborhood
  – What are you doing that is unique to your business?
  – Involved in and critical to the surrounding community, serves a cultural- or ability-specific need, provides continuity and a sense of identity to a neighborhood or specific cultural group

+ Be honest about concerns/difficulties
  – How can these grants help you?

Kim and Chris Casteel, co-owners of Anew Life Prosthetics and Orthotics, and Carina Brooks King, owner of Carina Esthetics, were grant recipients of Backing Small Businesses in 2022. Photos courtesy of Anew Life Prosthetics and Orthotics and Carina Esthetics.
Projects are feasible to complete by Sept. 9, 2024
- Budget is broken-down by expense categories
- Project plan anticipates suppliers/contractors to engage, if needed

Clear and Concise
Questions?

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