CEI Women's Business Center

Small Business Grant Resource Guide

AUTHOR: ELAINE THERIAULT-CURRIER

Visit us online: ceimaine.org/women

Last updated August 2021

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.

CEI Women's Business Center

Table of Contents

Tips for the Grant Search 4

Tips for Applying 5

Vocabulary 6

Grants for Small Businesses 7

a. Research, Development, and Innovation 7-9

b. Artistic Project Creation/Continuation 10

c. Marketing and Storefront Improvement 11-20

c.1 Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs 13-20

d. Major Capital Acquisition & Upgrade 21-23

e. Workforce Training 24

f. Food, Beverage, & Agriculture Business Operations 25-28

g. Grant Opportunities Related to COVID-19 29-31

h. National Grants 32-35

Pitch Competitions 36-39

Contact Info 40

CEI Women's Business Center

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.

CEI Women's Business Center

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*

CEI Women's Business Center

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

Grantor: 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 to determine if your research project is a good fit.

Research, Development, and Innovation *(continued)*

Grantor: Maine International Trade Center
Program: 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: September
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

Grantor: 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: Not required.
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 and meet with an MTI advisor.

Research, Development, and Innovation *(continued)*

Grantor: Northern Forest Center
Program: Wood Innovations
Description: Financial and technical assistance to wood product manufacturers to implement innovations such as lean manufacturing, mass customization, and transformational organizational development.
Funding Amount: Up to $20,000
Match: 50% of total project cost
Deadline: Rolling
Eligibility: Your business must be in the wood products industry and be located Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, or northern New York.
How to Apply: Visit the program's webpage and contact Dave Redmond at dredmond.northernforest@gmail.com.

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, Maine's official SBIR/STTR support organization

Artistic Project Creation/Continuation

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, 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, create a Maine Arts Commission account, and complete the online application.

Marketing and Storefront Improvement

Maine CDBG – Micro-Enterprise Assistance Grant Program

Description: Grants to assist in innovative solutions to problems faced by micro-enterprises; funds may be used for working capital, purchase of inventory, supplies, and equipment, and interior renovations or exterior improvements to the storefront façade.

Funding Amount: Up to $5,000

Match: See "How to Apply"

Deadline: TBD. As of July 2021, this program is very much in flux, and currently being revamped.

Eligibility: Must have no more than 5 employees (including owner); owner must be within the low-to-middle income range. May need to be located in a specific region of Maine per grant period.

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.

Maine Downtown Center – REvitalizeME Grant Program

Description: Grants toward the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or energy efficiency projects on historically-significant properties.

Funding Amount: Up to $250,000

Match: Up to 25%, depending on population

Deadline: March

Eligibility: Property must be non-residential and non-religious, located in a downtown community served by Maine Development Foundation (map here), and is currently, or eligible to be, listed on the National Registry of Historic of Historic Places. Applicant must be the private property owner.

How to Apply: Visit the Maine Development Foundation's REvitalizeME Grant Program page.

Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

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 total project cost

Deadline: November

Eligibility: Small business within the geography of the nearest New Ventures Maine office

How to Apply: Contact your local NVM office by visiting newventuresmaine.org.

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 and e-mail 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 and e-mail 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.
Funding Amount: Up to $15,000
Match: 50% of grant amount
Deadline: June, though not currently accepting applications
Eligibility: Located in a commercial area of Bangor as specified on the grant's online map.
How to Apply: Visit 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 in Bath.
Funding Amount: Up to $10,000
Match: 50% of total project cost
Deadline: December
Eligibility: Located in a commercial area of Bath
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@caribou maine.org for more information.

Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

Ellsworth – Heart of Ellsworth Downtown Grants Program
Description: Grants to support downtown Ellsworth businesses in securing future economic opportunities.
Funding Amount: Up to $1,000
Match: Contact for more information
Deadline: July
Eligibility: Located within downtown Ellsworth
How to Apply: Visit heartofellsworth.org/grantprogram and contact cara@heartofellsworth.com 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
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

Greenville – Moosehead Lake Region Economic Development Corp. Business Micro-Grant
Description: Grants to support business start-up operations, including business planning and market research.
Funding Amount: Up to $2,500
Match: 50% of total project cost
Deadline: Contact for more information
Eligibility: Located within the Moosehead Lake region
How to Apply: Visit mooseheadlakeedc.com and contact mooseheadlakeedc2020@gmail.com for more information.

Houlton – Façade Grant Program
Description: Grants to encourage private investment in improving historic facades in downtown Houlton.
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 for application and contact information.

Marketing and Storefront Improvement *(continued)*

Municipal Marketing & Façade Improvement Grant Programs

Lisbon – Business Façade Program
Description: Grants to support businesses and commercial property owners improve their building exteriors.
Funding Amount: Up to $20,000
Match: 50% of total project cost
Deadline: January
Eligibility: Located within the Town of Lisbon
How to Apply: Visit lisbonme.org/economic-community-development and contact Brett Richardson at brichardson@lisbonme.org for more information.

Richmond – Downtown & Village District Façade Grant Program
Description: Grants to promote direct improvements to the appearance of downtown and village district properties, which may be commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family.
Funding Amount: Up to $30,000
Match: 50% of total project cost
Deadline: See "How to Apply"
Eligibility: Located within Richmond's downtown or village district.
How to Apply: Visit richmondmaine.com and contact director@richmondmaine.com.

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: Up to $15,000
Match: 50% of total project cost
Deadline: Rolling
Eligibility: Located within Saco's Downtown TIF District.
How to Apply: Visit sacomaine.org and contact 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: May
Eligibility: Located within the Town of Skowhegan.
How to Apply: Visit mainstreetskowhegan.org/ta.

CEI Women's Business Center

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: April
Eligibility: Located within downtown Waterville.
How to Apply: Visit 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 and contact Ashley Rand at arand@westbrook.me.us for more information.

CEI Women's Business Center

Major Capital Acquisition and Upgrade

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.

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

Match: 50% total project cost

Deadline: LOI due in March, full application due in May

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 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, and Portland. The municipalities of Brunswick, Casco, and Frye Island are also ineligible to apply for state CDBG funds.

Major Capital Acquisition and Upgrade *(continued)*

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 March, full application due in May

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.

CEI Women's Business Center

Major Capital Acquisition and Upgrade *(continued)*

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 available for business renovation and capital equipment.

Funding Amount: N/A

Match: No

Deadline: LOI due in March, full application due in May

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 and contact your municipality to discuss a potential application.

Workforce Training

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 tab to apply or fill out a contact form.

Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Operations

CEI Tastemakers
Description: Funding to help established food & beverage companies expand production and create jobs.
Funding Amount: Up to $20,000
Match: No
Deadline: December
Eligibility: Business must produce food/beverage products for human consumption; must be an established business led by a proven leadership team.
How to Apply: Visit 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/dacd/ard/grants

Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Operations *(continued)*

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: Spring & Autumn

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

How to Apply: Visit 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 ceimaine.org – Find an Advisor tab.

Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Operations *(continued)*

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association – Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant

Description: Grants to promote, develop, and market U.S. fisheries.
Funding Amount: Up to $300,000
Match: No
Deadline: Pre-proposals due in August, full proposals due in November
Eligibility: Broad eligibility but members of the fishing community are encouraged to apply.
How to Apply: Visit 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 to domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, online sales or other direct producer-to-consumer (including direct producer-to-retail, direct producer-to-restaurant and direct producer-to-institutional marketing) market opportunities.
Funding Amount: Up to $750,000
Match: 25% of total project costs
Deadline: June
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 and contact the Maine USDA office at (207) 990-9127.

Food, Beverage, and Agriculture Business Operations *(continued)*

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: June

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 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: May

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 and contact the Maine USDA office at (207) 990-9127.

Grant Opportunities Related to COVID-19

These grant opportunities may no longer be available if/when the economic consequences of COVID-19 have faded.

City of Belfast – Keep the Faith Fund Small Business Grant

Description: Grants to provide relief to businesses located in Belfast that have had to close or experienced a significant reduction in business since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Funding Amount: $500
Match: No
Deadline: Rolling
Eligibility: Must be located in, and in good standing with, the City of Belfast.
How to Apply: Visit cityofbelfast.org/461/Keep-The-Faith-Fund-Small-Business-Grant

City of Portland – COVID-19 Micro-Enterprise Program

Description: Grants to provide financial assistance to Portland businesses impacted by COVID-19. This includes businesses that have remained open, have furloughed some or all of their employees, businesses that have closed temporarily, and those that have re-opened.
Funding Amount: Up to $5,000
Match: No
Deadline: May, June
Eligibility: Have no more than one employee; owner must be low-to-moderate income. May be a home-based business or located in commercial space, and must have begun operation prior to March 15, 2020. Must be located in Portland.
How to Apply: Visit portlandmaine.gov/2627/COVID19-loan-and-grant-programs

CEI Women's Business Center

Grant Opportunities Related to COVID-19 *(continued)*

These grant opportunities may no longer be available if/when the economic consequences of COVID-19 have faded.

City of Portland – COVID-19 Business Assistance Program for Job Creation (Rehiring)
Description: Grants to rehire four full-time workers who were employed by the small business just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Funding Amount: Up to $10,000
Match: No
Deadline: May, June
Eligibility: Business must be located in Portland and was in operation prior to March 15, 2020. Must use funds to rehire employees or create new jobs for which wages exceed Portland's minimum wage.
How to Apply: Visit portlandmaine.gov/2627/COVID19-loan-and-grant-programs

Island Institute – Business Resiliency Grant
Description: Grants to support island and coastal small businesses, artists and makers, and working waterfront businesses during the time of COVID-19.
Funding Amount: $1,500
Match: No
Deadline: Rolling
Eligibility: Must be located in an island or coastal community.
How to Apply: Visit islandinstitute.org/tom-glenn-community-impact-fund

CEI Women's Business Center

Grant Opportunities Related to COVID-19 *(continued)*

These grant opportunities may no longer be available if/when the economic consequences of COVID-19 have faded.

Small Business Administration – Restaurant Revitalization Fund

Description: Grants to support restaurants and other eligible businesses by providing funds equal to the business's pandemic-related revenue loss.

Funding Amount: Up to $10 million

Match: No

Deadline: As of July 2021 RRF funds were exhausted, but Congress may re-appropriate funds for this program.

Eligibility: Applicant may be a restaurant, caterer, food truck/stand, bar/tavern, snack bar, bakery, brewpub/microbrewery/tasting room/brewery/winery/distillery, or inn.

How to Apply: Visit restaurants.sba.gov or https://www.sba.gov/page/covid-19-guidance-resources

USDA – Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

Description: Grants to support producers of agricultural commodities marketed in 2020 who faced market disruptions due to COVID-19.

Funding Amount: Varies according to commodity

Match: No

Deadline: Not yet announced; program is open as of April 2021

Eligibility: Applicant must be a producer of an eligible commodity as listed on farmers.gov/cfap/commodities.

National Grants

Fearless Fund – Strivers Grant
Description: Grants to help Black female business owners continue to build and grow their business.
Funding Amount: $10,000
Match: No
Deadline: May
Eligibility: Applicant must be a Black female owner of a small business (under $3 million in annual revenue) that has operated prior to 3/2/2021.
How to Apply: Visit fearless.fund/strivers

FedEx Small Business Grant Contest
Description: Grants to support groundbreaking, women-owned businesses.
Funding Amount: $10,000
Match: No
Deadline: See "How to Apply"
Eligibility: Applicant must be a small business owner.
How to Apply: Visit fedex.com/en-us/small-business/grant-contest for more information

National Grants *(continued)*

IFundWomen / Jane Walker – First Women Grant Program
Description: Grants to support small businesses.
Funding Amount: Up to $50,000
Match: No
Deadline: Rolling basis through June
Eligibility: Applicant must be a self-identified woman entrepreneur with at least 50% ownership in the business, which must have been in operation for at least two years and must generate at least $25,000 in annual revenue. Must operate within the following industries: entertainment & film, music, journalism, STEM, sports, and hospitality.
How to Apply: Visit ifundwomen.com/janewalker

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

CEI Women's Business Center

National Grants *(continued)*

LISC – Rural Relief Small Business Grants
Description: Grants to support small businesses in rural areas.
Funding Amount: Up to $20,000
Match: No
Deadline: Funding in rounds; view "How to Apply" to be notified of new round
Eligibility: Applicant must be a small business owner in a municipality with fewer than 50,000 residents.
How to Apply: Visit lisc.org/covid-19/small-business-assistance

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.
Funding Amount: Up to $5,000
Match: No
Deadline: June
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 mcbridesisters.com/Our-Story/She-Can

National Grants *(continued)*

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: Rolling

Eligibility: Applicant must be a Black-owned small business with 25 or fewer employees.

How to Apply: Visit naacp.org/power-forward-small-business-grant

Pitch Competitions

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

Buoy Maine Sea Grant Competition

Description: Funding to foster innovation and entrepreneurship to support Maine's working waterfront and coastal communities.

Funding Amount: Up to $15,000

Deadline: See "How to Apply" for more information

Eligibility: See "How to Apply" for more information

How to Apply: visit seagrant.maine.edu/funding-opportunities/buoy-maine

Pitch Competitions *(continued)*

Gorham Savings Bank – LaunchPad
Description: Funding to support Maine ingenuity, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.
Funding Amount: $50,000
Deadline: April
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

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 for more information.

Pitch Competitions *(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: See "How to Apply" for next deadline.

Eligibility: Applicant must be a Maine-based entrepreneur.

How to Apply: Visit 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: $500

Funding Amount: $1,000 as a seed grant at the culmination of the program.

Deadline: December/January

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-viability/workshops

Pitch Competitions *(continued)*

Maine Farmland Trust – Farming for Wholesale

Description: A highly-selective, competitive program for experienced farmers who currently serve wholesale accounts and are ready to scale up significantly.

Cost: $500

Funding Amount: Compete for a $50,000 implementation grant.

Deadline: No future deadline specified yet.

Eligibility: Applicant must be a Maine-based farmer.

How to Apply: Visit mainefarmlandtrust.org/farm-viability/workshops

StreetShares Foundation – Military Entrepreneur Challenge

Description: Funding to create access to capital opportunities for military veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs.

Funding Amount: Up to $15,000

Match: No

Deadline: October

Eligibility: Applicant must be a low-income veteran or reserve member, a spouse or child of a veteran, or a Gold Star family member.

How to Apply: Visit streetsharesfoundation.org/the-veteran-small-business-award

CEI Women's Business Center

CEI Women's Business Center

Visit us online: ceimaine.org/women

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

Send us an email: wbc@ceimaine.org

Follow us on Instagram: instagram.com/CEIWomensBusinessCenter/

Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/CEIWomensBusinessCenter/

Visit us online: ceimaine.org/women