



SANTA MONICA'S SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF MICROGRANT PROGRAM

Microgrant Guidelines

The City of Santa Monica is offering a one-time grant of \$5,000 for existing brick-and-mortar businesses. These funds are intended to support retention of locally owned small businesses, encourage investment in commercial corridors, strengthen long-term business sustainability, and promote economic vitality and storefront activation. There is a total of \$100,000 for this program or 20 micro-grantees. Applications will be accepted from September 10 through October 1, 2026.

This grant helps small business owners make a meaningful investment related to business operations directly which may otherwise be financially out of reach. This could include but not limited to the following:

- Technology upgrades, including website or e-commerce improvements, software, equipment repairs, website hosting, workflow, scheduling, or CRM tools
- Free-standing furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) that do not require installation expenses, such as computers, point-of-sale devices, and printers
- Marketing and advertising fees
- Inventory or operating supplies
- Professional services related to business growth
- Business-continuity or emergency-preparedness expenses, such as backup power, emergency supplies, data backup, cybersecurity, or disaster-recovery services
- Operating expenses, including bookkeeping, accounting, legal, or business-planning assistance
- Other eligible business investments
- Debt service, taxes, fines, personal expenses, construction, renovation, tenant improvements, building alterations, permanently installed improvements, or related labor, materials, design, and permitting costs are not eligible for grant funding.

Program Qualification Criteria: The microgrant is open to all Santa Monica businesses that meet these minimum qualifications:

- Operate a brick-and-mortar business in City of Santa Monica
- Own or lease the property where the business operates, with at least 12 months remaining on the lease, OR qualify as a long-term tenant at a Santa Monica brick-and-mortar location for over 10 years, including a month-to-month lease holdover. Provide the lease start and termination dates (month and year) in the application; a lease or property-ownership document upload is not required. Qualifying month-to-month tenants must confirm in the application that they have requested a landlord letter confirming when the tenancy began and that there is no notice to terminate. If selected for a grant, they must email the letter to business.concierge@santamonica.gov, with the file named [BusinessLicenseNumber]_LandlordLetter.pdf (example: 123456_LandlordLetter.pdf). The grant award is contingent upon the City receiving and verifying this documentation.
- Have 50 or fewer employees
- Have annual gross revenues of less than \$3 million
- Have a valid City of Santa Monica Business License and be in good standing with the City's Business License Division (this includes businesses in good standing on an City-approved payment plan)
- No pending litigation arising from contractual or financial obligations with the City of Santa Monica
- Be in good standing with the California Secretary of State, if applicable. (Note: Sole Proprietors may not be subject to this requirement).

Additional Considerations: All businesses meeting the Program Qualification Criteria (above) are eligible to apply. The following factors are not requirements for eligibility and will only be considered for prioritization if the number of eligible applicants exceed available funding.

- Legacy business that has continuously operated in Santa Monica for 20 years or more
- Storefront business located on a commercial district or boulevard in Santa Monica (e.g. Downtown SM, Main St, Montana Ave, Pico Blvd, Wilshire Blvd, Santa Monica Blvd, Ocean Park Blvd)
- New business that opened within the last 18 months and has a fully executed commercial lease with at least 18 months remaining (through early 2028 or later)
- Existing business that has expanded operations in Santa Monica within the last 18 months (e.g. opened second location, expanded interior square footage)
- Existing business that experienced an economic shock within the last 18 months (e.g., theft, vandalism, or construction impacts)
- Veteran-owned business

If applications continue to exceed funding after these considerations have been applied, the City may conduct a lottery among the remaining qualified applicants.

Measuring Success

Each recipient will be encouraged to join the Buy Local Santa Monica campaign and highlight their business profile with a Small Business Spotlight to share the success the infusion of funds had on their business and raise awareness of the importance of supporting local businesses. Recipients will be required to participate in two approximately 15-minute outcome calls with City staff: one within 90 days after grant disbursement and a follow-up approximately 12 months after disbursement. The calls will confirm what the funds were spent on, whether the project was completed, and any changes to business operations or employee count.

Timeline

- Application Opens: September 10, 2026
- Technical Assistance Workshops: 1pm on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at Pico Library (Spanish translation available); 11am on Thursday, September 17, 2026, at Main Library. Attendance is optional.
- Application Closes: October 1, 2026
- Eligibility and Administrative Review: October 15, 2026
- Award Announcement: October 29, 2026
- Grant Agreement Execution: November 5, 2026
- Grant Fund Disbursement: Within 10 business days following execution of the Grant Agreement. (TBD)
- Buy Local SM Small Business Spotlight: Optional for participating businesses to share their story through Buy Local Newsletter

Attachment: Microgrant Online Application

Note: Funds may be reclaimed if false information is submitted, business closing immediately, or funds are used for ineligible purposes. Applications may be subject to the California Public Records Act.