

VENTURE PORTLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT GUIDELINES

2019

Venture Portland's grants, trainings and technical assistance help business districts city wide best meet the needs of their diverse communities. Venture Portland's Economic Development grants, distributed once a year, provide strategic financial support to meaningfully address neighborhood economic development. Eligible projects must show quantifiable results of economic development during the grant cycle (jobs/businesses created or retained, neighborhood business revenue growth, etc.). Before applying, business districts should assess their readiness to be able to accomplish economic development. Download the Economic Development grant application and other grant resources at ventureportland.org/grants.

Assessing Business District Readiness to Accomplish Economic Development:

- Feasibility of attaining short term goals – while the long-term return on investment of neighborhood economic development activities is on a much longer timeline than the length of one grant cycle, the business district must be able to show quantifiable economic development results at the end of the grant period. This requires the time, commitment and peoplepower vital for extensive planning and continued momentum necessary to accomplish the project's goals and ensure long-term success.
- Business district buy-in – the entire business district is responsible for the success of the project and no one person can succeed alone. Leaders of the business district must instill the importance of success at every opportunity and the project should leverage the district's current programs and assets.
- Relationships with district businesses – active dialogue should already be taking place with neighborhood businesses in the district. District businesses must trust in the organization's ability to meet their economic development needs in order to be willing to do the hard work, provide resources and share employment and revenue data for the success of the project.
- Baseline – business districts need to know where they are before defining measures of success. The number of current jobs and businesses, the amount of vacancies in the commercial corridor and the actual current total of business district revenue need to be readily at hand or procured.
- Annual Budget and Current Balance Sheet – any business district considering applying for this grant must already have or be able to produce a board-approved Annual Budget to prove the capacity necessary to engage in a year-long economic development project. Because the grant must be matched at least 1-to-1 with cash, a current Balance Sheet is necessary to show the business district's economic health and viability.
- Benchmark Achievement – business districts that have demonstrated benchmark success are in the best position to build on their track record and are more likely to have strong programs and assets in place to leverage economic development activities. Benchmark Definitions and Achievement Forms are available at ventureportland.org/economic-development-grants

I. Business District Eligibility

To apply for a Venture Portland grant, business districts must meet the following:

- Venture Portland member
- Up-to-date filings with all non-profit regulating government entities
- Complete all previous Venture Portland grants and submit all required grant paperwork
- Two district representatives participated in the [2018-19 Grant Certification Training](#) on 9/6/18
- Submit a complete grant application by noon (12pm) on Friday, 3/1/19; late or incomplete applications will not be accepted

II. Use of Funds

Applicants may apply* for **\$5,000-\$10,000**** to meaningfully address neighborhood economic development. Funding preference will be given to business districts that demonstrate benchmark achievement (priority benchmarks include Strong Membership, Web/Social Media Presence and Self-sustaining Signature Annual Event).

***In this grant cycle, applicants may apply for up to two grants in the following combinations: Benchmark and Catalytic, Economic Development and Catalytic or two Catalytic. Applicants may also apply for only a Benchmark, Economic Development or Catalytic grant.**

****Please note: the maximum amount that can be awarded each grant cycle varies based on Venture Portland's available funding.**

Business districts may not apply for both an Economic Development Grant and a Benchmark Grant in the Spring/Summer cycle. Business districts may however apply for an Economic Development Grant in the Spring/Summer cycle and a Benchmark grant in the Fall/Winter cycle. Benchmark Grant activities do not constitute neighborhood economic development.

Grant activities must occur between 4/1/19 and 2/15/20. Because Venture Portland Economic Development grants are meant to fund specific, short-term projects to meaningfully address neighborhood economic development and not ongoing activities, **grant funds may not be used to pay for ongoing staff members.** Applicants may still count cash expenses for ongoing staff toward their match.

Grant must be matched at least 1-to-1 with cash. This match must be reflected on the application budget page and, if funded, on the grant evaluation. While in-kind contributions and volunteer hours are critical to the success of projects and should be quantifiably measured and reported, they do not count towards the cash match. In general, project budgets with confirmed cash contributions in place at the time of application are more competitive.

Cash refers to cash-on-hand and the donations, grants and revenues that are expected or already received for this project.

Venture Portland must be properly recognized as a sponsor on any grant-funded materials and/or activities. Failure to do so will impact future grant eligibility. Venture Portland logo usage must be approved by staff before going to print.

Unspent and/or unmatched grant funds (including unverifiable expenses) must be returned to Venture Portland with the grant evaluation.

Past Performance

Although each eligible grant application is evaluated according to its own merit, the Grants Committee receives grant evaluation information from each applicant's recent grant evaluation(s) including variance information, whether or not the district met its goals and timeline and sponsorship acknowledgement requirements to help assess if the business district has the ability to effectively implement the project.

Americans with Disabilities Act Certification/Statement of Non-Discrimination

By submitting an application, the applicant agrees to comply in every way with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC Sec. 12101, et seq. and agrees not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, (creed), gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, national or ethnic origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, genetic information, income, political affiliation, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law in any of its activities or operations.

Statement of Equity

Venture Portland's Capacity Building Grants Program funds the smart, strategic growth of Portland's unique neighborhood business districts and helps business districts city wide best meet the needs of their diverse communities. Our corporate values, including transparency, accountability, equity and collaboration define all of our programs. By offering an accessible and extensive funding portfolio, Venture Portland grant funds support every stage of a business district's lifecycle and help business districts succeed at every level and skill set. Our long-term, innovative, relationship-driven approach as a funder provides support as business districts emerge, incorporate and evolve. By consistently bringing new perspectives to our decision-making table, forming new relationships and alliances, and finding new ways to support creativity, Venture Portland is a strong, equitable and relevant organization.

III. Grant Checklist

Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. The following items must be submitted:

- Grant checklist
- Cover letter introducing and briefly explaining purpose of the grant request
- Grant application – three sections including signatures, narrative and project budget
- Annual Budget and current Balance Sheet
- Benchmark Achievement Form(s) (if applicable)
- Supporting documents (if applicable)

IV. Training, Office Hours and Technical Assistance

Training: Participation by two business district representatives was mandatory at the [2018-2019 Grant Certification Training](#) on 9/6/18 to apply for a Spring/Summer 2019 grant. The training addressed: generating great ideas/project planning, application writing, budgeting, evaluation and any changes to the Grants Program. Participating business districts received a one-year grant writing 'certification' upon completion of the training, making them eligible for Fall/Winter 2018-2019 and Spring/Summer 2019 grants.

Office Hours: Venture Portland staff are available for appointments and drop-ins at Venture Portland's office during the dates and times listed below to assess business district readiness and to provide support and assistance during the early stages of your grant application. Staff are available the week grants are due to review final drafts (applications not yet in final draft form will not be reviewed after 2/25/19). **Venture Portland strongly recommends taking advantage of Grants**

Office Hours and Final Draft Review. To schedule an appointment, ask a question or send a draft, email jacob@ventureportland.org or call 503.477.9648.

Technical Assistance: Staff is available to provide significant technical assistance during planning, application writing, budgeting and, if funded, implementation and evaluation. Venture Portland staff is available for year-round technical assistance during each stage of the project.

Due Date: Applications received by noon (12pm) on 3/1/19 will be reviewed to ensure completion and accepted by staff. Applications may be submitted electronically via email or fax or in-person. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. Staff will not offer any assistance beyond accepting complete applications on 3/1/19. No application will be accepted after noon (12pm) on 3/1/19. This policy has been reaffirmed by the Grants Committee nine times since 2010.

V. Economic Development 2019 Grant Timeline

2/1/19 – Application Released/Info Session (9:30am-5pm)

2/7 – Grants Office Hours (9:30am-5pm)

2/14 – Grants Office Hours (9:30am-5pm)

2/19 – Grants Office Hours (9:30am-5pm)

2/26-2/28 – Grants Office Hours: Final Draft Review (9:30am-5pm)

3/1 – **Grant Applications Due at Noon (12pm)**

4/1 – Grant Awards Announced

4/1/19-2/15/20 – Economic Development Grant Activities

Grant Evaluations due no later than 15 days after project completion

***Early submission is encouraged.** While staff make every effort to offer assistance, each applicant has the final responsibility of submitting a complete application on time to Venture Portland. Applications, including signatures, may be submitted in-person, by fax or by email (jacob@ventureportland.org) with a receipt time of no later than noon (12pm) on 3/1/19. Contact Venture Portland if you need assistance with email submission.

Location for Office Hours, Final Draft Review and Application Submission:

Venture Portland

1125 SE Madison St, Suite 112

Portland, OR 97214

Fax: 503.477.9641

Email: jacob@ventureportland.org

Questions? Contact Jacob at 503.477.9648 or jacob@ventureportland.org. Download the Economic Development grant application and other grant resources at ventureportland.org/grants.