

1. Program Overview

Many local businesses have experienced economic damages due to the business interruptions resulting from required closures and restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While any individual business may be small, the cumulative impact of local businesses is very large. The County's Board of County Commissioners (Board) has directed the County Administrator to implement business grant programs to bridge the gap for local businesses most impacted as a result of COVID-19. The Local Business Grant Program includes Sliding Scale Grants as well as three smaller, grant programs intended to target specific needs and gaps:

- Health & Safety Matching Grants of up to \$10,000 to assist [Target Industry businesses](#) that create high wage jobs in targeted, high value-added industries in implementing COVID-19-related upgrades and safety precautions.
- Business Diversity and Arts Microgrants via Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation (TBBBIC) and Creative Pinellas, respectively, to help impacted business owners with barriers to participation in other grant programs to strengthen their business through direct financial assistance and professional services, including help with post-COVID business planning, record-keeping and preparing documents needed to apply for grant funding.

The following policy describes the Sliding Scale Grants and Business Diversity and Arts Microgrants. A separate policy addresses the Health & Safety Matching Grant programs.

2. Administration

The Board, through its Office of Management and Budget, has contracted with a Primary Pinellas CARES Local Business Grant Program Administrator, "Primary Program Administrator", for the administration of a small business grant program. The Primary Program Administrator will work with the County on the Pinellas CARES Local Business program for COVID-19 impacts. The Pinellas CARES Program Manager, a County employee, or their designee, will be the primary administrative point of contact for the Pinellas CARES Local Business Grant Program. The Primary Program Administrator is responsible for applicant service and support, screening and intake, eligibility assessment, referring applications to microgrant program partners, recommendations for approval and denial of applications, and data collection in compliance with U.S. Treasury Guidance and applicable state and local laws. The Primary Program Administrator is not a federal grant subrecipient based upon the finalized agreement.

3. Applicant Eligibility

Businesses are eligible for a Sliding Scale Grant from Pinellas County if:

- Business shows at least \$17,000 and no more than \$3,000,000 in gross revenues on their 2019 business tax return.
 - Businesses with \$4,250 - \$16,999 in gross revenues may be eligible for Arts or Business Diversity Microgrant programs.
- Business is in an industry likely to be most impacted by COVID-19 public health emergency
 - [See Eligible Industries by NAICS Code](#)
- Principal business address is physically located within the boundaries of Pinellas County, Florida.
- Business has been operating since at least October 1, 2019.
- Business can demonstrate ongoing business operations as of February 29, 2020.

- Business is expected to be fully operational after local and state emergency guidelines are rolled back.
- Business is not a publicly traded company.
- Business is not a non-profit 501(c) organization.
- Business does not have any current unpaid code enforcement or other liens or court fees and is not operating in violation of any state, federal or local laws.
- No owner, officer, partner, or principal actor of the business has a felony conviction for financial mismanagement within the last two years for which he or she is still serving a sentence (including prison, parole, and probation).

Businesses that have already applied for or received funding from local city grant programs are still eligible for this program, and businesses that apply for this program may also apply for current or future local city grants. Owners with more than one eligible business may submit an application for each legal entity.

Businesses that received a grant award through initial Pinellas CARES Small Business Program are eligible for additional incremental award for the difference if they qualify for more than \$5,000. Reapplication to the Local Business Grant program is required.

4. Required Documentation

Application must include all documentation listed below. The application may not be approved if all required information is not provided in a legible form.

- Attestation of Qualifying Economic Damages
 - Applicants must attest that the business suffered economic damages from business interruption caused by required closures resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency exceeding the grant award amount since March 1, 2020, excluding those damages covered by insurance or reimbursement from any federal program.
- Completed substitute [W-9 form for business](#)
 - DBA and Tax ID Number (Employer ID Number or Social Security Number for sole proprietor) must match tax return.
- Proof of Legal Operation (Active State Business Registration, local business registration, State professional license, or other documentation)
 - Updated and Current Municipal Business Tax Receipt, if applicable. Note that the unincorporated area of Pinellas County and the cities of Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores, Indian Shores and Redington Beach do not require a business tax receipt; or
 - If not required to have a Business Tax Receipt, Copy of "active" state business registration from Florida Division of Corporations
 - Search by "Entity Name" [here](#) (use full legal business name), select listing with "Active" status, and attach most recent filing as a screenshot; or
 - If not required to register with Florida Division of Corporations, attach documentation showing the business was operating prior to March 1, 2020 and meets all regulatory requirements from Pinellas County or the municipality in which the business is located. Examples may include certification from the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation or certification from Department of Health.
- Business Financials (Applicable 2019 Tax Return *OR* (for Microgrants only) proof of 2019 Tax Return Extension and Profit & Loss Statement for 2019 *OR* proof of Amended 2019 Tax Return Filing and Profit & Loss Statement for 2019)



- **Individual** - (Independent Artist or Small Business that does not file a [schedule C](#)) - Schedule 1, Additional Income and Adjustments to Income ([Form 1040s1](#))
- **Individual** - (Sole Proprietors and individual/single owner LLCs) – Form 1040 [Schedule C](#))
- **Corporations** (C-Corps, S-Corps, corporate Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs) - Corporation Income Tax Return ([Form 1120](#) or [Form 1120-S](#))
- **Partnerships** - Return of Partnership Income ([Form 1065](#))
- Additional Documentation (may include printed, signed copy of application by business owner if online submission is being completed on his/her behalf)

5. Microgrant Programs

The Business Diversity and Arts Microgrant Programs are intended to provide a path for those businesses with barriers to qualifying for Sliding Scale Grants and other federally funded business assistance. To address these gaps, the Business Diversity and Arts Microgrant Programs are intended help Pinellas County small businesses build core business functions in order to adapt to current circumstances, build long-term resiliency, and be positioned to qualify for grants in future. The program does this by combining a microgrant cash award with required practical business services to assist the business in establishing required documentation and/or developing a post-COVID business plan. The program will pay providers directly for professional business development services and upon successful completion and submission of required documentation, businesses would be eligible for a monetary grant based on annual revenues as per Table 1, below.

6. Grants Award Amounts

Grant funds can only be used to reimburse the cost of business interruption caused by required closures provided those costs are not paid by insurance or by another federal program. Such costs may include employee wages, vendors, rent or other business expenses. Grant award amount may not exceed the impact experienced. No reimbursement is required. Sliding Scale Grant awards range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 based on 2019 Tax Return as shown below in Table 1. Qualifying businesses applying without a 2019 Tax Return or Tax Extension will be referred to the applicable microgrant program for consideration. Under the microgrant programs, applicants may be eligible for a Microgrant awards as per Table 1.

Table 1

Min. Gross Receipts or Sales	Max. Gross Receipts or Sales	Sliding Scale Grant Amount	Microgrant Amount ¹
\$4,250	\$16,999	N/A	\$1,000
\$17,000	\$24,999	\$2,500	\$2,125
\$25,000	\$99,999	\$3,750	\$3,375
\$100,000	\$249,999	\$5,000	\$4,625
\$250,000	\$499,999	\$6,250	N/A
\$500,000	\$999,999	\$7,500	N/A
\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$10,000	N/A

¹ Microgrant awards represent the Sliding Scale award less average of 3 hours of additional business development services at \$125 per hour, except the flat award amount for applicants with revenues under \$17,000.