



Marketing Mini-Grants: Downtown Dollars Guidelines, June 2015

Background

Women, Work, and Community's (WWC) marketing mini-grant program strengthens access to markets for entrepreneurs by supporting the development of professional, well-planned marketing tools, materials, and activities.

Combined with trainings, technical assistance, networking, and links to other local community development programs, WWC's mini-grant program helps new and established entrepreneurs secure resources to effectively market their products and services, broaden their customer base, and increase their sales and profits.

Marketing Mini-Grant; Application Deadline June 1, 2015

WWC awards cash mini-grants of up to \$400 to microenterprises (businesses with 5 or fewer employees) through a competitive application process to support a variety of marketing projects.

A total of \$900 is available in the June 2015 grant cycle for **businesses in Aroostook, Piscataquis, Washington, and Hancock counties**. Three businesses will be chosen from a competitive pool of applicants to receive grants: **\$400 for first prize, \$300 for second prize, and \$200 for third prize**.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include individual micro business owners, business partners, or groups of business owners. Women, men, couples, partners, and mixed groups of entrepreneurs are welcome to apply. Non-profit organizations are not eligible. **Criteria for the contest: being in business 5 years or less, having 5 or fewer employees, and gross annual sales of \$500,000 or less.**

Priority will be given to entrepreneurs operating in downtown business districts or located in the following **Maine Downtown Center member communities: Madawaska, Van Buren, Presque Isle, Houlton, Dover-Foxcroft, Calais, Eastport, Machias, Bucksport, Castine, Stonington, Blue Hill, and Bar Harbor**.

WWC's mini-grants support new or expanded business marketing and promotion, not the production of your product or purchase of equipment, tools, furnishings, or other fixed assets. Professional licensure and/or fees will not be funded.

Business Match

Your winning grant must be matched by a 25% contribution (i.e. \$100 match required for \$400 grant; \$75 for \$300 grant; \$50 for \$200 grant). Matching funds can come from business profits, personal funds, or other sources.

WWC Marketing Mini-Grants Priority Areas:

- **Branding** (developing a professional, unified image of your business and implementing your brand through appropriate channels)
- **Access to markets** (promoting your product or service to reach new markets; marketing your product for wholesale or retail)
- **Networking & collaboration** (professional development and networking opportunities that extend your business connections in your industry; partnership with other businesses or organizations to increase your visibility and sales)
- **Local impact & investment** (preference given to proposals in which both the grant applicant and the vendors with whom you plan to contract are located in the target communities)
- **Need & capacity** (Please consider the question of how the funding will make an impact on your business. Be specific about increased sales and how the grant will impact your business.)
- **Specificity** (Clearly delineate the expenses of your project and how the grant funds will be utilized. Quotes from vendors are encouraged.)

To apply for a mini-grant:

1. Please answer the questions on the application and submit your application to:

Erica Quin-Easter, Microenterprise Specialist
Women, Work, and Community
181 Main Street – UMPI
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone 768-9468
Email erica.quineaster@maine.edu

2. WWC's regional review committee reviews the proposals and makes funding decisions. A committee comprised of WWC staff, community business partners, and Graduate Ambassadors reviews WWC's marketing mini-grant applications.
3. Upon acceptance of the proposal, the grant recipient completes a WWC registration form and receives the grant check. Turnaround time from the grant deadline to receipt of funds is approximately one month.
4. WWC secures a photo of the grant recipient and issues a press release to announce the grant and promote your project.
5. When the project has been completed, the grant recipient submits a short report.

Past recipients of WWC's marketing mini-grants are asked to wait one year before applying for another grant, and preference may be given to first-time grant applicants. If you are not chosen to receive a mini-grant, you are welcome to reapply or have your application considered again in future grant cycles.



Northern Maine Marketing Mini-Grant Application

Please answer the questions below completely and return by Monday, June 1, 2015.

<p>Contact information (name(s), business name, address, email, phone, website, fbpage):</p>	
<p>Please tell us briefly about your business. How long have you been in operation? What is your mission, and what products and/or services do you sell?</p>	
<p>What marketing project are you proposing to do, and how does this fit into your overall business and marketing plan? What are your goals for this marketing project (i.e. number of new customers, \$\$ increase in sales, etc.), and how will you evaluate whether you meet your goals?</p>	

Budget

Grant amount you are requesting (If less than \$400)	\$
Match funds you have available (must be at least 25% of grant award)	\$
Total amount for your project	\$

Three grantees will be chosen from a competitive pool of applicants: \$400 for first prize, \$300 for second prize, and \$200 for third prize.

Criteria

Business Start Date	
Gross sales	\$
Number of employees (excluding owner)	Full time: Part time:

Please feel free to attach additional materials pertinent to your application. **Your completed application must be received by 5:00 PM Monday, June 1, 2015 for consideration.**

Please submit your application electronically to erica.quineaster@maine.edu or mail to:

Erica Quin-Easter, Microenterprise Specialist
 Women, Work, and Community
 181 Main Street – UMPI
 Presque Isle, ME 04769

Please contact WWC anytime with questions! You are welcome but not required to discuss your proposal with WWC before submitting your application.

For questions in your business region, please contact:

WWC Aroostook County Center
 Erica Quin-Easter, 768-9468, erica.quineaster@maine.edu

WWC North Central Region (Piscataquis, Washington, and Hancock counties)
 Jane Searles, 262-7843, mary.jane.searles@maine.edu.