



## 2021-2022 WSMA Grant Opportunities

### Statewide & Urban Grants for Nonprofit Microenterprise Development Organizations (MDOs) and Others Throughout Washington

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Update: January 6, 2022*

### Eligibility Questions

**If our organization has a 501c6 (instead of a 501c3), are we eligible to apply?** *Yes. As long as you are providing comprehensive business training, technical assistance and/or microloans. Contact staff if you need additional clarification.*

**We work with small businesses with up to 5 employees and do short workshops, but we do not have a formal business training program. Are we still eligible to apply for this grant?** *Yes, we encourage organizations that want to formalize business training, technical assistance and financing into their programming to apply for this grant.*

**We would like to incorporate more microlending services in the work we do with small businesses, are we eligible to apply for funding to make this happen?** *Yes, this funding is intended to increase the business training and financing resources available to the smallest businesses around the state, including microlending. However, due to state constitutional spending restrictions, the proposal funding we provide cannot be used to fund actual loans.*

**Many of our members reside in Bellevue and our non-profit organization is located in Tukwila. Is our organization qualified and eligible for this grant?** *If your members are businesses and your nonprofit is duly authorized to serve these businesses, and you provide business training technical assistance and/ or microloans then you would be eligible to apply for this grant.*

**Are unions eligible to receive funds? I helped found a nonprofit/political worker union: IUPAT 116 and was interested in applying as Vice President.** *No. If unions are involved in organizing workers in political campaigns, nonprofits, etc., they do not qualify. Organizations eligible to receive funds should have business assistance aspects of their work which include assisting businesses to start up or expand.*

**Can ADO's apply to fund tech service providers and programs?** *Yes, we've done this before but we will prioritize funds for programs where business training, technical assistance and other business resources that are not currently available or are in short supply for businesses in the area.*

**Could an EDC organized as a 501(c)(6) use a community foundation as a pass through to meet the 501(c)(3) requirement? If so, which organization is best eligible to apply?** *You can use a 501c3 fiscal sponsor, but a 501c6 can also apply.*

## **General Questions**

**Can we apply for both Statewide and Urban grants?** *Yes, but make sure you differentiate between the two. In addition, they require separate applications.*

**In the Guidelines, it says that we can apply for both, however on the application portal it says select only one. If we can apply for both, would that be two different programs and how is that broken out?** *You can apply for each of the categories, but they require separate applications. So one for Statewide and then another one for Urban. We will review them separately as they are two different funding allocations. During the Information Session, it was noted that it's important to differentiate in the project description who the client base is for each proposal and what assistance will be provided. It needs to be clear what is being funded by each proposal. On page 2 of the Guidelines, you can see the description of each.*

**Can you please define "Technical Assistance"?** *Technical assistance can take many forms. These services can be provided in a group or as one-on-one business coaching, specialized assistance in a particular industry, or business counseling in areas of business support like cash flow projections, marketing, operations, etc.*

**Are there limits on how funds can be used? How specific?** *On Page 2 and 4 of the Program Guidelines, you will see that grants approved under this contract Grants approved under this contract may be used to pay expenses, including but not limited to rent, mortgage and utilities, technical assistance, and efforts to help prevent permanent closure of businesses. However, funds may NOT be used for equipment (tangible property including but not limited to copiers, vehicles, furniture, and technology infrastructure).*

**These funds can't be used for loans, correct?** *Correct. Applicants can not use these dollars to lend, grant or provide any direct financial assistance to small businesses. They can be used to help businesses apply for money.*

**Can we use these funds to pay for individuals to start small businesses, like giving them funds to apply for business licenses?** *No, you can not give any cash payment, loans, or cash directly to businesses. You can pay for the technical assistance you provided to them in support of accessing a business license, but not for the license itself.*

**Can the non-profit entity assist "idea stage" entrepreneurs under this program? (While the vast majority of our micro-enterprises are registered businesses, there are some idea stage people that seek assistance prior to creating a business.)** *Yes.*

**Can a Chamber use the funds to provide grants to small businesses?** *No. No funds can go directly to businesses.*

**Can we use the funds to pay our staff to train others in our business? For example, can we be paid to train musicians how to market themselves?** *Yes, this is definitely an appropriate use of these funds.*

**Is there an FTE requirement in order to fulfill the contract?** *No.*

**I see you prioritize "vital sectors" and it lists the creative economy. Can you define what that means?** *Those in the creative economy include artists, musicians, poets, makers of all kinds, photographers, graphic designers, writers, fashion designers, filmmakers, game designers, and many more, Services for these business owners helps them develop their businesses, their marketing, accounting systems, operations etc.*

**Can we use the funds for our work with City, County and Corporation to access contracting opportunities?** *If you are assisting startups and micro-enterprises who are trying to access and qualify for city and county and corporate contracting opportunities the answer is yes. If that is not what you are asking please clarify.*

**Can we use these funds to support a program in which small businesses are given financial support to take on interns? (Given that small businesses often incur more in costs to train employees.)?** *Grant funds could pay for contracted training for businesses but funds can not go to businesses directly. Check with L&I about requirements for businesses seeking to bring on interns, volunteers or other unpaid staff.*

**Are we required to use WSMA designated trainers or can we contract out to others for technical assistance?** *Yes, you can contract with outside specialists and consultants but be sure to identify them in your funding request, if possible.*

**Can we use funding to pay for marketing, specifically a part time graphics or web designer?** *As long as you can provide information about how that program or service will positively impact small businesses and the results of such work.*

**Could grant pay for an external financial audit?** *These funds can not be used to pay for an external audit unless it was directly related to or enabling other services to be provided via our grant.*

**If we wanted to do a Lunch-N-Learn series for our businesses, could this grant help offset food costs?** *Yes, as long as it's not excessive or out of alignment with the rest of the project budget.*

**Could we use the funds to pay for registration to a business conference that covers the areas of need?** *Yes, this is an appropriate expenditure.*

**Does the immigration status of our clients matter? Can we use this grant to support people who are currently immigrants and/or undocumented?** *It is our understanding that these funds can be used to provide business services for immigrants and refugees.*

**Are award selections based on what we request or should we expect reduced offers? For example, we ask for \$60K to serve ## with TA statewide, if not enough funding would potentially we be offered \$30K and then modify our scope and ## to reflect that reduced funding?** *In past funding rounds we have fully funded some projects and partially funded others—dependent on the strength of the proposal. If the grant award made to a project is less than the original proposal we expect to make adjustments in the Scope of Work and results expected.*

**In case we got funding, what would be the reporting requirements?** *See page 7 of the program Guidelines. All awarded grantees will be required to attend a Zoom call check in during the months of March and April, 2022 and submit a Final Report on or before June 16, 2022. A report template will be delivered to each funded organization and will include a short summary, key lessons, successes, challenges, a business testimonial, and outcome data.*

**Can you give examples of how successful grantees have measured these impacts (given they are subjective and qualitative) as outlined in Q12 (page 9) of application?** *We recognize that it's hard to measure the intangibles. Some organizations have used surveys, some have done individual interviews. We use this information along with the other metrics, like jobs created and businesses started, to tell the story of impact. Providing vignettes and stories of how businesses benefited from your business services are essential to this grant program and we'll ask you to include those in your final report, should your project be funded.*

**I have concerns about the Expected Outcomes. It requires a bit of crystal ball types of estimates, which is really unknown. How is this used in the application?** *Be as realistic as you can when you are setting your goals based on your past experience providing these business services or resources. Put in a 0 if you are not providing that specific specific service with your project.*

**When will SourceLink go live?** *We plan to open the Resource Partner Application on the WSMA Sourcelink platform sometime in the first Quarter of 2022*

**Is this grant a contract? If this is a contract (rather than a simple grant agreement) must it be signed and is it possible for applicants to review the contract language prior to applying for this funding?** *WSMA does use a contract for applicants who are successful in the review process. Contracts change slightly from grant cycle to grant cycle so all successful grantees are encouraged to thoroughly read their contract and their Scope of Work before signing.*

**Is it safe to assume that if an application is submitted early that there will be no ability for WSMA staff to give some comments to enhance the submission prior to the deadline.** *That is correct.*

**Will today's Information Session recording be shared?** *No. Frequently asked questions and answers (FAQs) will be posted to our website after the sessions.*

**Why is the application period and grant portal open for such a short period?** *The RFP release date was beyond our control, leaving a finite amount of time for the entire grant period. It takes time to process*

*all of the applications fairly, collect answers to reviewer questions, sign contracts, distribute payments, and complete required reporting in accordance with our funder.*

**What will you require as part of reporting for programs we provide? We have confidential clients and cannot release names.** *You will need to track the types of programs you provide, who and how many people attend these programs or receive your technical assistance. After the project is over, you will describe the type of services you provided and general information about the businesses served (e.g., a compiled total of businesses assisted, number of employees, etc.). We will not ask for any names of participants or sign in sheets, we are mainly looking for the impact and demographics of the businesses assisted/trained.*

**What is the difference between training and technical assistance?** *Training is for an ongoing cohort (for example: 10 week, 3 hours/week program with curriculum, preparing) while technical assistance is more individualized (one-on-one mentoring or individual/group coaching) or focused on specific consulting with a business or small group of businesses.*

**We work with another partner and want to apply for funding together. Is that possible?** *Yes, collaboration is an important part of WSMA's goals around Washington State. Working with partner organizations to expand and deepen the business training, technical assistance and financing resources to businesses with five or fewer employees is a priority. You must decide which of your organizations will apply and manage the reporting and accounting requirements under the grant.*

**Who needs to certify and electronically sign our application?** *The person ultimately responsible for your project should certify the application. This could be an executive director, board president, chief financial officer, etc.*

**The word count limit in each of the questions within the grant application are very limited. Can we attach additional documents that share our story?** *At this time we are not accepting additional documents with these applications. We encourage you to be specific, clear and concise about your responses regarding your intended goals, organizational history, and outcomes. The portal has a word count at the bottom of each question to assist you.*

**We missed the WSMA Grant Information Session. Where can we go if I have additional questions?** *We will update this FAQ with questions from the Information Session(s) and will upload them on our website. Per Page 5 of the Program Guidelines, in line with WSMA's commitment to conduct an equitable and accessible application process, technical assistance will be offered to support organizations with determining their eligibility and in completing their application.*

- *Eligibility and project assistance will be provided between December 21 and January 13. Contact [lisa@wamicrobiz.org](mailto:lisa@wamicrobiz.org)*
  
- *Portal assistance will be available between December 29 and January 13. Contact [cherie@wamicrobiz.org](mailto:cherie@wamicrobiz.org)*

## **Match & Budget Requirement Questions**

**Does the work need to be accomplished by June 16, 2022 or paid by June 16, 2022?** *The work must be completed and your report submitted by June 16, 2022.*

**Is the request cap of \$60K for the entire project (which includes the match) or just the funds requested from WSMA?** *This is the amount requested from WSMA.*

**Can you explain the match requirement again?** *All proposals must provide a cash-match equal to 25% of the total project costs. As an example: If your total project costs \$10,000 you will only be able to apply for 75% (\$7,500) of the costs from WSMA and match with your own funding the additional 25% (\$2,500).*

**What can matching funds look like in the grant? Can the matching funds come from any source - both Federal and/or nonfederal?** *As long as you can demonstrate you are not pulling from the same pool or reporting the same results twice—once to each funding source. Please note: state general fund sources cannot be used to match WSMA grants (which are also funded by the state general fund).*

**Any special requirements of who can give us the match?** *See above.*

**Would in-kind count towards the match? What of a staff person?** *The expenditure of the staff wages is considered cash if paid with another source.*

**Do in-kind donations work as matching funds? For example, a venue donates the cost of space rental.** *No, needs to be a cash match.*

**Can we use SBRN funding for the match?** *No, state general fund sources cannot be used to match these WSMA grant funds (which come from the same source).*

**Do the match funds need to be spent by the deadline or only the WSMA funds?** *Our hope is that the project is complete by June 16, 2022 and this includes the match funds directly used for this project.*

**Can we do the match with our general operating funding?** *Yes, as long as you can document that it is specifically for this project and outlined in your match letter.*

**What do you need for the match? Does it need to be deposited into our account, a paid invoice?** *We require a signed letter on letterhead from the source that they are contributing the 25% match.*

**For certification for the match funder is the letter addressed to WSMA or to the applicant?** *Documentation of the match from the other funder to your organization is optimal. It is possible that an award letter from the other project can be used with added documentation. The letter can either be addressed to the applicant or to WSMA.*

**For certifying the match- are you needing a signature from within our organization or from the match source?** *It can come from either. If from your organization, it must be on your letterhead and must articulate how the match funds are secured and how they will be used specifically for the project.*

**Is overhead (or indirect costs) allowed? And, if so, is there a max percentage?** *We do not prohibit it, but we end up looking at the percentage in relation to the project budget to see if it is reasonable and if it's related directly to the actual service provided. The higher the overhead rate and/or the less it is directly related to the actual project work proposed the lower the proposal is likely to be rated.*

**What is the start date of the project?** *Project start date will be February 1, for those grantees who are funded.*

**Can you explain again how to access the upload button for the Project Budget?** *You can read how to do this on Page 14 of the Program Guidelines and we've got a [short video here](#) that walks you through the process.*

## **Portal & Technical Questions**

**Where can I log on to the WSMA grant portal?** *The portal link is on our website, but you can access it directly [here](#).*

**Our offices are in a very remote community and we have spotty internet service. Can you help us with this?** *Yes, here is a [link to the Washington State Wi-Fi hotspot link](#) where you can find and use Internet connections for this application. Let us know if you need additional support with this issue.*

**Can these funds be used to pay for an annual license for software that will help businesses with business support?** *Because services will not be predominantly used for business support before June 16, 2022, it's not likely this request will be eligible for WSMA grant funds.*

## **Q & A and Tips For Grant Application Portal Success Not Addressed Above (See Page 13 of the Program Guidelines for the full set of Q&A):**

**Can we save our application in sections in your online grant application?** *Yes, however we strongly encourage applicants to create and edit your answers in a separate document to copy and paste into the grant portal. Make sure your responses do not exceed the word count for each question. Once you are finished, paste your responses into the online form when you are ready to apply, so that you don't lose your work. However, the WSMA grant portal also allows applicants to save their work in draft form to come back to before submitting the final version.*

**If we submit our proposal before the deadline of January 14, 2022, can we go back into the portal and make changes?** *Unfortunately, once an applicant submits their application, you can NOT make changes. It is strongly recommended that you use a Word document to finalize your application (paying attention to word counts) and submit only when you are ready. However, If you accidentally submit before completion of the application, please contact [cherie@wamicrobiz.org](mailto:cherie@wamicrobiz.org).*

**How will I know if my application was received?** *You will receive a confirmation email to the address you provided from [noreply@smartsimple.com](mailto:noreply@smartsimple.com), which will also include a PDF of your full application for your records. You will also receive email communications as your application moves through the review process and if our reviewers require additional information.*

**How will I know if my application was awarded or declined?** *You will receive a confirmation email to the address you provided from noreply@smartsimple.com on or before February 28, 2022.*

**What should we use for our grant funds request? What do we upload our funding request to the grant portal?** *Please use the format provided on Page 10 of the Program Guidelines (2021-2022 WSMA Statewide & Urban Grants Funding Request Form) by copying it to a new document (Word preferred) and saving to your computer. You can also download the Word version on our website ([LINK](#)). Once you fill in your budget justification AND amounts, you can then save this document on your computer. You will then upload this document to the portal using the upload graphic that appears after you click Save Draft.*

**On the WSMA grant portal, under Finances: How do I access the upload button for the 2021 - 2022 WSMA Statewide & Urban Grants Funding Request Form?** *You must first enter the amount requested from WSMA ONLY, not the total (which includes the 25% Cash Match. For more information and an example, please see Sections 4 and 11 of the RFP Guidelines) and then click Save Draft. Once this is done, reopen the Finance tab and an upload graphic (file with an up arrow) will appear and you will use this to upload your form. You can learn more and watch a [short video about uploading your project budget here](#).*