



Town of Brookline, Massachusetts
Planning & Community Development Department

Brookline Small Business Relief Grant Program Program Guidelines

Overview:

The Town of Brookline has established a Small Business Relief Grant Program to aid in the stabilization of small brick-and-mortar Brookline businesses that have suffered significant business disruption due to COVID-19. As authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the Town of Brookline will utilize \$200,000 in supplemental funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to provide up to \$15,000 grants to eligible Brookline businesses. Grant funds can be used for working capital expenses, including but not limited to payroll expenses, loss of inventory, rent or commercial mortgage payments, and utilities.

It is anticipated that there will be substantial interest in this program and that available resources will not be sufficient to meet the needs of all applicants. The Town will need to make difficult choices among many worthy and needy businesses and have designed the selection process to prioritize businesses that most align with the requirements set forth by the funder (i.e. HUD) and the Town's goals for the program. Applications that meet minimum eligibility requirements will be graded according to a list of comparative criteria. Applications that receive the highest grades based on the eligibility criteria will receive priority.

This program will be overseen by the Community Development and Economic Development Divisions of Brookline's Planning & Community Development Department. Applications will open on Friday, June 5, 2020 and will be processed on a weekly basis for as long as funds remain available.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants must meet basic program eligibility requirements that are a combination of federal CDBG requirements (i.e. a federal program designed to primarily assist low- and moderate-income people) and additional Town requirements.

- **Federal CDBG Program Requirements:** Applicants must be either a qualified microenterprise or a low-moderate income job creation project:
 - o Microenterprise applicants must:
 - Have five (5) or fewer full-time equivalent employees, AND

- Meet the household average median income requirements. Total household income for the business owner must be at or below 80% of the average median income to qualify for funding.
 - See Income Limits for Low-to-Moderate Income Households provided on the [Small Business Relief Grant Program page](#) for reference.
 - Job Creation and Retention applicants must:
 - Applicants must create or retain at least one (1) job. The job must be filled by an individual who meets the household average median income requirement. Total household income for the individual must be at or below 80% of the average median income to qualify. Rehiring at least one position recently laid off due to COVID-19 related impacts or retaining a furloughed employee who meets income eligibility standards likely would allow an applicant to meet this requirement.
 - All applicants must be for-profit entities.
- **Additional Town Requirements:**
 - Eligible businesses must:
 - Operate out of a brick-and-mortar location in the Town of Brookline,
 - Have been in operation in Brookline since November 1, 2019,
 - Be a type of business where, prior to March 1, 2020, a majority of business revenue was through in-person transactions or in-person services,
 - Show a loss compared to normal business operation periods due to COVID-related limitations of business operations,
 - Have no more than 50 employees.
- **Ineligible Applicants:**
 - Applicants that do not meet minimum eligibility requirements,
 - Sole proprietors without a brick-and-mortar location in Brookline,
 - Businesses with past-due tax liabilities, tax liens, or who have filed for bankruptcy,
 - Liquor and tobacco stores, cannabis stores, pawn shops, adult entertainment, and real estate businesses are ineligible to receive federal funding as this is prohibited by the program funder (i.e. HUD)

The Town of Brookline reserves the right to reject any application that is incomplete or does not meet federal eligibility requirements. As there will likely be more applicants than funding availability, the Town reserves the right to use its judgement to select grantees that best meet and advance the goals of this program.

Comparative Criteria:

All applicants who meet the Minimum Eligibility Requirements will be graded in accordance with Town program priorities, which include:

- **COVID-19 Impact:** Applicants that demonstrate severe impact to business operations and revenue due to COVID-19 will be prioritized, especially those who face ongoing operational challenges due to the requirements and practicality of social distancing measures.
- **Use of Funds:** Applicants who can demonstrate a clear plan for the use of funds and explain how the funds will positively impact the long-term viability and resiliency of the business will be prioritized.
- **Employee Retention:** Businesses that demonstrate a higher ratio of employees that will be retained or hired will be given priority.
- **Brick-and-Mortar Businesses:** Businesses with brick-and-mortar locations with first floor storefronts in one of Brookline’s commercial areas will be prioritized.
- **Cash Flow Management:** Businesses that have contacted their landlord, bank, insurance company, and/or utility companies seeking relief to assist with immediate cash flow issues will be given priority.
- **Access to Federal Relief Programs:** Businesses that either did not apply for or receive funding through the federal Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) or Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), will be prioritized.

Priority	0 Points	3 Points	7 Points	10 Points
COVID-19 Impact	Business was not impacted by COVID-19		Business is significantly impacted, but able to operate in a limited fashion during the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. takeout/delivery, curbside pick-up, virtual services)	Major impact to operations due to social distancing requirements and cannot operate until late in the state’s Reopening Plan
Use of Funds	Incomplete or insufficient plan or description of how the grant money will be used or how the funds will positively impact the viability of the business	General plan for the use of the grant money, but the description lacks specificity or details about impact	Specific plan for use of the money with discernable positive impact on business viability and future resiliency	Well-thought-out post-COVID-19 plan drafted with a clear strategy for the use of grant funds; funds will make a clear impact on the long-term success and resiliency of the business
Job Retention or Creation	0 FTE employees retained	0.5 FTE employee retained	1-1.5 FTE employees retained	2 or more FTE employees retained
Brick-and-Mortar Business	Business does not have a physical	Business has a physical location in Brookline		Business has a first-floor storefront

	location in Brookline	located on an upper story or back off space (i.e. <i>not</i> a first-floor storefront)		location in one of Brookline's commercial areas
Cash Flow Management	Businesses will receive a point for each of the following entities that they have reached out to seeking relief to assist with cash flow management: - Landlord - Bank - Insurance company - Utility company			
Access to Federal Relief Programs	Business received either an EIDL or a PPP loan*	Business was either denied or did not apply for EIDL or PPP loans		

**Note: Due to federal restrictions, Brookline's Small Business Relief Program funding cannot be applied to the same expenses already covered by Small Business Administration relief programs, such as the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).*

The maximum possible score is 47 points. Applications will be scored by an evaluation committee made up of Community Development and Economic Development Division staff.

How to Apply:

Applications will be available as of June 5, 2020. **Submit your application via <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BrooklineSmBizGrant>.**

After submitting your application, you will be notified by email within one week about whether your application meets the initial program requirements. Applicants that meet the initial program requirements will receive a phone call to schedule and coordinate the pick-up of a signed copy of your application along with the following supporting documentation:

- A copy of the last state and federal business tax returns you filed.
- If you have been in business for less than a year, additional business documentation listing your revenues and expenses to date (we will call you to discuss this first).
- Completed [IRS W-9 form](#) for your business
- If a Microenterprise applicant, a [Microenterprise self-verification form](#).
- If a Microenterprise applicant, a copy of the last state and federal household tax returns for the majority of the ownership of your business
- Payroll Records to document current number of employees (one week in Jan/Feb 2020 & one week in Apr 2020)
- Additional documentation or agreements that we will discuss with you and then email you, based on the details of your application, which may include: documentation of your revenues and expenses if you have been in business for less than a year; Conflict of Interest statement or disclosures; and an agreement to provide additional documentation upon future request by the Town's Community Development Block Grant Administrator.

- *Note:* Job Creation or Retention applicants will be required to have any new hires submit to the Town for 3-6 months following receipt of the grant one-time documentation of whether they live in a low- or moderate-income household at the time of hire as well as demographic data.

You will receive an email confirmation that your application is complete within 1-2 business days of submitting your supporting documents.

Application Review Process:

Applications will be ranked according to the average score given by the evaluators and those with the highest score will be ranked at the top. Funding awards will be made starting with the highest scoring applicants, and will be made, in order by ranking, until all funds are exhausted. Please note that grants will not be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each week, the highest scoring grant applications will be awarded funding, and the remaining applications will be rolled over for further evaluation to the following week. In the unlikely event that the funds are not exhausted, the Town may elect to issue another application round with any remaining funding.

Funding Considerations:

Funds are limited and the Town reserves the right to discontinue or modify requirements and funding for the program. Please note that filling out an application for the program does not imply that funding for the applicant is available or that the applicant is automatically approved. Grant funding requests must be approved by the Town and a contract signed between the Town and the applicant. Expenses incurred prior to March 27th are not eligible expenses. Also, capital improvements are not eligible expenses.

The Town of Brookline has the right to reject the Small Business Relief Program application or terminate any agreement if an applicant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or intentionally provided misleading or incorrect information. The Department of Planning & Community Development reserves the right to adjust regarding the conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.

Opportunity to Pay-It-Forward:

While this is a grant program, all approved grantees will be asked on a voluntary basis to consider donating funds back to the program, if and when they are able to do so, so that in the future, other businesses may benefit from this resource, as well.

Questions?

- **Email:** Contact Meredith L. Mooney, Economic Development Planner, at mmooney@brooklinema.gov or 617-264-6478 for more information, details, or clarifications.
- **Attend weekly virtual town hall meetings with the Brookline business community:** Brookline businesses are encouraged to participate in the Town's weekly virtual town hall meetings with the Brookline business community to learn more about and participate in Q&A about the Small Business Relief Program. These virtual town hall meetings are held every Thursday at 9am via Zoom videoconference: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88644465341>

The Town of Brookline does not discriminate in its programs on the basis of race, color, disability, religion, sex, familial status, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic information, ancestry, children, marital status, or public assistance recipient.

People with disabilities are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation of rules, policies, practices or services. Requests may be made by contacting Caitlin Starr at cstarr@brooklinema.gov.