



Community Business Builders Microenterprise Education Program

Program Guidelines

City of Medford

Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability

These are general Program Guidelines based on previous programs. There are no cohorts currently planned.

A. Summary

Community Business Builders is a multi-week educational course designed to support microenterprise business owners or aspiring entrepreneurs in Medford. The Program is a series of classes to help entrepreneurs establish the skills necessary to start and/or run a successful business in Medford. Classes are held over several weeks and cover topics such as accounting, budgeting, financial management, financing options, marketing, sales, planning, and utilizing technology.

By the end of the Program, cohort members will have written a business plan, acquired the tools necessary for presenting loan applications to fiduciary institutions, and practiced their elevator pitch. The Program will introduce members to the existing ecosystem of business development resources within Medford and the commonwealth, will provide mentorship opportunities with consultant partners, and introduce them to a network of micro-enterprise business owner peers.

B. Definitions

1. **Program:** Microenterprise cohort that will receive training for launching and growing their businesses.
2. **Program Staff:** Kayla Myros, Economic Development Planner, and Laurel Siegel, CDBG & Grants Manager, who will administer and manage the Program.
3. **Applicant:** An eligible business owner seeking to participate.
4. **Microenterprise:** A business having 5 or fewer Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees, including the business owner(s).
5. **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employee:** One permanent full-time employee or multiple permanent part-time employees who work at least 40 hours total per week.

6. *Area Median Income (AMI)*: The Area Median Income for the City of Medford, as such income limits are promulgated from time to time by HUD or its successor.
7. *Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI)*: Incomes at or below 80% of the Area Median Income.

C. Program Details

Typically, the Program runs for 12 consecutive weeks with one class per week:

- 8 Group Classes: focused on foundational skills, peer-to-peer learning, and applied practice.
- 4 Personalized Counseling Sessions delivered one-on-one to guide participants through business plan completion and individual problem-solving.

The Program will be delivered in a hybrid format, combining in-person sessions in Medford with remote learning opportunities. This increases accessibility while ensuring strong engagement. Guest experts will provide specialized instruction during in-person sessions.

Cohorts will include up to ten (10) participants who intend to open or currently operate a Microenterprise (i.e. a current microenterprise owner or **potential** microenterprise owner). Participants in the Program will be Medford residents who qualify as low-to-moderate income . *Please, see Section D for full information on eligibility requirements.*

Course Overview:

- *Week 1-2: Business Strategy & Structuring*
 - Setting goals and understanding customers and markets
 - Exploring legal structures, registration requirements, and licensing in Medford
- *Week 3-4: Business Finances & Accounting*
 - Budgeting and tracking income and expenses
 - Preparing financial statements and basic tax preparation
 - Accessing capital through loans, grants, and community financing
- *Week 5-6: Operations Strategy*
 - Standard operating procedures for efficiency and compliance
 - Inventory management, service delivery, and cash flow strategies
 - Customer service best practices
 - Sales fundamentals for small businesses, including:
 - Prospecting and identifying target customers
 - Consultative selling techniques and building trust with clients
 - Setting sales goals and tracking performance
 - Closing strategies that are practical for microenterprises
 - Integrating sales with marketing efforts to maximize reach and conversion
- *Week 7-8: Branding & Marketing*
 - *Developing a brand identity that resonates with target audiences*
 - *Building digital presence, including websites and social media*

- *Marketing across channels (print, online, and community networks)*
- **Week 9-11: Business Plan Development**
 - Individualized support to finalize each participant's business plan
 - Feasibility studies, revenue projections, and profit analysis
 - Incorporation of peer and consultant feedback
- **Week 12: Pitch Day**
 - Participants present their business plans to a panel of experts and peers
 - Feedback provided to strengthen future presentations
 - Celebration of cohort accomplishments and introduction to Medford's business resource ecosystem

D. Eligibility Criteria

Interested applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. **Microenterprise:** If an Applicant operates a business, then the business must have 5 or fewer Full Time Equivalent employees, including the owner(s). If an Applicant does not currently operate a business, they must ***intend*** to open a Microenterprise business.
2. **Residency:** The owner of an Applicant business must be a Medford resident.
3. **Income Restriction:** The total family income of all members of the applicant's family residing in the Applicant's household (including all persons aged 18 and over) must be equal to or less than 80% of Medford's Area Median Income.
 - a. *To find current income limits*, please reach out to Laurel Siegel at lsiegel@medford-ma.gov or review the Community Development Block Grant webpage at www.medfordma.org/departments/planning-development-sustainability/community-development-block-grant-cdbg-program.

Applicants will be asked to provide documentation on the total income for their household including, but not limited to, tax returns, pay stubs, etc.

4. **Conflicts of Interest:** The City of Medford must follow the regulations outlined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 268A, and the standards in 24 CFR 92.356 concerning conflicts of interest. Individuals who currently hold or have previously held roles related to activities supported by CDBG funds, or who have the ability to participate in decision-making processes or access privileged information regarding these activities, are prohibited from obtaining any financial interest or benefit from a CDBG-assisted activity. They are also prohibited from having an interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement related to such activities or their proceeds, either for themselves or for individuals with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure or for one year after.

E. Application Process

1. All Applicants are required to submit an application.
2. Successful Applicants will be requested to provide documents for income verification. If an Applicant does not submit the requested information within 5 business days, the review process will be terminated.
3. After the determination of eligibility is completed and verified by the City of Medford, Roads Consulting Group and the Applicant will enter into an agreement for participation in the Program.

This Program is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The program is subject to the availability of CDBG funding from HUD and to the continued eligibility of the City to receive such funds. Review and acceptance of Applicants will be subject to applicable HUD regulations.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the **Community Business Builders: A Microenterprise Education Program**, please contact Kayla Myros at kmyros@medford-ma.gov or 781-393-2480.

If you need reasonable accommodation in order to complete your application, please contact Frances Nwajei at (781)-393-2439 or fnwajei@medford-ma.gov. While the municipality will do its best to accommodate you, certain accommodation requires the hiring of outside contractors who may not be available if requested immediately before the application is due.