



**New Jersey Economic Development Authority
Small Business Improvement Grant Program
Notice of Funding Availability**

This amended NOFA (dated December 19th, 2025) for the Small Business Improvement Grant Program (“Program”) indicates an increase in grant funding available \$97,938,195.58 million, as discussed below under the “Funding Source” section. The NOFA has also been amended in the “Application Process” section regarding grant award notice to applicants. All other program requirements (including eligibility criteria, program details and restrictions) remain the same as the prior NOFA.

All updates to the prior NOFA are bolded below:

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) began accepting applications for the Small Business Improvement Grant Program at 10:00 a.m. EST on Thursday, February 10, 2022. The application can be accessed at <https://www.njeda.gov/small-business-improvement-grant/>. Applications will be reviewed on a first come, first served basis. A \$100 approval fee is required after the application has been reviewed and prior to execution of a grant agreement.

Purpose

The Small Business Improvement Grant Program offers reimbursement to small businesses for costs associated with making building improvements or purchasing new furniture, fixtures and equipment. This grant will reimburse a small business for 50 percent of total eligible project costs incurred after March 9, 2020, but no more than 2 years prior to the application date.

Overview

On August 11, 2021, NJEDA’s Board approved the creation of the Main Street Recovery Finance Program, which established the Small Business Lease Grant and the Small Business Improvement Grant to support eligible small business with facility improvements. **The NJEDA began accepting applications for the Small Business Lease Grant on October 20, 2021 and for the Small Business Improvement Grant on February 10, 2022.**

Due to consistent public demand for the product, the NJEDA Board of Directors subsequently approved additional funding in December 2022, October 2023, June 2024 and May 2025. At their November 12, 2025 meeting, NJEDA Board approved additional funding for the Small Business Improvement Grant Program bringing the total allocation to fund grant approvals to be \$97,938,195.58. All Program requirements and regulations for the Program, which are found at N.J.A.C. 19:31E-1.1 et seq., remain unchanged.

Program Details

The Small Business Improvement Grant Program will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to New Jersey-based small businesses and nonprofits to reimburse business owners for costs associated with making interior or exterior building improvements or purchasing and installing new furniture, fixtures and equipment. The grant will reimburse a small business eligible for assistance from the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) for 50 percent of eligible total project costs incurred after March 9, 2020, but no more than 2 years prior to the application date. Additional eligibility criteria apply. Forty percent of all funding is set-aside for businesses located in eligible NJ Opportunity Zone census tracts.

Funding Source

A total of \$97.9 million of Main Street Recovery Finance Program funding will be utilized to capitalize the Small Business Improvement Grant. Of this \$97.9 million, 40 percent (\$39.1 million) will be reserved for businesses located in Opportunity Zone eligible census tracts

The total funding and award amount are based upon current information about funding availability. NJEDA reserves the right to increase the amount and number of awards should additional funds become available.

Eligibility

The Small Business Improvement Grant is reimbursement based. A business must have completed the capital improvements or purchased and/or installed the new furniture, fixtures and equipment.

To be eligible under the program, applicants must:

- Rent or own and operate from the facility. Landlords are not eligible under this program.
- Meet SBAs definition of Small Business based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).
- Have a total project cost of at least \$5,000, and have incurred that cost on or after March 9, 2020, with the capital improvement work having commenced no more 2 years prior to date of application.
- Provide a WR-30 or equivalent payroll documentation.
- Provide a current tax clearance certificate prior to approval.
- Be in good standing with the Department of Labor.
- Be in good standing with the Department of Environmental Protection.
- Certify at application that they are not in default with any other EDA or State assistance.
- Certify that all the information and documentation provided to the NJEDA is true and accurate.

Businesses defined as “home-based businesses” may only receive reimbursement for new equipment purchased and/or installed. Home-based businesses are not eligible for reimbursement for renovation or improvement projects. Non-profits and for-profit businesses are eligible to apply. Applicants are eligible to receive a Small Business Lease Grant and Small Business Improvement

Grant for the same location. Applicants are limited to one application per Employer Identification Number (EIN). Applicants operating from multiple locations under a single EIN are limited to one application under the sole EIN, but may pool project costs from multiple locations into a single application.

After execution of the grant agreement, the receiving entity must:

- Commit to paying each full-time and part-time employee not less than \$15 per hour or 120 percent of the minimum wage, whichever is higher. For tipped employees, the small business shall not pay less than 120 percent of the minimum wage. Businesses that receive grant funding of up to \$25,000 must comply with these wage requirements for two years. Businesses that receive grant funding of greater than \$25,000 must comply with these wage requirements for four years. Non-compliance with these wage requirements will result in repayment of the grant to the NJEDA.
- Remain in the location for a period of time based on the amount of the grant. For grants of up to \$25,000, the entity must remain in the location for at least two years. For grants of greater than \$25,000, the entity must remain in the location for at least four years. Non-compliance with this requirement will result in repayment of the grant to the NJEDA.

Additional eligibility requirements may apply to ensure that the applicant is eligible. This may include, but is not limited to:

- An acknowledgement and agreement that grant proceeds be applied to eligible uses only.
- Projects with costs over \$50,000 must comply with Green Building Standards for lighting and mechanical work.
- Affirmative action standards apply to contractors with four or more employees.

Finally, prohibited businesses include, but are not limited to: gambling or gaming activities; the conduct or purveyance of “adult” (i.e., pornographic, lewd, prurient, obscene or otherwise similarly disreputable) activities, services, products or materials (including nude or semi-nude performances or the sale of sexual aids or devices); any auction or bankruptcy or fire or “lost-our-lease” or “going-out-of-business” or similar sales; sales by transient merchants, Christmas tree sales or other outdoor storage; any activity constituting a nuisance; or any illegal purposes.

Eligible Uses

Under the Small Business Improvement Grant, funding can only be used to reimburse business owners for costs associated with making interior or exterior building improvements or purchasing and installing new furniture, fixtures and equipment. Home-based businesses may only receive reimbursement for new equipment purchases and/or installation. Home-based businesses are not eligible for reimbursement for renovation or improvement projects.

Grant Amounts

The minimum project cost is \$5,000 and the maximum grant amount is \$50,000.

Application Process

Online applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis based upon the date the NJEDA receives a completed application submission. **Applicants will be notified whether they are awarded funds as soon as practicable upon completion of approvals and declinations and the completion of all possible appeals.**

Fees

A \$100 approval fee is required after the application has been reviewed and prior to execution of a grant agreement.

Additional Information

Comprehensive information about the Small Business Improvement Grant Program is available at <https://www.njeda.gov/small-business-improvement-grant/>.

State and Federal Requirements

Funding for this grant is subject to State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the following, which may impact affiliates: N.J.S.A. 52:32-60.1, et seq., which prevents the New Jersey government entities from certain dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Belarus or Russia; Compliance with the list of “Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” promulgated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>; N.J.S.A. 24:6I-49 which provides that the following are not eligible for most State or local economic incentives (a) a person or entity issued a license to operate as a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or that employs a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and (b) a property owner, developer, or operator of a project to be used, in whole or in part, by or to benefit a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or to employ a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12, et seq., which prohibits a member of the Legislature or a State officer or employee or their partners or a corporation in which they owns or controls more than 1% of the stock to undertake or execute any contract, agreement, sale, or purchase of \$25.00 or more, made, entered into, awarded or granted by any State agency, with certain limited exceptions including grant awards by the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology.