



Program Guidelines

Approved August 21, 2025 by the Detroit Economic Growth Association Board

Mission of the Detroit Legacy Business Project

The Detroit Legacy Business Project seeks to maintain and sustain Detroit's small businesses that have been in operation for at least 30 years and who have helped to shape the cultural identity and collective character of Detroit.

The program is intended to empower these companies to continue their products and services, and to enhance their customary approach to customer relations. These legacy businesses have developed a valuable community connection that supports the vibrance of both commercial corridors and residential blocks.

The Detroit Legacy Business Project will provide financial assistance and business support programming to eligible businesses.

Program Definitions

- **Allowable Use** - an expenditure of grant funds that is included in a specific business's project budget and can be categorized in one of the program's enumerations of allowable uses.
- **Business Location** – the physical, commercial address where the business employees operate and sell products or services to customers
- **Business Support Programming**– educational opportunities for business owners with the purpose of increasing the operational capacity of the business owner or their employees
- **City of Detroit** – the assets, employees, branding and properties that fall under the control of municipality of Detroit, including its City Council members and staff

- ***City of Detroit Treasury Clearance*** – a filing and document that validates that individuals and businesses do not owe money to the City of Detroit. It is required by all Detroit-based businesses that need a business license, and those individuals and businesses who conduct business within the city of Detroit or directly with the City of Detroit.
- ***Detroit Economic Growth Association or DEGA*** – the nonprofit organization and City of Detroit partner that co-manages the Detroit Legacy Business Project
- ***Financial assistance*** – an allocation of monetary and taxable value that is made directly to a business owner and can be spent on a specified and allowable use
- ***Financial Need*** – a demonstrated or documented reality of a business or business owner which shows that without financial assistance or business support programming, the business would be unable to secure the financing or services necessary to complete a critical project.
- ***Legacy Business*** – an independently owned and operated business which is headquartered and open to the public in the city of Detroit for at least 30 years, and that has impacted the culture of the city through its products, services, and communal reputation. Proof of legacy may include Articles or Organization, income and property taxes, business acquisition and owner transfer documents, and media coverage.
- ***Microgrant*** – A financial payment of up to \$5,000 made from the DEGA to a legacy business for a budget of allowable expenses that total less than \$5,000. The microgrant may be used for new allowable expenses only and disbursement of this funding requires a budget, an official invoice or price quote prior to the purchase, and a copy of the purchase receipt and photo proof of work completion.
- ***Payment plan*** – an officially approved timeline of scheduled repayment for outstanding fees and taxes owed to the City of Detroit, State of Michigan or the US Federal Government
- ***Pre-payment*** - A financial payment made from the DEGA to a grant recipient for an allowable expense that has yet to be purchased by their company. Requires an official invoice or price quote prior to the purchase, as well as a copy of the purchase receipt and photo proof of work completion.
- ***Reimbursement Payment*** – A financial payment made from the DEGA to a grant recipient for an allowable expense previously made by their company after the approval of their grant. Requires an official invoice or price quote, a bank statement which shows the payment for the expense was made, and a photo of the purchase's deliverable.

Types of Assistance

The Detroit Legacy Business Project will provide selected Detroit-based businesses that have been in operation in a physical location in Detroit for a minimum of 30 years with two types of support: business support programming and financial assistance. This support will be designed to address both material and strategic business challenges.

About the Business Support Programming

Business Support Programming provided to legacy business owners will be comprised of training seminars, compliance and resolution meetings with City of Detroit departments, one-on-one consulting, and outbound service referrals to external business resources. Business support may be restricted to eligible businesses who applied to the initial round of grant funding.

- In-person and virtual training seminars will be taught by qualified DEGA staff, City of Detroit staff, and partner organizations.
- City of Detroit compliance and resolution meetings will be facilitated by DEGA staff and relevant City of Detroit Department representatives.
- Outbound referrals will be logged, initiated and tracked by DEGA staff

About the Financial Assistance - \$15,000 & \$50,000

The Detroit Legacy Business Project provides funding to selected small businesses who meet the program definition of a “legacy business” on a reimbursement or pre-paid basis for an allowable use.

Each round, the following awards will be made:

- One City-Wide Grant (\$50,000)
- Fourteen \$15,000 grants – 7 council district-specific and 7 at-large (14 total)
- Fifteen Microgrants:
 - Five \$5,000 grants
 - Ten \$2,500 grants

A points-based application for the \$15,000 and \$50,000 grants will be made available to the public that will provide an assessment of four areas that, together, total 100 points:

1. Legacy Business Track Record (36 Points) - This section qualifies a business's documented record of 30+ years of physical operation in the city of Detroit

2. Social & Cultural Contribution (34 Points) - This section qualifies the efforts made by the business to engage with the public, provide career opportunities to Detroit residents, strengthen its brand, and to increase awareness of its products and services during the last 30 years. Successful applicants must demonstrate its impact upon the culture, history, or identity of Detroit or a specific Detroit neighborhood
3. Product & Service Retention (4 Points) - This section qualifies the steps taken by the business owner to ensure that the business's products and services will remain physically available to the Detroit residents and visiting customers for the next 10 years.
4. Grant Use and Project Description (26 points) - This section qualifies the degree to which the proposed project is properly planned and will enhance the business's operation and positive communal impact.

Documents uploaded to the application that verify the veracity of the responses will be factored into the final evaluation, in addition to the numerical score.

All \$15,000 and \$15,000 grant recipients will be chosen based upon score (quantitative evaluation) and a site visit (qualitative evaluation), supporting documents, and eligibility.

Site visit evaluations will include the following considerations:

- Is the project budget compatible with the business's operations or the needs of the business location?
- Does the business appear to be in regular operation in adherence to stated business hours and generally open to the public?
 - Minimum of 3 days per week in operation
- Is there any obvious blight or nuisance on the property?
- Is the exterior and facade of the property reasonably inviting to members of the public and first-time customers? Does the proposed project address this facade?

Required documents to be uploaded or emailed, in addition to required application submission, include the following:

- Itemized Project budget
- Bids, Permits and Architectural drawings (Only for proposed projects wherein the grant funds would be used for construction), and Price Quotes relevant to budget items
 - Failure to provide an itemized project budget with the relevant expense estimates, detailed construction bids, stamped architectural drawings by

an architect licensed in the State of Michigan, or construction permits will disqualify a grant application from additional consideration.

- Project costs must fit into the grant amount received through the Detroit Legacy Business Project for the applicant to be deemed eligible for a grant award
- Certificate of Compliance
- Business License
- Business and Business Owner Tax Clearance
- Current Deed, Land Contract, lease agreement or some other proof of authorized regular occupancy or operation for the business at the business location
- Business IRS Tax Return for 2023 and 2024, if taxes are filed separately from Personal taxes
- Payroll tax form to verify number of W2 employees
- Proof of Product/Service Sales (Nonprofit applicants only)

Final grant recipient selection will be made by a committee of DEGC staff members.

About Microgrants – Ten \$2,500 & Five \$5,000 (15 recipients per round in Total)

The Detroit Legacy Business Project provides smaller amounts of funding to cover allowable expenses of up to \$5,000. Like other forms of funding, the grant amount must not exceed the cost of the total budget for the project, based upon price quotes and invoices for the project.

Microgrants will be awarded to legacy business owners at the discretion of DEGA staff under the following conditions:

- An application for a microgrant was submitted before the application deadline
- The business owner provides a description of their project that is substantiated by any request for photos, videos, or a site visit
- All other considerations and conditions being deemed equal by the application review committee, the timestamp of the application submitted will qualify an applicant for microgrant selection (i.e., first come, first served for eligible applicants that submitted a timely and complete application).
- First time eligible, grant applicants will be given priority consideration over past grant recipients of any amount
- Past Recipients of \$50,000 grants are ineligible for microgrant funding for a period of 24 months since the date of their initial grant award.

- Past Recipients of \$15,000 grants are ineligible to receive a microgrant for 12 months from the date of their \$15,000 grant selection.
- Microgrant winners are eligible for a second and final microgrant

Who is eligible for a cash grant?

The following requirements qualify the eligibility of applicants for financial assistance:

- Location and Business Track Record
 - Businesses who can prove physical operation in the city of Detroit for the last 30 years via Lease or purchase agreement for a physical location in Detroit
 - ♣ State of Michigan or Federal documentation that shows continuous branding, operation AND related ownership.
 - Document that shows ownership transfer under the same business name
 - ♣ Property Deed, Lease Agreement or some other proof of occupancy
 - ♣ Popular culture or media documentation that shows continuous branding AND related ownership.
 - Business address/location in the city of Detroit
 - ♣ Locations that are not accessible to the public via standard modes of transit (foot, bike, public transit, or automobile) do not qualify
 - There must be some sort of physical reception area at the business location for the public to inquire about services or products.
 - ♣ PO boxes do not qualify as an eligible business location
 - ♣ Storage space that serves as a regular workspace with Detroit business owners does not qualify as an eligible business location
 - ♣ Residential homes that have not received a conditional use permit or zoning variance for commercial activity does not qualify
 - Franchise businesses are ineligible for both financial assistance grants and business support programming.
- Federal Internal Revenue Service and State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
 - Eligible Grant recipients must have the following IRS documents
 - ♣ 2023 and 2024 Business Tax Returns
 - ♣ Employee Identification Number
 - Eligible Grant recipients must have the following LARA Documents

- ♣ Articles Of Organization/Incorporation
 - ♣ Annual Statements: 2020-2024
 - ♣ Any necessary Certificates of Restoration of Good Standing
- City of Detroit Compliance
 - Eligible business owners must be compliant with the City of Detroit for this business and all other financial matters relevant to the City of Detroit
 - ♣ No outstanding residential or commercial property taxes, blight tickets, or water bills without a payment plan in place
 - ♣ Has an individual and business Treasury clearance from the City of Detroit
 - ♣ Possesses a blight clearance, if necessary
 - The Business is compliant with City of Detroit building codes and has no outstanding bills or fines/violations without an official payment plan
 - ♣ No outstanding commercial property taxes, blight tickets, or water bills without a payment plan in place
 - ♣ Has an individual and business Treasury clearance from the City of Detroit
 - Business location, according to the City of Detroit's Planning Department or the City of Detroit's digital Zoning Portal, must operate within a commercial space and be properly zoned for their use.
- Eligibility and Ineligibility for business support programming and financial assistance by business type:
 - Eligible business types
 - ♣ For-profit Sole Proprietorships
 - ♣ General Partnerships
 - ♣ Limited Partnerships (LP)
 - ♣ Limited Liability Partnerships (LLP)
 - ♣ Corporations (Inc., Corp.)
 - ♣ Limited Liability Companies (LLC)
 - ♣ Low-profit Limited Liability Company (LC3)
 - ♣ Faith-based organizations, subject to 24 CFR § 570.200(j), participating in registered and licensed for-profit commercial activity
 - ♣ Independently owned businesses that participate in retailers' cooperatives are eligible to apply
 - ♣ Nonprofit enterprises that sell a product or service to the public or other companies. Product or service must have been sold for the last 30 years

- Ineligible
 - ♣ Past Detroit Legacy Business Project Grant Recipients
 - \$50,000 grant recipients are permanently ineligible for subsequent and all future \$50,000 and \$15,000 grants. They are ineligible for 24 months for future microgrant selection from the date of their initial grant selection
 - \$15,000 grant recipients are permanently ineligible for subsequent and all future \$50,000 and \$15,000 grants. They are ineligible for up to 12 months for future microgrant selection.
 - First-time Microgrant recipients are eligible for selection for all future financial assistance, including a second and final microgrant, as well as \$15,000, and \$50,000 grants
 - ♣ Charitable Non-Profits
 - ♣ Home-based businesses
 - ♣ Ecommerce businesses without a public commercial location
 - ♣ Franchisors & Franchises
 - ♣ Businesses headquartered outside of the city of Detroit

Allowable Financial Assistance Grant Uses - \$50,000 and \$15,000

- Product inventory, equipment & machinery, furniture, fixtures, and interior decor
- Software subscriptions (technology)
- Building repairs and renovations
- Façade improvement (signing and exterior beautification)
- Professional services
 - Logo (re)design, website design, publicity content creation, advertisement placement fees
 - Communications (including but not limited to marketing, advertising, publicity, and brand strategy)
 - Financial (including but not limited to debt consolidation and restructuring, fundraising, loan application assistance and filing, and Accounting and bookkeeping, and tax preparation)
 - Legal (including but not limited to trademarks, patent filings, ownership transfer, property acquisition)
 - Architectural and structural engineering
 - Business consulting (including but not limited to certification and permit filings, grant writing and submission, and process mapping)
 - Training and professional development

Allowable Financial Assistance Microgrant Uses - \$2,500 and \$5,000

- New Equipment & Hardware to scale product or Service
- Beautify the business - physical enhancements
- Internal & External Enhancements for the customer experience
- Improve business awareness
- Business operation upgrades
- Legal Services
- Landscaping and curb appeal improvements
- Taxes, Accounting, or Bookkeeping
- Other Technology upgrades

Disallowed uses - all grants:

- City taxes and delinquencies
- Federal taxes and delinquency
- State taxes and delinquencies (excluding sales taxes)
- Rent and rent stabilization
- Mortgage fees and interest
- Utilities (Water, Phone, Gas, Monthly Internet, Electric, and Waste Management fees)
 - Costs and Fees associated with the Installation of and Initial Connection to Internet are allowed
- Blight violations, Tickets, Fines, and other penalties
- Payroll and salary
- Debt-servicing
- Shareholder dividends or owner withdrawals
- Financial products (stocks, bonds, equities)
- Real estate property purchase
- Expenses incurred prior to DEGA grant approval
- Project costs outside or in excess of the proposed budget and awarded grant size

Grant Disbursements - \$15,000 and \$50,000 grants

From the date of grant approval, funds are available for up to one year

- Reimbursements Requirements
 - Payment Requestor must have a notarized authorization by the business owner or show proof of ownership
 - ♣ LARA and IRS registration matches photo ID

- Maximum of \$15,000 or \$50,000, as applicable
 - Must be a budgeted expense and part of proposed project
 - Must be an allowable use
 - A purchase receipt or paid invoice dated after grant approval
 - Bank statement that equals the purchase price on the receipt or paid invoice
 - Photo/video proof of the completed service/product
 - Signed acknowledgement of reimbursement check pickup/delivery
- Pre-Payment Requirements:
 - Payment Requestor must have a notarized authorization by the business owner or show proof of ownership
 - ♣ LARA and IRS registration matches photo ID
 - Maximum of \$7,500, unless an exemption is granted by DEGC staff
 - ♣ Previous pre-payment purchases must be verified before the approval of a subsequent pre-payments
 - Must be a budgeted expense and part of proposed project
 - Must be an allowable use
 - Present an official purchase invoice from a verified vendor
 - Show a paid post-purchase receipt
 - Provide photo/video proof of the completed service/product
 - Purchase may be subject to an in-person site visit

Grant Funds must be spent via check request within one year of grant reception

Grant Disbursements - \$2,500 and \$5,000 microgrants

- From the date of grant approval, funds are available for up to one year
- Grants are made to the business recipient on a prepayment basis – an itemized budget that contains accurate and correlating invoices or price quotes are required prior to the submission of a check request and a disbursement of funds
- Payment Requestor must have a notarized authorization by the business owner or show proof of ownership
 - LARA and IRS registration matches photo ID
- Must be a budgeted expense and part of proposed project
- Must be an allowable use
- Present an official purchase invoice from a verified vendor

- Show a paid post-purchase receipt
- Provide photo/video proof of the completed service/product
- Purchase may be subject to an in-person site visit

Grant Application Submissions (subject to change)

- Round 2 grant applications will open on August 25, 2025 at 11 am
- Round 2 Applications will close on October 6, 2024 at 8:00 am
- Round 2 Grant Recipients will be selected by November 3, 2025
- Awardees will be publicly announced on November 20, 2025
- Press Conference & Launch of Round 3 Grant Application on January 8, 2026
- Round 3 Grant Application Closes on January 26, 2026
- Round 3 Grant recipients selected March 2, 2026
- Round 3 Grant recipients notified March 5, 2026
- Grant Award Reception & Launch of Version 2.0 of Legacy Business Map Registry March 26, 2026

Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of Interest rules require that both the DEGA and recipients of Program awards be free of any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in the making of Program awards. As part of the Application each applicant is required to disclose all relevant facts concerning any past, present or currently planned interests, activities or relationships which may present an actual or perceived- Conflict of Interest. Conflict of Interest means, in general, that because of the applicant's other activities or relationships with persons or entities are in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to the Program, may obtain a financial interest or benefit from the Program, or have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement with respect to the Program, either for themselves or those with whom they have business or immediate family ties, the applicant may have an actual or perceived unfair competitive advantage. Each applicant shall submit a Conflict of Interest Statement with its application when required. It is recommended to contact the DEGA immediately if a conflict of interest is found, or appears to be present, so a course of action may be determined with minimal impact to applicant. If a conflict of interest exists, the application should contain a proposed Mitigation Plan. This Mitigation Plan shall be subject to the approval of the DEGA, and may be in addition to any other measures implemented by the DEGA to identify, manage, eliminate or mitigate conflicts of interest.

Freedom of Information Act

The DEGA is a nonprofit working with a public entity. Certain documents in the DEGA's possession may be subject to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Information submitted to the DEGA as part of the application process may be subject to disclosure under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) unless such information is otherwise determined to be exempt from disclosure. DEGA will not disclose any information it believes to be exempt under the FOIA but does not guarantee the confidentiality of an applicant's submissions and specifically does not warrant that the application and/or grant documents are exempted from disclosure under FOIA.

Disclaimer

The information contained herein is subject to the actual grant-award documents and the written terms and conditions which govern the program, as the same may be amended from time to time. DEGA reserves the right to make the final determination of any person's or organization's eligibility and/or qualifications for Program benefits, and to make allocation of program benefits as it may, in sole discretion deem appropriate. DEGA reserves the right to update these Program Guidelines in its sole discretion without notice or liability.