



Michael P. Galime  
Mayor

# CITY OF UTICA MICROENTERPRISE GRANT PROGRAM

## **Program Objectives**

The objective of the 2026-2027 City of Utica Microenterprise Grant Program (the “Program”) is to help small existing minority and/or women owned (MWBE) businesses or startup businesses provide new job opportunities, and ultimately broaden the tax base of the City of Utica. This Program will also incorporate a technical assistance and training component with HUD CDBG funding to make the applicants’ projects a reality. The 2026-2027 City of Utica Microenterprise Grant Program is designed to support MWBE microenterprises (at the time of application) with ten or fewer employees, counting the owner(s).

Technical assistance gained through the program will enhance the applicant’s chances for success in their project as well as open up financing opportunities not normally available through traditional lending channels.

## **Program Eligibility Criteria**

### Eligible Activities

- Provide assistance to small existing minority and/or women owned (MWBE) businesses;
- Must be located within the City of Utica;
- Support the Program objectives;
- Result in the creation of job(s) which are available to LMI persons as defined by HUD guidelines. If there will be no hiring of new employees, the owner must meet low- or moderate-income guidelines at the time of application to the Program;
- Purchase of capital assets such as machinery, equipment, inventory, working capital and soft costs (including entrepreneurial training); and
- Utilization of funds must be eligible pursuant to the guidelines governing the CDBG program and as amended.

### Ineligible Activities

- Speculation or real estate assistance for primarily ownership, sale or investment purposes;
- Currently (at time of application) or subsequently (within the period of the grant agreement) deemed illegal;
- Those businesses that are traditionally identified as “sin businesses,” such as golf courses, massage parlors, suntan facilities, racetracks, gambling facilities, or any store the principal business of which is the sale of alcoholic beverages or cannabis;
- Do not meet or further the Program objectives; and
- Deemed ineligible for assistance under the Small Business Act, as amended and further described in Chapter 1 of Title 13, Code of Federal Regulations, and in Chapter 1, Section 3 of the “Standard Operating Procedures” of the Small Business Administration.

### Eligible Applicants

- Must be or shall become a commercial enterprise with ten (10) or fewer employees (including the owner of the business). In the case where no jobs are to be created, the owner(s) must be low- or moderate-income persons as established by CDBG criteria at the time of closing;
- Must be a commercial enterprise which is minority or women owned;
- Must be a bona-fide registered United States Corporation or partnership or sole proprietorship, be able to repay if found in default of program objectives, and possess good character and reputation and be of legal age. An investigation of character shall be made from the best available source including, but not limited to, past and present creditors, employers, and other sources having knowledge of the applicant; and
- Applicant must present a reasonable likelihood for long-term viability based upon issues such as feasibility, marketability, management, competition, and capitalization;

### Employment Standards

- Meet the project requirements established by the agreements between the City of Utica and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to create jobs for low- or moderate-income persons;
- 51% of those jobs created are to be held, or made available, to low- or moderate-income (LMI) persons as set forth in the federal national objective;
- Forty (40) work hours or more per week will be considered as one (1) full-time job equivalent (FTE). Part-time positions may be combined to create FTE positions; for example, two (2) part-time jobs that total 40 hours a week or more will be viewed as one

FTE. However, BOTH part-time workers must be LMI for the combined FTE to be considered as LMI;

- At least ONE (1) FTE LMI job must be created. If the owner/operator of the microenterprise is LMI, that position will be counted as one FTE for purposes of the Program; and

### **Grant Assistance**

- Grant minimum           **\$5,000**
- Grant maximum         **\$15,000**

The fund will provide grants in the following manner:

- 1) Financing of capital assets (*such as buildings, machinery and equipment*);
- 2) Working capital; and
- 3) Grant recipient will provide a minimum of 10% cash equity in the project.

Business plan assistance offered by MVCC's thINCubator and is provided to all clients at no charge. The owner(s)/principal(s) of each recipient business are entitled to, but are not required to complete a training program consisting of the following elements.

- Developing a business plan
- Legal issues
- Taxes, recordkeeping, accounting
- Financing
- Marketing/advertising
- Employee issues

### **Program Marketing/Outreach**

- Release of program notification and application contact information to area media sources;
- Direct notification to all City of Utica Common Council Members and Oneida County Legislators within the City boundaries;
- Post information to City of Utica website;
- Collaborate with area partners such as the thINCubator, the Genesis Group, and local chambers of commerce to advertise the grant program;
- Program Delivery staff will make additional efforts to identify and encourage marginalized and/or disadvantaged populations to participate in the program. These specific outreach efforts will include reaching out to various nonprofit partners working within the marginalized communities to inform any clients who are MWBE business owners to consider the grant program. This may include in-person events to explain the program to potential applicants.

- Potential partner organizations include:
  - Utica Veterans Outreach Center
  - Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (dba “The Center”)
  - Women’s Business Center of New York State
  - Junior Frontiers Alumni Impact Collective
  - Mohawk Valley Latino Association

## **Program & Grant Administration**

### Application Processing

For the project request to be processed all information must be included, complete and additional information may be requested. The participation in a technical assistance, training and mentoring effort will be required. The application will be processed by City of Utica staff as follows:

1. Potential applicant calls the City of Utica Urban & Economic Development staff and/or completes an eligibility questionnaire to determine if eligible for the program.
2. If eligible, the applicant may download the application form from the website, or call the City of Utica Urban & Economic Development office, to receive the application packet, document checklist and program guidelines by email.
3. Review the submitted application for completeness including development and completion of approved business plan.
4. Review for eligibility to grant guidelines.
5. Determine economic feasibility and risk assessment.
6. If necessary, additional information will be requested from the applicant.

### Application Review & Approval

Applications will be accepted from **February 26<sup>th</sup>** to **April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026**. Staff will rank and review applications and make their decision by **May 4<sup>th</sup>**. Each applicant will be notified of the decision in a timely manner both verbally and in writing.

The City of Utica has the ability to disapprove a grant based upon incompleteness or ineligibility to program criteria as set forth in this program design plan and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations.

## Review Guidelines

In reviewing an application, the following factors will be considered, in addition to other terms set forth in this document:

1. Appropriateness of Assistance – Feasibility of the proposed project must be contingent upon receipt of funds under this program.
2. Job Creation – Each applicant must demonstrate the total number of permanent new jobs created or existing jobs retained by the proposed project. Particular emphasis and priority will be given to those projects which create the highest number of permanent job opportunities for low- or moderate-income City of Utica residents.
3. Location of Business – Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a “first-come, first served” basis with no geographical distinction as long as they meet the program criteria.
4. Relocation Penalty – Any grantee who chooses to move its company from the City of Utica to another municipality prior to the end of the grant period will be subject to complete repayment of the grant at the time of the decision to relocate.

## Grant Documentation

- A Loan Agreement, Promissory Note and Security Agreement will be provided detailing the approved grant, terms, requirements, conditions and next steps to be taken to close a grant award.
- Grant closing will be carried out by the City of Utica’s Department of Urban and Economic Development Staff once all conditions are met and documents are provided by the grantee. Closing documents will include a grant agreement and all other appropriate documents.
- Grant disbursement will comply with terms meeting, grant closing and related documents, evidence that all equity is committed.

Program funds will be administered through the City of Utica Urban & Economic Development (UED) Office.

UED staff will conduct an annual financial review of all grantees. The annual financial review will ensure that all conditions, covenants and terms of the grant are complied with. The annual review will also include an assessment of need for modified or on-going technical assistance and training.

In the case where default (defined as failure to comply with program guidelines) occurs the grantee will be notified in 30 days. A determination will be made if further information is required and if further technical assistance and support is required.

## **Application Submittal**

In order to be considered for a grant, applicants must submit one (1) electronic copy in PDF format and/or one (1) hard copy of your proposal and all required attachments by **12:00pm (noon)** on **Friday, April 3, 2026** to:

**Jack N. Spaeth**

Economic Development Program Specialist

City of Utica

Department of Urban and Economic Development

1 Kennedy Plaza, Utica, NY 13502

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