

BUSINESS MICRO-GRANTS APPLICATION INFORMATION

The Market Entry Fund

Enabling Small Businesses in Local Food | Ag

INSTRUCTIONS: The application for a microgrant is a simple fillable PDF, provided below, and asks you to provide your business information, along with a short narrative to three specific questions. Your final and completed application should be about 3-4 pages (excluding this page). Submit your completed PDF application to: info@marketentryfund.org, **no later than TUESDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2021, at 5 pm.**

DISCLAIMER: An application to this process does not guarantee funds to an applicant. We reserve the right to cancel this solicitation and program at any stage of the process should we deem it necessary under our charitable mission and operations. All costs incurred in applying to this opportunity is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

ABOUT THE MICRO-GRANTS PROGRAM

The Micro-Grants Program is provided by the Market Entry Fund and supports micro food businesses that are owned by entrepreneurs of color, women, veterans and/or individuals demonstrating socio-economic barriers to equitable participation in business – especially the packaged food industry. Micro-grants range from \$500 to \$5000, one-time award. To minimize the burden on applicants in our approach to allocating resources, especially in the communities where resources are already limited, we work hard to adhere to these principles: simple and user-friendly; open and responsive to business/community needs; *do the most good* or have the most impact on the business; and steward well the funds from our donors.

The use for micro-grants is flexible and open – but we are looking for proposals that have specific and identified uses (for a unique challenge in the industry for the businesses, or a one-time business opportunity) that can propel the business to the next level – “*whatever that next level*” may mean for the business. However, uses are generally not for activities that are typical and ongoing for the business, such as: ongoing staffing expenses, rent, branding/marketing; general planning, coaching, and mentoring; bookkeeping and other typical/general business activities.

ABOUT THE MARKET ENTRY FUND:

Market Entry Fund (MEF) is a nonprofit that supports CPG food startups in Minnesota. Our mission is to enable equitable participation in the marketplace by marginalized and underrepresented entrepreneurs, who are in food production and manufacturing. MEF does this through advocacy, business and technical supports, along with micro-grants. Food business is complex - heavily regulated across government levels and required deep and direct technical and industry specific support services. Noticeably, this is an industry where people of color and women entrepreneurs enter business.

Our strategic services and supports often fill gaps in the existing ecosystem and include:

Market Support: enables emerging businesses to go to market with their food/beverage products. Through co-retailing, a supportive grocery environment, our store partner provides retail services and transactions for makers and gives them 100% of proceeds from their food sales. (See our Co-Retail Membership Awards Program).

Micro-Grants: provides cost-sharing opportunities and micro-grants to micro food manufacturing businesses to get them to their next business milestone. We seek to grant to businesses where the “*funding, small as it may be, can have the deepest and most tangible impact/return.*” (Grant Cycle Opens Now – see application below).

Connections: makes ongoing strategic and impactful referrals to other organizations in the ecosystem for the community of manufacturers we work with.

APPLICATION FOR A BUSINESS MICRO-GRANT

[Provide Your Logo Here]

Submission Date: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

Upload Logo Here

Business Information

Business (Legal Name): _____ EIN: _____

Founder/Owner First and Last Name: _____

Business Address: _____

(Where mail can be received for the business.)

Product Category: _____

(Select the best description your product.)

How much are you requesting? _____ *(Grant awards range between \$500 - \$5000)*

Business Narrative

1. Tell us about your business: *what has been your business experience? what is the story behind your business? what are the opportunities and challenges?* **(Business Storytelling - 20 points)**

2. Tell us what you would do with the grant money, if awarded. Be sure to provide clear context for how you plan to spend the grant and how that aligns with the business experience that have described above).

(Strategic Use of Revenue: 30 points)

3. How does spending the grant money the way you described above help your business break through an issue or a barrier that you are facing in your business? ***(Breakthrough (or Impact) for Your Business: 50 points)***