

Moore County Small Business Impact Grant GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORM – 2026

Presented by



In partnership with



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Award Announcement: On or before March 30, 2026
- Grant Amount: \$500 - \$5,000 (in increments of \$500)
- Project Completion Deadline: December 1, 2026
- Reimbursement-Based: Eligible expenses must be paid before reimbursement
- Limit: One application per business per grant cycle

Program Overview

The Moore County Small Business Impact Grant Program, funded by a \$25,000 grant from Duke Energy Foundation and administered by Moore County Economic Development Partnership (MCEDP), provides reimbursement-based microgrants ranging from **\$500 to \$5,000** to help small businesses in Moore County strengthen their operations and contribute to local economic vitality. Grant funds can be reimbursed for storefront improvements, equipment purchases, technology upgrades, inventory purchases, and other strategic investments that enhance business sustainability, create jobs, and revitalize commercial properties throughout Moore County.

A selection committee will review and score all grant applications, select the award recipients, and MCEDP will issue the award funds. Funds will be disbursed in amounts from \$500 - \$5,000, in increments of \$500.

Eligibility Requirements

- Must have a current storefront presence located in Moore County that is open and operating
- Limited to **retail, restaurant, or service-based** businesses
- Maximum of **50 total (part-time & full-time) employees total**
- Locally owned and independently operated; legally incorporated (**Tax ID required**)

Eligible Expenses

Grant funds may be used for:

1. **Interior Improvements & Fixtures** – Enhancements to physical space that improve customer experience or improve operational efficiency.
2. **Storefront Beautification & Exterior Renovations** - Enhancements to building appearance including exterior paint, awnings, signage, or lighting (must comply with local zoning).

3. **Equipment Purchases** - Commercial equipment such as kitchen appliances, retail displays, or furniture.
4. **Technology Upgrades** - POS systems, computers, software, cybersecurity tools.
5. **Strategic Inventory Purchases** - Inventory for expansion, new product lines, or seasonal demand.
6. **Marketing & Advertising Materials** - Branding assets, print ads, digital marketing campaigns.
7. **Website Development & E-Commerce** - Website design, hosting, and online sales functionality.
8. **Health & Safety Upgrades** - Improvements for workplace safety and compliance.
9. **Accessibility Improvements** – ADA-compliant modifications for customers and employees.
10. **Workforce Development Initiatives** - Programs supporting workforce needs (e.g., recruiter collaboration, job listing fees, training tuition)

Ineligible Expenses

Grant funds **cannot** be used for:

1. Salaries, payroll, or incentive pay
2. Rent or Mortgage
3. Utilities

Priority Business Focus

The Moore County Small Business Impact Grant serves all eligible businesses located within Moore County. To strengthen economic opportunity and support diverse business growth, 60% of grant funds are prioritized for businesses in the more underserved markets within the County, or communities with limited commercial activity and fewer business options for residents. These are often smaller towns and rural areas that would benefit from additional business investment and expanded access to goods and services. These communities include Robbins, Vass, Pinebluff, Cameron, Carthage, and Taylortown. Additionally, businesses that are minority-owned, women-owned, or veteran-owned (including service-disabled veterans) may receive bonus points during the application review process.

Application Submission Deadline

Applications must be postmarked or received by Moore County Economic Development Partnership by 3:00 PM, Friday, February 27, 2026.

In Person: 15 Chinquapin Road, 2nd Floor, Pinehurst, NC 28374.

By Mail: PO Box 5885, Pinehurst, NC 28370.

Moore County Small Business Impact Grant

APPLICATION - 2026

SECTION 1: BUSINESS INFORMATION

Legal Business Name:

DBA/Trade Name (if different):

Federal Tax ID (EIN):

Business Type:

☐ Retail

☐ Restaurant

☐ Service-Based

Other/Description:

Business Description (Describe the nature of your business and products/services offered):

Physical Business Address (Moore County storefront location):

Street:

City:

ZIP:

Mailing Address (if different from business address):

Business Phone:

Business Email:

Website (if applicable):

Year Business Established:

Do you have more than one storefront location in Moore County?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify other location(s):

Number of Employees (Must not exceed 50 total employees):

Full-Time:

Part-Time:

Total:

SECTION 2: OWNER/CONTACT INFORMATION

Owner/Authorized Representative Name:

Title/Position:

Contact Phone:

Contact Email:

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Title/Summary (brief description in 1-2 sentences):

B. Detailed Project Description (Please describe what you plan to do with the grant funds.

- Include specific details about improvements, equipment, technology, inventory, or other investments. Attach additional pages if needed.):

C. Primary Eligible Expense Category (check one):

- ☐ Interior Improvements and Fixtures
- ☐ Storefront Beautification and Exterior Renovations
- ☐ Equipment Purchases
- ☐ Technology Upgrades (e.g. POS systems, computers, software, etc.)
- ☐ Strategic Inventory Purchases (e.g. inventory for expansion, new product lines, etc.)
- ☐ Marketing and Advertising Materials
- ☐ Website Development and E-Commerce Platforms
- ☐ Health and Safety Upgrades
- ☐ Accessibility Improvements
- ☐ Workforce Development Initiatives (e.g. training, recruiter collaboration, etc.)

D. Expected Impact (How will this project benefit your business, customers, and/or the Moore County community?):

E. Will this project result in job creation and/or retention?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe and specify number of jobs to be created and/or retained:

SECTION 4: PROJECT BUDGET & TIMELINE

A. Total Project Budget (itemized breakdown of all costs):

Item/Expense Description	Vendor/Supplier (if known)	Cost
TOTAL PROJECT COST:		

Note: Please manually calculate and enter the total cost in the TOTAL PROJECT COST field above.

B. Grant Amount Requested: \$ (minimum \$500, maximum \$5,000 in increments of \$500)

C. Other Funding Sources, if applicable (Note: No matching funds are required for this grant):

☐ Business funds ☐ Loan ☐ Other grant ☐ None

Amount from other sources: \$

D. Project Timeline (Note: All projects must be completed by December 1, 2026):

Anticipated Project Start Date:

Anticipated Project Completion Date:

SECTION 5: REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

(Submit the following documents with your application):

Required for All Applicants:

- ☐ Completed W-9 Form or proof of Federal Tax ID
- ☐ Proof of business location in Moore County (copy of: lease agreement, deed, utility bill, or business license)
- ☐ Proof of business operations (copy of: business license, articles of incorporation, or similar)
- ☐ At least two (2) quotes or estimates for expenses over \$1,000

Additional Documentation (if applicable to your project):

- ☐ Current photos of space/storefront (for improvement/renovation projects)
- ☐ Building permits or zoning approvals (if obtained and/or required for your project)
- ☐ Vendor/contractor specifications or proposals
- ☐ Marketing plan or website mockups (for marketing/website projects)
- ☐ Approval authorization by property owner for leasehold improvements
- ☐ Other supporting documentation:

SECTION 6: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Please review to strengthen your application:

Criteria	Points	Evaluation Factors
Demonstrated Business Need	25	Clear articulation of need for funding
Clarity and Feasibility of Project Plan	10	Well-defined, realistic project approach
Potential Impact on Business Success	30	Revenue growth, business sustainability, job creation/retention
Community Benefit	25	Downtown and area revitalization, filling market gaps with new products/services, improving customer access/experience
Quality and Completeness of Application	10	Complete documentation, clear responses, professional presentation
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS:	100	
BUSINESS BONUS POINTS		Up to 25 additional points
Minority-Owned Business	+5 points	At least 51% minority ownership
Women-Owned Business	+5 points	At least 51% women ownership
Veteran-Owned Business (including Service-Disabled)	+5 points	At least 51% veteran or service-disabled veteran ownership
Business in Underserved Market Community	+10 points	Robbins, Vass, Pinebluff, Carthage, Cameron, Taylortown
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE SCORE	125	Base (100) + Maximum Bonus (25)

Minimum Score for Award: Applications must score at least 60 points (out of 100) to be eligible for funding

Note: Businesses may qualify for multiple bonus point categories (maximum 25 total bonus points). Bonus points increase competitiveness, but base score must meet the 60-point minimum threshold.

SECTION 7: CERTIFICATIONS AND SIGNATURES

Minority-Owned Business Status

I certify that I/the owner(s) of this business identify as a member of the following underserved community(es) (check all that apply):

- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Two or more races
- ☐ Woman-owned business

Veteran-Owned Business Status

- ☐ Veteran-owned business (including service-disabled veterans)

Applicant Certification

By signing below, I certify that:

- All information provided in this application is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- My business meets all eligibility requirements including having a current storefront presence in Moore County, being locally owned and independently operated, having 50 or fewer employees, and being legally incorporated.
- I understand this is a reimbursement-based grant and that eligible expenses must be paid in full before reimbursement will be issued.
- I agree to complete the project and submit required progress and final reports to Moore County Economic Development Partnership by December 1, 2026.
- I understand that grant funds cannot be used for salaries, payroll, incentive pay, rent, mortgage, or utility expenses.
- I will provide receipts, invoices, copies of cancelled checks, and other documentation as required for reimbursement.
- I authorize Moore County Economic Development Partnership and the selection committee to verify information provided in this application.
- I agree to allow MCEDP and Duke Energy Foundation to use photos and information about this project for promotional purposes.
- I understand that providing false or misleading information may result in disqualification of this application, denial of grant funds, and/or requirement to return any funds already disbursed.
- I understand that submitting an application does not guarantee funding.

Signature of Owner/Authorized Representative

Printed Name

Title

Date

APPLICATION SUBMISSION & TIMELINE

Deadline: Applications must be received by 3:00 PM, Friday, February 27, 2026.

Submission Options:

Method	Address	Deadline Requirement
In Person	Moore County Economic Development Partnership 15 Chinquapin Road, 2nd Floor Pinehurst, NC Call ahead to confirm office hours.	Must be received by 3:00 PM on February 27, 2026
By Mail	Moore County Economic Development Partnership PO Box 5885 Pinehurst, NC 28370	Must be postmarked by February 27, 2026

Awards will be announced on or before March 30, 2026. Funds must be disbursed to the award recipients by December 31, 2026.

Questions?

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