

## January 2023

Jan 9, 2023 - Neva Lee's submitted application for newly announced Small Business Support Funding Reimbursement Grant

Sends email and docs to Julie Reinhardt/DLI: "Hey Julie!

I hope this is right.

Please let me know when you've had time to review if anything else is needed.

Thank you - appreciate it!!

Jan 10, 2023 - Email reply from Julie Reinhardt/DLI : "I'm forwarding this over to [REDACTED]...she'll double check that everything is submitted and then it will go to the review committee! You guys were ready!!

Neva Lee's reply "thanks - i know i forgot the W9. whoops. lol. yeah, we are ready!

we got plans and moves we've been wanting to make since making the move.

And i didn't know how much the classes would really be taking off. i have waiting lists!

:)

Jan 20, 2023 - Downtown Lansing Inc. (DLI) / Julie Reinhardt. requests, per email, to make edits to our application and submit more documents in addition to what was required by the initial application.

"We need you to edit your application and resubmit it to me. Take out the \$3000 in construction for the coffee shop and put in \$3000 in rent payments. Send me a copy of your lease. Send me a copy of your P&L for 1/1/22-12/31/22. Send me a print outs of each item you are going to purchase (like a picture with cost from Amazon) as your "third party". If you can get all this to me by Monday morning I can push your app to the review committee."

Jan 20, 2023 - Neva Lee's submitted requested information/documents to DLI/Julie

Jan 2023 - Many emails between Neva Lee's and DLI/Julie with questions on grant application, requests of additional information and docs to submit/resubmit for grant approval.

## **February 2023**

**Feb 15, 2023** - DLI/Julie requested more information based on feedback from the Grant Review Team. Requests included utility bills, our lease, Profit and Loss statements for 2022 with expense breakdowns. She also asked to stop by the following day to discuss further.

**Feb 2023** - During an in-person conversation with DLI/Julie

She commented that everyone over at the office had a good laugh at our application. Saying “you know how when you tell someone how to make a peanut butter sandwich but everyone does it differently?” in regards to her instructions on how to submit photos of purchases we intend to make. She then told us how to redo it and asked us to resend it to her. We were worried about other people, outside of who should be seeing our business, personal and financial documents and laughing / joking at our expense and how unprofessional it is.

**Feb 24, 2023** - Neva Lee’s email to DLI/Julie.

“Hey Julie -

I just wanted to follow up with ya!

When you were in you said you thought we had everything submitted so I wanted to make sure this is the case, as to hopefully not extend our submission out any longer.

I had thought we were to be in the first round and already under review based on previous emails - but then additional items popped up as needed beyond the original checklist to submit.

So, in order to for sure get in this round (a round) - I am following up in hopes to squash further delay... lol

## **March 2023**

**March 17, 2023** - Neva Lee’s received SBSG award packet, via email, including an award letter, DLI’s instructions on the reimbursement process detailing that recipients would reimbursement payments within 30 days of submitting receipts; in addition, DLI required grantees to wait for the official public release of SBSG grantees before the grantees could post to their respective media outlets.

## **April 2023**

**April 6, 2023** - Neva Lee's submits March receipts to DLI/Julie, via email, for reimbursement.

Neva Lee's email to Julie/DLI : "If there's anything else we need to know to submit these or other rules please let us know asap."

Julie's reply: " So far so good...we are going to create a "reimbursement letter" that will keep you up to date on your disbursements so you always know where you are after each disbursement. I'll update you if the grant people have any questions."

**April 10, 2023** - Email from DLI/Julie to Neva Lee's

DLI stated that a receipt was denied due to funds being spent before the award letter date (March 17). Two issues arose: (1) Neva Lee's receipt was from March 18 and (2) the attached award letter document that DLI attached as verification of Neva Lee's awards, was incorrect. It was for a different downtown businesses award letter, and not the Neva Lee's receipt in question. Email from Julie/DLI : "Faun,

I ran this invoice through the receipts review committee today and they were unable to approve it because the dates were from before the grant was awarded The money has to be spend after March 17<sup>th</sup> which is your award date. I am happy to meet with you to go over the process more fully if it would help clarify the process. I have attached your award letter again that shows the categories and amounts as well."

Neva Lee's Reply : "Hey Julie!

I got the wrong attachment so I'm not sure which receipt it was for but I also may have included the wrong one, too! Lol We're only human 😊"

**April 2023** - DLI delivered a reimbursement check for March 20023 in an incorrect amount due to DLI accounting/review error

## **May 2023**

**May 4, 2023** - Neva Lee's submitted April 2023 reimbursement request with receipts to DLI/Julie, via a personal SBSG folder located on Google Drive

**May 10, 2023** - Neva Lee's emails Julie/DLI : Hey Julie - I just wanted to pop in to see about March receipts that didn't count? I never got the details on which one you were referring to. We ended up with Novel Concept's award letter as the attachment.

**May 22, 2023** - Email from Cathleen/DLI in regards to incorrect reimbursement check : "Thank you for forwarding all of these on. Looking really quickly at the messages below, Julie is correct in saying that anything that was spent before you received the award letter, is unfortunately not an eligible expense based on State and Federal requirements. The state

will just not allow us to reimburse any expenses that were paid before the grant was awarded. I'm sorry. But, everything paid for the day of the award letter, or later can be submitted!"

May 22, 2023 : Neva Lee's to Cathleen: "Thanks Cathleen! For your time :)"

The missing receipt/one that didn't qualify was for March.

Our award letter was for March 17.

We turned in 3 with dates of

March 18

March 24

March 26

So, that's where I was curious which one.

May 22, 2023 - Neva Lee's notified DLI/Julie by email of a PII issue. Neva Lee's shared their google folder of their financial documents with DLI/Julie. On this date, while reviewing their folder for a missing receipt, several other downtown small business owner's/SBSG grantees' financial records and documents were discovered inside the Neva Lee's folder they created to share with Julie. Neva Lee's conveyed concern that theirs and the other small businesses/merchants records not be accessible to one another or anyone else. "Hey Julie -

Just wanted to give you a heads up. I went into my google drive folder (April invoices grant) that i had shared with you w/our receipts that wouldn't fit in an email. I was looking for one and i saw a file "██████████" and i was like that doesn't ring a bell, what did i order from that company? so i clicked on it and saw it was for the new place downtown. It was all their info. I then scrolled through and noticed that the folder contains many other businesses receipts too. I don't know if they all have access to that drive w/all that information in it or not - like i do? But i hope not. i wouldn't want people being able to peep all those important docs and info. I did open that one but it was before i realized what it all was. thanks!"

May 22, 2023 - At Neva Lee's request, has an in-person meeting with Cathleen Edgerly, Executive Director, DLI. to discuss overall grant situation, and remaining balance owed, in additions to no-show appointments, lack of response or communication, among other issues

May 23, 2023 - Julie replies to Neva Lee's regarding financial documents "mishap"

"I look into it...thank you for the heads up. I will also be sure other records did not get combined as well in the download process.

Thanks for lookin out!

May 24, 2023 - Neva Lee's email to Cathleen regarding missed/inaccurate payments of SBSG

May 24, 2023 - Email from Cathleen/DLI : "Good morning!

Thank you for your patience as I looked into the receipts and dates you sent me.

It appears that stating there was missing receipt/ineligible expense was a mistake on our end. We've corrected it and you should be receiving the check in the amount I shared with you the other day, hand delivered sometime tomorrow

Also, for the March payments owed- we are rectifying this in the next check run so you should have all reimbursements by end of next week.

Again, I am so sorry for the mix-up on our end and the frustration we caused.

May 25, 2023

Through no fault or action of the flower shop, and in light of recent actions of DLI, the support of SBGF funding for a business that was a direct competition business within a small area was of considerable concern on several levels. Neva Lee's was also just awarded funding within the SBSG to purchase a floral cooler to start selling flowers, prior to the addition of the flower shop coming to downtown.

\* - Neva Lee's emails Julie regarding spending of awarded reimbursement federal grant funds -

"Also, i wanted to make sure that since there is a flower shop now coming downtown a block or so away, and that we were awarded \$2k for the floral cooler prior to us knowing that - and we don't want to be competing/cross over with 2 places so close to each other trying to sell both plants and flowers ... we can still use that awarded \$2k in another category? I know initially you said when we turned in our application it was estimated amounts for each category, but that we could go under or over as long as we are staying within our grant."

Julie Replies- "The cooler expense would have fallen under Inventory so if you no longer want to purchase one you would need to spend those funds on other inventory."

May 25, 2023 - Per financial update from DLI/Julie:

Julie's financial records of Neva Lee's SBFG grant spending amounts were incorrect; Neva Lee's corrected the amounts and returned to DLI/Julie for update.

## June 2023

June 18, 2023 - Per financial update from DLI/Julie: Julie's financial records of Neva Lee's SBFG grant spending amounts were incorrect; Neva Lee's corrected the amounts and returned to DLI/Julie for update.

## July 2023

July 11, 2023 - Per financial update from DLI/Julie: Julie's financial records of Neva Lee's SBFG grant spending amounts were incorrect; Neva Lee's corrected the amounts and returned to DLI/Julie for update.

July 31, 2023 - Neva Lee's via email to DLI/Julie submitted final SBSG reimbursement receipts for August reimbursement

## September 2023

Sept 1, 2023 - Neva Lee's emailed DLI/Julie for a status on final past due SBSG reimbursement payment as it is late.

“Hey Julie - Popping in to see about the ETA on the last check for July's spending.”

Sep 3, 2023 - DLI/Julie replied to email

“Faun and Luke,

We are in a holding pattern right now until we address a few things with the Grant Review committee (internal reporting issues...nothing related to your specific reimbursement request.) We are hoping to get things resolved this week and checks submitted for next week.

That being said...I may be emailing for additional information related to reimbursement requests in the past (cancelled checks, bank statements, etc.), as the review committee reviews previous months. I'll reach out if I need any further documentation.”

Sep 23, 2023 - Neva Lee's email to DLI/Julie re: past due SBSG payment

“Hello, Just wanted to circle back around to this and see what the progress/status is on the final grant payment?”

Sep 23, 2023 - Email response from DLI/Julie

“All checks should be dispersed by October 5 at the latest...sorry about the delay.”

### **October 2023**

Oct 5, 2023 - Neva Lee's email to DLI/Cathleen/Julie to follow up on final past due reimbursement check

“Hello Julie and Cathleen,

I am circling back around to our final check being dispersed by Oct 5th (today).

I think that puts us way over the 30 day reimbursement timeline, with no updates unless I have reached out, if i am correct?

I will be leaving the shop at some point to prepare for a class tonight, but Luke will be here in my absence until I return.

Please feel free to drop it by at anytime today. I would consider this an urgent request, with all things considered.”

Oct 9, 2023 - Email from DLI/Julie emails to say final payments should be disbursed after additional review, within the next 10 days, and to request more receipts for review

“I went back through your July submission and, per their current review process, they will have questions on the following receipts. This is a different arm of the review team and has not slowed down your check process...but I know they will be requiring the below information. Please submit it to me once it is gathered.”

Oct 9, 2023 - Neva Lee's supplies requested information to DLI/Julie

Oct 18, 2023 - Final SBSG reimbursement check was delivered by a DLI employee with the comment “Here's your gift, does it look accurate?” and as they left they said, “Enjoy your gift”