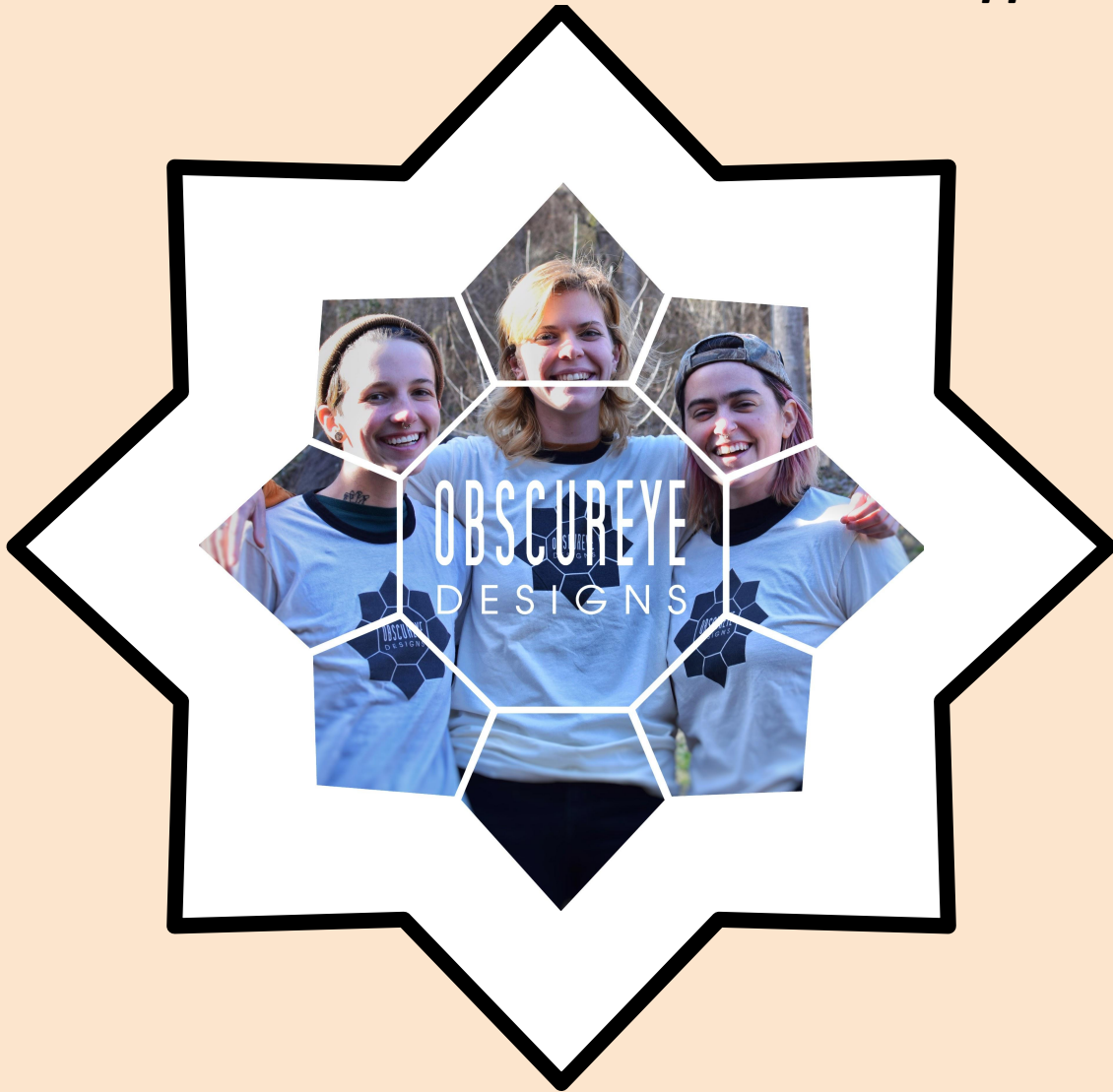


OBSCUREYE DESIGNS LLC

Mastercard Main Street Love Small Business Grant Application



Obscureye Designs LLC is a small, non-hierarchical woodworking collective based in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Our entirely queer and trans team designs and manufactures custom jewelry displays for piercing studios.



www.ObscureyeDesigns.com



[@obscureye_designs](https://www.instagram.com/obscureye_designs)



ObscureyeMakes@gmail.com

OUR TEAM

CK WALKER (THEY/THEM)



Role: designing displays, client interaction, social media, and manufacturing.

About: CK is a long-time body modification, art, and woodworking enthusiast. As a 1st generation college graduate from rural Tennessee, they are thrilled to have created a business that allows them to provide for themselves, as well as their community members. Every day they wake up grateful to be a part of this team.

EMILY TIERNEY (SHE/HER)



Role: accounting/bookkeeping, CNC programming, engraving, and manufacturing

About: Emily is our resident jack-of-all trades, with experience in farming, veterinary care, healthcare, and more. She has an intense passion for mutual aid and community-centered living, and loves being a part of a company that focuses on being an active participant in its local community.

LEE WILLIAMS (THEY/THEM)



Role: purchasing, shipping, manufacturing

About: Lee is a piercing and tattoo enthusiast with an extensive background in sustainability and recycling. Their love for plants and animals led them to a degree in conservation biology, and a passion for working methodically with organic materials.

OUR MODEL

NON-HIERARCHICAL

Notice there are no titles listed above? That's because all members of Obscureye, regardless of role, receive **equal compensation** for their time and labor, and actively participate in the idea sharing and decision making process. Creative control, as well as marketing and financial choices, are agreed upon by all involved.

Obscureye actively works against hiring bias and workplace discrimination by being a place of work where **all folks can be themselves without worry of unfair treatment**. Our entirely LGBTQ+ team works to make opportunities for employment available to gender-non conforming individuals in our community.

QUEER OWNED, QUEER OPERATED

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED

Obscureye believes in the responsibility of businesses to participate in the local economy, and **give back to their community**. We locally-source as much of our supplies and lumber as we can, and contribute monthly to fundraisers and programs in the Asheville area.

In 2020, we donated approximately 15% of our net income to local fundraisers.

COMPANY WINS

SERVING A NICHE NEED

Our success and viability is mostly due to our discovery of a niche market. As piercing becomes more popular, studios are constantly upgrading their jewelry inventory. Our displays have been proven to increase jewelry sales, which are the main revenue source for studios. The skill involved to produce quality displays also ensures we can not easily be replicated.

FIRST YEAR SUCCESS

From our first year in business, to our third, Obscureye has never ended a year without profit, a rare feat for new small businesses.

Our displays are in most major studios in the United States, and we have also reached our third year with 100% 5-star reviews, due to our exceptional product and impeccable customer service.



TOPLINE STATS

NET INCOME 2019: \$71,017.76

NET INCOME 2020: \$66,133.25

COVID-19

Sales Comparison 2019 vs. 2020



ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCING (APP) CONFERENCE: CANCELLED

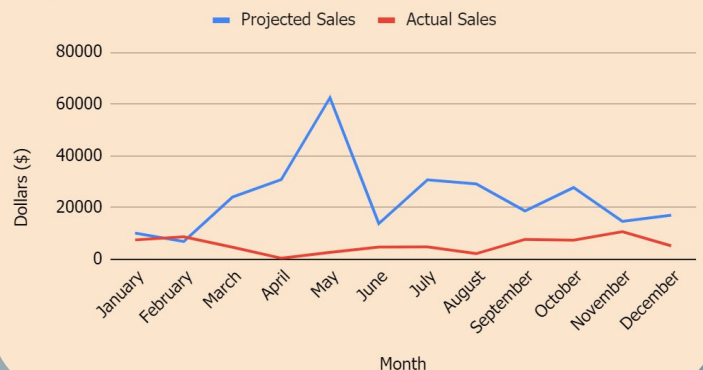
The largest impact of Covid-19 on our business has been the cancellation of the APP conference. A week-long exposition for companies in the piercing industry, this conference is attended by piercers from all over the world, and is where we accumulated HALF of our gross income for 2019, as can be seen by the spike in the graph to the left, in the month of May. With the APP conference being cancelled in 2020, and likely 2021, we stand to lose upwards of \$100,000, based on our projected growth.

LOW SALES DUE TO SHUTDOWN OF PIERCING STUDIOS:

As a business that sells exclusively to piercing studios, our ability to function depends entirely on those studios remaining open.

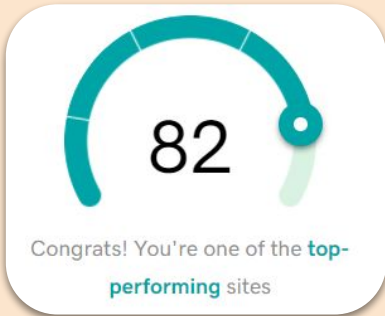
Studios all over the country are losing revenue due to shutdowns. This means they have less expendable income to purchase our displays, and our sales have been greatly affected. The graph to the right shows our expected sales growth for the year 2020, based on a comparison of sales in January and February in 2019 vs. 2020 (before COVID shutdowns). As the graph demonstrates, our actual sales in 2020 were substantially lower than projected.

Projected vs. Actual Sales



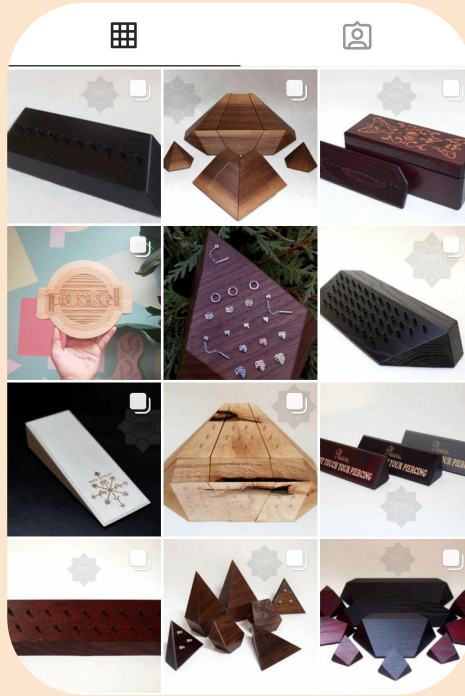
ONLINE PRESENCE

APART FROM THE ANNUAL APP EXPOSITION, OBSCUREYE OPERATES 100% ONLINE.



WEBSITE:

Our website contains a plethora of information about our products, our team, and instructions for ordering. It is also home to our webstore, stocked with ready-to-ship inventory. We typically stay within the top performing 75-95% of GoDaddy sites.



Obscureye Designs

100% recommend

Based on the opinion of 8 people

INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK:

Our social media is our primary form of marketing and client acquisition/engagement. We are heavily active on Instagram in particular, ideally posting at least 3 times per week. Currently, 100% of our clients find us via Instagram, or by word of mouth from fellow industry professionals

DIGITAL GOALS

BEING AN ALMOST ENTIRELY ONLINE BUSINESS, ALL GROWTH IS DIGITAL GROWTH!

WEBSITE: STREAMLINE CUSTOM ORDERS

-We hope to hire a web designer to create an ordering widget that allows clients to virtually design their own sets of our displays, including interactive visual examples of product choices. This will greatly cut down on time spent consulting with clients about their orders, and give clients more freedom to explore possibilities on their own. Basically: a digital sales team!

SOCIAL MEDIA: EXPAND ONLINE REACH/DIGITAL MARKETING

-Currently, our online reach is limited to clients in the US, Canada, and Australia. We'd like to expand our client base to piercing studios all across the globe. With the widget taking consulting time off of our hands, we'd have more time to curate social media posts, increase engagement through new types of posts, apps, and promotions, and work with the algorithm to reach international clientele.

WEBSTORE: PARTNERING WITH OTHER DISPLAY MAKERS

-We often have other display makers reach out admiring our online presence, and we'd like to begin talks of using our existing infrastructure to bring in others in the industry, ideally buying their products wholesale and selling them at retail through our site. This will increase both the products we have to offer and traffic to our site.

OBSTACLES

TIME, HANDS, COVID

Currently, despite Covid, we are receiving more orders than we can handle. Our two full-time employees, and one part-time employee, work together to accomplish every aspect of running this company, from hands-on manufacturing, to accounting, to social media. This has caused our turnaround time for orders to range from 4-to-7 weeks, which is not ideal for us, or our clients. Were it not for Covid and loss of APP conference profits, we would likely have the capital to bring our part-time employee to full time, as well as outsource certain tasks that bog us down, or are out of our skill range.



LOOKING FORWARD

IF WE WERE TO RECEIVE THIS GRANT

Because of the small size of our business (a micro-business, if you will), this grant money would likely go much further in our hands, than that of a multi-million dollar small business.

An influx of funds such as this grant offers would allow us to pay a full-time, living wage to all three of our employees, which in turn would catch us up on orders, make up for some of our lost sales, and bring us back to a working pace that will produce and sustain for ourselves the capital needed to keep our team running. It would also provide enough to hire a designer for our custom-order website feature, which would free up a massive amount of time that we could spend on production.

Lastly, because of our commitment to sharing our success with those around us, this grant would not only be an investment in us, but in our community as well. We succeed in tandem with our community.

