



DOWNTOWN NORTH WILKESBORO
PARTNERSHIP

SMALL BUSINESS

GROWTH

MICROGRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDE

Investing in local businesses. Strengthening our community.



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A PROGRAM OF THE DOWNTOWN NORTH WILKESBORO PARTNERSHIP

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Purpose

The Downtown North Wilkesboro Partnership (DNWP) created the Small Business Growth Microgrant Program to encourage investment in small businesses that strengthen North Wilkesboro's economy.

The program provides competitive grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for projects that improve business operations, increase productivity, expand capacity, create jobs, and position businesses for long-term success.

The program combines financial assistance with professional business development resources to ensure grant recipients have both the capital and knowledge needed to maximize their investment.

Program Goals

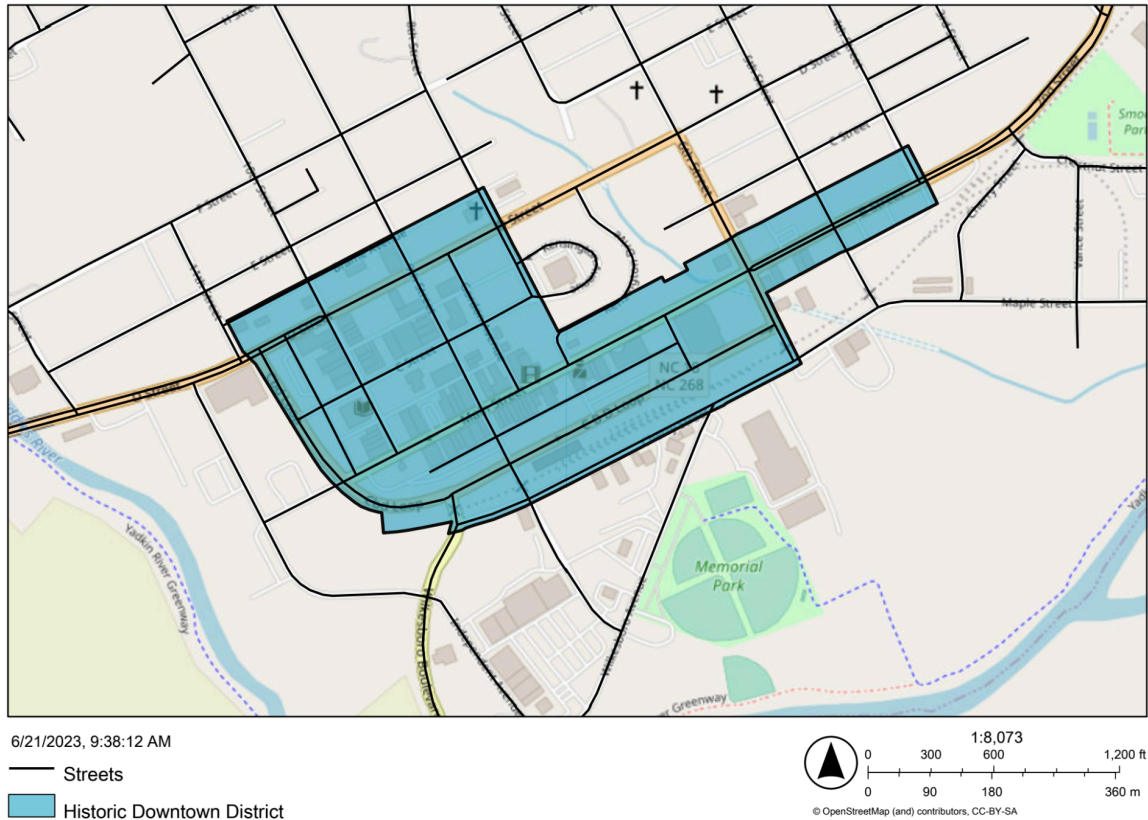
The Small Business Growth Microgrant Program seeks to:

- Encourage business growth
- Increase private investment
- Create and retain jobs
- Modernize small business operations
- Increase entrepreneurship
- Strengthen downtown businesses
- Improve customer experiences
- Increase economic opportunity
- Support long-term business sustainability

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are those whose brick-and-mortar business is located in Downtown North Wilkesboro (see map below), has fewer than 100 employees, is for-profit, and is current on all Town and County taxes. Priority may be given to businesses creating jobs, retail and restaurant businesses, businesses expanding operations, businesses filling market gaps, and businesses investing in vacant buildings.

Downtown North Wilkesboro's Historic District



Examples of eligible business development activities include:

- Equipment, including computers and POS systems.
- Technology, including website development, e-commerce, and software.
- Inventory, including new product lines, seasonal inventory, and raw materials.
- Building improvements, including accessibility improvements, storefront improvements, customer seating, display fixtures, and signage.
- Business expansion, including packaging equipment, workstations, and customer experience improvements.
- Employee training to expand offerings or services.

Ineligible expenses include: payroll, rent, utilities, debt, taxes, real estate purchases, vehicles, general operating expenses, entertainment, political activities, and charitable donations. Grant funds cannot reimburse completed work - only expenses incurred after application approval are eligible.

Award Information

Awards will be administered in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Grants are reimbursable.

Applicants must complete the project before reimbursement. Once payment is received in full, applicants must submit receipts after project completion and will receive a check. Projects must be completed and receipts submitted by December 15, 2026.

Technical Assistance Requirement

All grant recipients must complete at least three hours of technical assistance by November 8th.

Approved providers include:

Main Street America Small Business Hub

Free online training including:

- Business Planning
- Marketing
- AI for Small Business
- Customer Experience
- Financial Management
- Digital Tools

Wilkes Community College Small Business Center

- Business Counseling
- Marketing
- Financial Planning
- Business Planning
- Expansion Assistance

Other providers may be approved upon request. When appropriate, experienced business owners and professionals may serve as mentors, sharing best practices and connecting grant recipients with local resources and networking opportunities.

Certificates or documentation of completion must be submitted before reimbursement is issued.

Application Process

1. Submit application
2. DNWP Executive Director reviews applications for eligibility and completeness.
3. The DNWP's Review Committee reviews eligible and completed applications.
4. Approved applicants are notified.
5. Business completes technical assistance and approved project.

6. Business submits reimbursement documentation.
7. Grant reimbursement issued.

Evaluation Criteria

Business Growth Potential

- Will the investment increase sales, production, customers, or services?

Economic Impact

- Will jobs be created or retained?
- Will private investment be leveraged?

Project Readiness

- Can the project begin immediately?
- Is the budget complete?

Business Need

- Will this investment solve a demonstrated challenge?

Capital Investment

- Does this project make a meaningful long-term investment?

Technical Assistance

- Applicant demonstrates willingness to utilize business education resources.

Timeline

Applications Open - September 1, 2026

Applications Close - September 30, 2026

Committee Review - October 13, 2026

Awards Announced - October 15, 2026

Technical Assistance Deadline - November 8, 2026

Project Completion & Receipts Submitted - December 15, 2026

Reimbursements Processed By - December 31, 2026

Final Reports Due 30 days after project completion

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to complete a short report describing the following:

- Project completed
- Jobs created/retained
- Revenue impact

- Customer number or experience impacted
- Equipment purchased
- Lessons learned
- Photos

Program Contact Information

For information about the program, please contact Taylor Berry, Executive Director of the Downtown North Wilkesboro Partnership, at downtown@northwilkesboronc.gov or 336-928-0381.

Visit our website at www.downtownnorthwilkesboro.com for more information about the Downtown North Wilkesboro Partnership and other business incentives.