

Maine Jobs & Recovery Coworking Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is the Maine Jobs & Recovery Coworking Grant Program?

The Maine Jobs & Recovery Coworking Grant Program aims to provide direct financial support to coworking spaces in the State of Maine that experienced impacts during the pandemic. It also builds on other Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan programs including remote worker supports and previous financial support to Maine's libraries that also serve as much-needed remote work locations in many Maine communities.

Specifically, this grant opportunity offers competitive grant funds to small businesses and organizations that operate coworking spaces around the state. These funds will help to stabilize operations, reconstruct layouts that were previously altered to meet social distancing requirements; cover increased costs and other impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic; provide outreach, digital infrastructure, and community to new remote workers, and invest in new infrastructure.

The Coworking Grant Program is described in the Grant Guidelines document. Applicants can apply for these grants through an on-line application. A webinar will also be presented, as well as customer service during the open application period in the form of a dedicated voicemail line and email address.

2. What are the programs goals?

This program provides one-time funding to support coworking development – specifically, financial assistance to coworking businesses and non-profit coworking organizations that demonstrate a need for financial relief based on expenses related to the disruption of operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program also provides direct financial support for the expansion of Maine's coworking spaces, including spaces intended to help support remote workers.

3. How much funding is available and when can awardees expect funding?

The total available funding for this program is \$500,000 which has been split between two grant categories:

- Group 1: Grants to existing coworking spaces for pandemic recovery efforts, \$200,000 allocation. We anticipate a \$25,000 award cap with a \$1,000 award minimum.
- Group 2: Grants for new space or expansion of existing space, \$300,000 allocation. We anticipate a \$100,000 award cap with a \$50,000 award minimum.

The award caps are subject to change based on need and volume of applications.

The Maine Department of Economic & Community Development has the discretion to award all of the funds or to award fewer awards than planned, based on the quality and completeness of the applications and the demonstration of financial need.

4. What are the application criteria?

Each group requires the following documentation to demonstrate financial need and/or demonstrate the planned use to grant funds. Note – an applicant may apply for both grants, but if successful, only the higher value will be awarded (cannot receive a grant from both groups).

Group 1 Applicants will be required to demonstrate the following as part of their application:

Must show proof of being in business during the pandemic (at least during calendar year 2022 but preference will be given to spaces that were in operation at least since 2020. All organizations must be in operation as of this application - 2023. If there is a disruption in the operation of the space, this must be fully explained and documented.

Must show expenses or impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic through one or more of the following, depending on the request:

- Receipts/invoices of work completed to alter the coworking space to adapt to social distancing and other pandemic-related adjustments **as well as proof of purchase**.
- Documentation of loss of revenues as demonstrated by financial statements (P&L, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow, etc). **All applicants must show a financial statement** (pre pandemic and after the start of the pandemic) regardless of which impact justification they elect.
- Documentation of costs incurred as a result of reopening after COVID-19 related closure (such as PPE and installation of physical safety measures)
- Documentation of increased costs of operating a coworking space as a result of COVID-19
- Documentation of costs associated with HVAC improvements, creation or addition of indoor or outdoor space for social distancing purposes, and increased costs due to supply chain disruptions or increased demand)
- Document an impact (with narrative) from the pandemic. This could be an increase in demand.

Please Note: If the fund payout exceeds the costs that you have displayed but there are new projects that would meet the qualifications, you are allowed to present quotes, and then proof of purchase to unlock the remaining payout. Examples could include: increasing office space to meet new demand, the need for a “phone booth” due to a higher demand for video calls, etc. Funds will be available for redemption until June 28, 2024

Additionally, the award amounts may deviate from the amount requested based on the quality and thoroughness of the documentation provided.

Group 2 Applicants will be required to demonstrate the following as part of their application:

- Thorough description of work to be performed to create or expand an existing coworking space with evidence of need for this creation/expansion based on quantifiable measures.
- Cost estimates of work to be performed for expansion project and/or infrastructure improvements.
- Description of plans to accommodate remote workers in the coworking space, including providing remote workers with necessary infrastructure, connectivity, and support.
- Description of other efforts to obtain funds to the project and how successful those efforts have been.

For both award groups, expenses to be addressed by these funds must have been incurred between March 3, 2021 and December 31, 2024. Funds must be fully expended by December 31, 2026.

5. Which entities are NOT eligible for the Maine Jobs & Recovery Coworking Grant Program?

- Professional Services with NAICS Codes starting in 5411 or 5412
- 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6)
- K-12 schools, including charter, public and private, institutions of higher education
- Municipalities, municipal subdivisions, and other government agencies
- Foundations and charitable trusts
- Trade associations
- Credit unions
- Insurance trusts
- Scholarship funds and programs
- Gambling
- Adult Entertainment
- Country clubs, golf clubs, other private clubs
- Cemetery trusts and associations
- Fraternal orders
- Hospitals and nursing facilities
- Those involved in the sale of medical or recreational cannabis or cannabis products

6. In order to qualify, business/organizations must:

- Be headquartered in Maine or have a minimum of 50% of employees and contract employees based in Maine)
- Be current and in good standing with all Maine State payroll taxes, sales taxes, and state income taxes (as applicable) through June 30, 2023
- Be in good standing with state agencies which include Maine Department of Labor, Maine Secretary of State
- Not be in bankruptcy
- Not have permanently ceased all operations and intend to continue as a going concern
- Be in consistent compliance and not be under any current or past enforcement action with COVID-19 requirements as set forth by the State of Maine
- Must not be otherwise barred from receiving federal funds

- Must have a Federal UEI number. The UEI is a 12-character unique number assigned to all entities (public and private companies, individuals, institutions, or organizations) who must register to do business with the federal government. If you do not have a UEI number, register for one *here*.
- Organizations with multiple affiliated locations across the State should submit a single application.

For purposes of the Maine Jobs & Recovery Coworking Grant Program, your business/organization is considered affiliated with any other business/organization that:

- Has the same Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (including Social Security Number)
- Has the same corporate parent or grandparent
- Is majority owned (more than 50%) by the same owner or group of owners

Entities that previously received financial support from Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan programs are not ineligible but are less likely to receive an award.

Businesses/organizations will be liable for any misuse of funds. The grants are taxable income and subject to audit. Funds must be spent on operations that are strictly within Maine.

7. What will be needed to complete the application?

You will need to gather the following information about your business/organization (and all affiliated businesses/organizations) before you begin your Maine Jobs & Recovery Coworking Grant application:

1. Federal Employer Identification Number or Social Security Number
2. Type of business/organization (non-profit or for-profit)
3. Must have a Federal UEI number. The UEI is a 12-character unique number assigned to all entities (public and private companies, individuals, institutions, or organizations) who must register to do business with the federal government. If you do not have a UEI number, register for one *here*.
4. Principal office address
5. "Doing business as" (DBA) name
6. Applicant address and other contact information
7. For business: Ownership percentage of each individual owner with greater than 25% equity
8. Documentation in the form of receipts or invoices for incurred expenses due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Related Public Health Response
9. An estimate and justification of how much of your losses are a direct result of the pandemic and a disruption to operations.
10. A prepared, electronic W-9 in the event your business/organization is selected for a grant (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>)

8. Which expenses are allowable?

Grant relief is intended to help businesses and nonprofits with significant expenses related to COVID impacts. These expenses include:

- Interest on deferred loans - the loans must be in deferral as a direct result of the pandemic
- Costs incurred as a result of reopening after COVID-19 related closure (such as PPE, workforce safety training, and installation of physical safety measures)
- Increased costs of doing business as a result of COVID-19 (such as infrastructure tools to improve remote access (contactless check in/out, take out)
- HVAC improvements, creation or addition of indoor or outdoor space for social distancing purposes, and increased costs due to supply chain disruptions or increased demand)

Funds must be spent on operations that are strictly within Maine. The Maine Jobs and Recovery Small Business Grant Program is intended to assist in covering losses incurred as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health response. Businesses/organizations will be liable for any misuse of funds.

Submitted expenses must not have been covered and/or reimbursed by previous pandemic recovery funding. Because these are Federal funds you must follow cost principles as outlined in 2CFR.200 subpart E <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.400>

9. How do I document allowable costs?

For each of these expenses, the application requires receipts or documentation of payment. Please provide guidance on how the submitted documents directly apply to the costs being claimed in your application. This could be in the form of a summary page of costs (e.g., HVAC contractor invoice = \$XXX.XX). While individual receipts are excellent supporting material, it is difficult for our reviewers to match them to the costs reported on the application without further information. Disorganized information can result in a denial if it's not possible for our reviewers to tell which receipts go with the costs listed in your application.

10. What are some examples of unallowable expenses?

Examples of unallowable expenses include (list is not all-inclusive):

- Depreciation expense
- Entertainment
- Lobbying
- Goods and Services for Personal Use
- Fines, Penalties, Damages and other Settlements
- Payroll expenses are not eligible for this program.

11. How do I get or find my Unique Entity ID (UEID) number and is there any cost to me to obtain a UEID number?

On **April 4, 2022**, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID number generated by SAM.gov. The Unique Entity ID (UEID) number is required and free to obtain. We will need to report all awards to the federal government and include the UEID number for that account.

- The Unique Entity ID number is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).
- As part of this transition, the DUNS Number has been removed from SAM.gov.
- Entity registration, searching, and data entry in SAM.gov now require use of the new Unique Entity ID number.
- Existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID number by following the steps [here](#).
- New entities can get their Unique Entity ID number at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration.
- The SAM.gov website has a video and a list of FAQs. (Videos can be found halfway down the [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) page.)
- *Please note – the registration process allows you to obtain just a Unique Entity ID (UEID) number or also to register your business so that you can bid on government contracts. The video indicates that you need to register your entity to get federal awards. The award you are applying for through this program is NOT a **direct** federal award. Unless you plan to bid on government contracts most applicants for this program only need to sign up for the UEID number. (Easier and faster.)*
- If you have attempted to register your UEID number with SAM.gov but have received a message stating your request requires further review, you can still proceed with the online application for this program. However, please note that we cannot make any award payment if the UEID number has not been given to the firm from SAM.gov.

12. What is the application timing and deadline?

Maine DECD will host a webinar in January 2024 with information about this grant program.

Applications will be accepted until 11:59 PM February 16, 2024. Visit the online application portal to complete the form electronically. You will receive email confirmation that your application has been received. If you are unable to use the on-line portal, please contact us for assistance using the contact information provided below.

If you have any questions that are not addressed in the application instructions or the FAQs, please call: 1-800-872-3838 (and press 3) or email: BizAwards.DECD@maine.gov.

13. Is the information I provide protected?

The security of your sensitive information is important to us which is why all information is stored securely and only accessible by personnel designated by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. All sensitive information, including Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is encrypted at-rest and in-transit throughout the process. Information collected by this system will not be shared or used for any other purposes besides grant selection and distribution except as may be required by Maine's Freedom of Access Act, 1 M.R.S Section 401 et seq. It is likely that some of the information provided will be accessible under Maine's Freedom of Access Act (1 M.R.S. Section 401 et seq.); however, proprietary information, tax or financial information, and PII will not be disclosed. After submitting your application, a confirmation email shall be sent with a copy of the submitted application excluding all sensitive PII.

14. If I am having trouble or concerns, who can I reach out to for assistance?

Please call: 1-800-872-3838 and press 3
Or email: BizAwards.DECD@maine.gov

Please allow up to three business days for someone to get back to you as DECD is experiencing a high volume of calls and emails.