



2026-2027 Grant Opportunity: *WSMA Statewide Grant Program - Collaborative Projects*

Application Instructions

Submit applications via the [WSMA grant portal](#) by **5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, October 16, 2026**. Refer to the separate 2026-2027 Statewide Grant Program Guidelines on the [WSMA website](#) for an overview and details about this funding opportunity. Of note, the Lead Organization and all Collaborating Partners (as defined in Section 1.B. of the Program Guidelines) must meet WSMA program eligibility criteria (as outlined in Section 2 of the Program Guidelines).

Applicants requiring technical assistance with the WSMA 2026-2027 Statewide RFP and Program Guidelines should contact Lisa Smith, WSMA Executive Director, at lisa@wamicrobiz.org and Catherine Borgeson, WSMA Grant Specialist, at catherine@wamicrobiz.org.

Information Session: September 22, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. Register [HERE](#). WSMA will post the FAQs on the WSMA website after the Information Session. WSMA will also record this session and make it available on the [WSMA YouTube Channel](#).

Grant Portal Walkthrough: September 23, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. Register [HERE](#). WSMA will record this session and make it available on the [WSMA YouTube Channel](#).

Applicants can find grant writing resources on either the [Puget Sound Grantwriters Association](#) or the [Funding for Good](#) websites.

If the Lead Organization already has a WSMA grant portal account, create a draft application by selecting “Funding Opportunities” on your dashboard. After saving a draft, continue to access your application by selecting “In Progress” under “Applications” on your dashboard. Do NOT

try to access your active draft application by opening a new application under the "Funding Opportunities" as this will create a duplicate application. If the Lead Organization is a first-time applicant, you must first [register your organization](#) with the WSMA grant portal. Please contact catherine@wamicrobiz.org with any portal technical assistance questions.

The WSMA grant portal allows applicants to save their work as a draft to come back to before submitting the final version. We strongly advise applicants to click "Save Draft" frequently while completing their draft application on the grant portal to avoid losing their work. You can also create and edit your answers in a separate Word document to copy and paste them into the grant portal. Make sure your responses do not exceed the word count for applicable questions. Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation email to the address you provided from noreply@smartsimple.com, which will also include a PDF of your application for your records. You can continue to access your submitted application on your grant portal dashboard. Unfortunately, once an applicant submits their application, you can NOT make changes. However, if you accidentally submit before completion of the application, please contact catherine@wamicrobiz.org.

Items to be included or ready for submitting your proposal:

1) Questions answered on a Word document so you can copy and paste into the grant portal (optional, but remember to click "Save Draft" frequently as you complete the application on the portal to avoid losing any work), 2) Completed Funding Request Form in Excel (available for download on the WSMA website or from the grant portal), 3) Expected economic impact outcomes ready to copy & paste into the grant portal, 4) Lead Organization's budget for the last full 2026 calendar year, 5) Lead Organization's Profit & Loss (P&L) / Income Statement (actuals) from the 2025 calendar or fiscal year or most recent 12-month period, and 6) Lead Organization's IRS 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination.

Application Questions

Contact Information

Contact information is copied directly from your organization and user profile and will appear in a read-only state within this section. If the information displayed is outdated, please update your organization and/or user profile before completing and submitting your proposal. After saving any changes to your user and/or organization profile, click "Save Draft" to refresh the application.

Organization Information (*pulled from organization profile*)

- Organization Name
- Organization Address - Official, stated in W-9 Form
- Organization Phone
- Organization Website
- Organization EIN (Employer Identification Number)
- Organization UBI (Unique Business Identifier)

- Organization's Washington State Legislative District(s)
- Organization's Washington State Congressional District(s)

Primary Contact Information *(pulled from user profile)*

- Contact Name
- Contact Title
- Contact Address
- Contact Phone
- Contact Email

Project Information

WSMA is accepting applications from organizations seeking to engage partners on a collaborative project that expands business services and reach through collective action that no single Entrepreneur Support Organization (ESO) could easily achieve on its own. Funding will focus on two key priorities: collaborative projects that provide comprehensive business services to specific industry sectors and ensuring funds are distributed to businesses statewide in specific communities to achieve geographic and demographic equity.

1. Please list the organization names and websites of your Collaborating Partners.
2. Collaborating Partners Narrative: Define your strategic partner engagement. **Who** are your Collaborating Partners? Why this group of partners? What unique value do they bring to the table? What gap do they fill in the partnership? What capacity do the organizations in the collective project have to innovate, reach new entrepreneurs, share expertise, and adapt existing resources to deliver WSMA-funded programming to support microbusinesses in Washington? *(1,500-word limit)*
3. Describe the experience of the Lead Organization and/or Collaborating Partners in providing comprehensive business services for the key sectors listed below.
 - a. Also enter the cumulative years of demonstrated experience (from all parties in the collaborative project), as applicable. Put a zero (0) if a category does not apply:
 - small-scale manufacturing
 - creative economy
 - agriculture/food-based economy
 - circular economy
 - climate resilience
 - clean technology
 - energy
 - childcare
 - homebuilding/construction
 - life sciences
 - maritime trades
 - tourism

4. Provide a 300-word abstract (brief summary of your collaborative project). For example:

Sample 1: Super Downtown (SR) is a local Main Street partner working with an SBDC, a microbusiness hub in their local port district, and a circular economy consultant to reach 60 businesses over the grant period at existing events (about 2.5 businesses per week). SR is in close touch with small-scale manufacturers in the community but wants to get better at linking these small companies with comprehensive business and financing programs. At least 25 of these companies interested in receiving traditional business training and technical assistance services will be referred to the SBDC and other ESOs offering business technical assistance on Evergreen BizLink. Specialized services will be offered to 5-10 manufacturers that want to increase revenue by finding uses for their residuals (waste streams) with connected services to new markets, consulting services, business resources, and financing. This program will offer hands-on training and technical assistance to manufacturers and will help them complete applications for permitting, licensing new products, and accessing procurement services.

Sample 2: Rural Germinator (RG). This rural-based ESO is partnering with a nearby CDFI, a local chamber, and a marketing specialist to bridge opportunities to financing for 45 rural entrepreneurs in the tourism, creative economy, and outdoor recreation sectors. The Chamber will survey their members and those from nearby communities about their business needs. The CDFI will teach two training workshops. And for those entrepreneurs who complete the training program, RG will provide deep marketing services and support with preparing for financing for 10 entrepreneurs to those who complete the training program.

5. Select the focus areas of your collaborative project and indicate all that apply:

- **Training:** Provide multi-session training programs or comprehensive business training webinars or workshops that build the capacity of small businesses to attract new customers, manage their finances, fine tune their operations, apply for financing, etc.
 - **Training Series:** Group-based, connected, multi-session or cohort training experience where one session is connected to the next and attendance is expected at all sessions, typically with a culmination event or certificate.
 - **Training Workshops:** One-time or stand-alone events that provide vital training programs but as individual or separate, unconnected events where attendance at all workshop/webinar sessions is optional.
- **Technical Assistance:** Assistance to small businesses that includes but is not limited to support for accessing federal and state loans/grants, business coaching, helping businesses with implementing their business plans, troubleshooting, improving marketing strategies, or preparing for financing, etc.
- **Microlending or Financing Support:** Assistance to organizations that provide support for accessing microloans and other financing resources for microenterprises. Funding is available to provide technical assistance, loan

processing, outreach, business counseling, and other services. **However, the loan amount itself and/or any fees associated with it that are normally paid by the borrower cannot be covered with these funds; this funding prohibition applies as well to any type of other lending or financial instrument.**

6. Does your collaborative project primarily serve businesses in rural or urban communities? Is it statewide? Refer to Section 1.B - Definitions in the Program Guidelines. Note: Statewide projects include programs with a demonstrated history of service delivery primarily accessed by businesses located across the state.
7. Which counties will your collaborative project serve? *(Select all that apply.)*
8. Regarding your collaborative project's outreach, engagement and services for BIPOC-owned businesses in your collaborative project's service area, identify the communities your collaboration serves below. Indicate all that apply:
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (NHPI)
 - White
 - Other/Mixed Race
9. Scope of Work (SOW) Summary *(table format in grant portal)*: List the primary deliverables your collaborative project will provide with these grant funds. How do you intend to use WSMA grant funds? What tools and resources will you provide to microbusinesses? Complete the columns for the number of businesses, sessions and hours of instruction per deliverable business service type - cohort training series, module/single workshops/webinars/events, or one-on-one/small group technical assistance (as outlined in Section 3 of the Program Guidelines). For proposal alignment, your SOW Summary must match your numbers reported in the Economic Impact Outcomes. Please note that, for this grant cycle, your collaborative project **must serve at least 35 Washington-based unduplicated businesses.**

We understand that this is your proposed plan for what your collaborative project will accomplish with this grant. WSMA recognizes that you will also need to be flexible to make changes as necessary to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. However, the Collaborating Partners must commit to their formal roles in the delivery of the programming and meet the eligibility requirements of the grant.

The SOW summary table on the following page contains sample language for guidance. Only complete the business service types (row) relevant to your deliverables. For multiple business service deliverables, click the "+" button on the grant portal to add additional rows.

Business service type (training series, training workshops, technical assistance, access to financing)	# of sessions	Total duration, in hours	In-person, virtual, or both	Location (city or county. If virtual, indicate which areas the businesses served are based in)	# of businesses served	Collaborating Partners and/or anticipated consultants	Description of work (include what tools or resources will be provided)
Training Workshop	4	8	In-person	Port Townsend	40	SBDC (Small Business Development Center), Chamber of Commerce	Two-hour workshops on “Tips and Tools for Start-ups” to focus on 10 entrepreneurs each that have not yet been formally established
Training Series	8	27	In-person	Jefferson County	10	Local CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) and library	Based on our past experience and surveys, we will reach and connect with 50 entrepreneurs in February, provide business programming for 10 business owners from March-May. Translations and interpretation and other support will be provided as needed for participants. We will train 10 manufacturers to source materials, expand, purchase equipment, or manage waste.
Technical Assistance	12	18	Both	Vancouver, Ridgefield, Clark County	30	EDC, DES (Department of Enterprise Services), Vancouver Community Library	Individual or small group technical assistance with the following topics that include, but are not limited to: How to overcome fears of scaling; Legal advice; Panel discussion of business owners in the industry to share their experience and advice; Access to financing resources; Other topics as identified by participants: resale opportunities, stores, transportation, warehouse.
Access to Financing	6	3	Both	Vancouver, Ridgefield, Clark County	6	CDFI, local lender	Through the technical assistance sessions, we will assist six businesses in applying for and securing loans.

10. Project Narrative: Describe **how** the organizations in your collaborative project will accomplish the specific activities highlighted in the Scope of Work summary. The project narrative tells a story about what will happen and how the programming will unfold.

Please share how your proposed collaborative project will ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in delivering services and, if applicable, focus on priority industry sectors outlined in the Program Guidelines. Include unique details about the services that will distinguish the project from other applications. Why are these particular services essential? Explain how the proposed business services meet the needs of the Washington-based small businesses to be served.

As often as possible, provide the name and type of webinars, the kinds of business technical assistance support, what translation and interpretive services your collaborative project will provide, and/or how your project connects businesses with financing resources. *(1,500-word limit)*

11. Beyond the traditional measures of impact, please describe what you expect to be the impact of your proposed collaborative project on your organization (Lead Organization and Collaborating Partners), the businesses, and/or communities served.

Impact can vary significantly across different communities. For example, it may be reflected in improved quality of life, increased confidence, greater stability, or heightened hopefulness among the businesses being served. Additionally, projects that foster collaboration and promote a more cohesive local economy can help bridge geographic and cultural divides. This ensures equitable and sustainable support for underserved communities while positioning the region for future economic growth. Such projects should be deeply rooted in relationships, local knowledge, and a listening approach to build trust and provide responsive advising.

12. Explain how you will track your progress, including the total number of business owners served and your work results. How will the Lead Organization manage coordination of the proposal's activities with its Collaborating Partners? Identify the specific platforms, software, spreadsheets, or other tools that enable your organization to measure progress with economic impact outcomes. If applicable, please share how you will measure quality of life, greater stability, hopefulness, etc. through surveys and other strategies.

Funding Request

Application requests must total **\$10,000**. Applicants will use the 2026-2027 WSMA Fund Request Form (Excel), available for download from the [WSMA website](#) or the [grant portal](#). If you are unable to download a copy, please reach out to Catherine Borgeson at catherine@wamicrobiz.org. Once you fill in your **REQUIRED Fund Request Form** with written budget justifications AND line item amounts in the Excel form, you will upload the completed Excel spreadsheet to the grant portal (third tab of the application) using the upload graphic (file with an up arrow). MUST upload in Excel, NOT PDF or Numbers.

For some proposals, the entire project may be larger than this grant program can fund, and total costs may be carried by more than one entity. This is the value of having multiple partners involved in a project. Please indicate what portion of the project this WSMA grant would cover. For example, you might indicate 100% if the \$10,000 is sufficient to meet all project deliverables without any additional funding, 50% if you intend to supplement it with funds from other organizations, or 75% if some of your collaborators and/or consultants are providing in-kind support, among other scenarios.

Economic Impact Outcomes

Outcomes are vital for understanding the **impact of these funds**. Identify the anticipated economic impact outcomes your organization (Lead Organization and Collaborating Partners) expects to achieve, especially the number of unduplicated businesses served by your collaborative project. Intensive support for a smaller number of businesses is sometimes as valuable as reaching many companies with limited programming. Gauge your impact carefully. Put a zero (0) if this category does not apply to you. Of course, it is difficult to estimate future impact. This section helps WSMA evaluate your best understanding of the goals you want to achieve with these grant funds and how you will accomplish them.

Jobs & Businesses

- Jobs Created with these Funds (*If an existing business you served hires a new employee, that is a job created. If a person you served with business assistance starts a new business [see definition below], that is one job created.*)
- Jobs Saved (*If a business is able to keep a person on as an employee as a result of the business services your organization provided, it is a job saved.*)
- Businesses Started (*If the entrepreneur you served formalizes their business with a UBI number/business license, establishes an EIN, and/or sets up a business bank account, etc. it is considered a business started.*)
- Businesses Expanded (*If a business is able to reach new markets, increase their revenue, access financing, expand on their physical space or hire more employees as a result of the business services your organization provided to this business, it can be counted as a business expansion.*)
- Total **UNDULICATED** Business (existing and start-up) Served (*Unduplicated counts a business one time no matter how many services [a workshop, a webinar, a technical assistance session] are attended or received. with at least one hour of in-depth business support provided to a unique business.*) Please note, for this grant cycle, your collaborative project **must serve at least 35 unduplicated businesses**.

Business Training Series (*Group-based, connected, multi-session or cohort training experience where one session is connected to the next and attendance is expected at all sessions, typically with a culmination event or certificate.*)

- Sessions Provided (*Number of sessions in a training series*)
- Businesses (Existing and Start-up) Served (*Number of businesses that attended the training series*)
- Total Hours of Instruction (*Total number of hours of all the sessions*)

Business Training Workshops/Webinars *(One-time or stand-alone events that provide vital training programs but as individual or separate, unconnected events where attendance at all workshop/webinar sessions is optional.)*

- Sessions Provided *(Total number of stand-alone workshops or webinars provided)*
- Businesses (Existing and Start-up) Served *(Number of participants that attended each of the workshop[s] or webinar[s])*
- Total Hours of Instruction *(Hours only. For example, two, one-hour workshops would be two hours of instruction)*

Technical Assistance *(Business provider or specialist supporting the needs of a specific business or small group of businesses)*

- Sessions Provided *(Number of meetings or appointments regardless of the number of hours)*
- Businesses (Existing and Start-up) Served *(Number of participants that received at least one business technical assistance hour of support)*
- Total Hours of Technical Instruction *(Hours only. For example, if a business had two appointments, lasting two hours each, the total would be four hours.)*

Access to Financing *(Loans/Grants)*

- Businesses (Existing and Start-up) Served *(Including those assisted with referrals)*
- Referrals to Local/Regional Lenders as a Result of the Project *(Number of businesses introduced to a financing partner)*
- Loans/Grants Applied For *(An application for funding is submitted)*
- Businesses Awarded Loans/Grants *(If applicable) (How many businesses secured a loan and/or grant?)*
- Total Amount Funded/Received *(Total funding dollars awarded to the business)*

Demographics of Those to be Served

- # of Veteran Owned Businesses
- # of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous & People of Color) Owned Businesses
- # of Women Owned Businesses (who identify as such)
- # of Businesses Owned by People with Disabilities
- # of Businesses Owned by People Exiting the Justice System
- # of LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses (who identify as such)
- # of OMWBE Certified Businesses
- # of Businesses Owned by Refugees and/or Immigrants

Attachments to Upload

To simplify the application, only the Lead Organization will upload its organizational attachments, but all Collaborating Partners must meet WSMA program eligibility criteria (as outlined in Section 2 of the Program Guidelines).

1. Lead Organization's Budget (not the collective project budget) for the last full 2026 calendar year.
2. Lead Organization's Profit & Loss (P&L) or Income Statement (actuals) for the 2025 calendar year, or fiscal year or most recent 12-month period. This document shows how much your organization has spent and earned over a 12-month period.
3. Lead Organization's IRS 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination. The IRS determination letter notifies a nonprofit organization that its application for federal tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) has been approved. Nonprofit or quasi-governmental applicants with different formal IRS designations will also be considered.

Certifications & Attestation

1. I certify this nonprofit and Collaborating Partners do not discriminate with regard to employees, volunteers, delivery of programs or services, or clients served based on age, sex, religion/creed, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, marital status, military or veteran's status, pregnancy or genetic information.
2. I certify that our nonprofit and Collaborating Partners are active and do not have any compliance or regulatory issues with state or federal agencies, as of the date of signature.
3. I certify that the Collaborating Partners have formal roles in the delivery of the programming, that they meet the eligibility requirements of the grant, and will participate in the development of the final report.
4. I certify that I am authorized to submit this proposal to WSMA on behalf of the organization.

Please Note: By entering your name, title, and date into the WSMA grant portal, you are:

1. Representing that you are an officer or other agent duly authorized to enter into legally binding agreements.
2. Agreeing to submit this WSMA grant application in an electronic form which shall be bound by its contents as an electronic transaction.
3. Agreeing that your insertion of this data constitutes an electronic signature.