

Business Marketing Technical Assistance Grant

I. INTRODUCTION

The Business Marketing Technical Assistance Grant focuses on an identified need- marketing support within the business community. The pandemic negatively affected businesses; leaving businesses with a depleted workforce, increases in cost with lack of sales, and changing business plans to accommodate new regulations. These impacts created restrictions on the amount of time a business owner can dedicate to marketing their businesses, at a time when maintaining revenues is crucial. This grant opportunity provides a much needed resource to help businesses survive during a very challenging time. Business owners will have an opportunity to work directly with marketing professionals to create, redesign or update their website, upload online point of sale tool to business websites, and focus on social media marketing strategies for direct marketing to consumers.

Through the Technical Assistance Grant, the communities Ashland, Framingham and Natick are providing consultant services to assist businesses to improve their marketing efforts to increase sales.

II. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All businesses with located in Ashland, Framingham and Natick will be considered for this grant. This grant is open to all sectors in the small business community. All businesses under 50 employees will be eligible. Preference will be given to BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA+, or veteran-owned businesses, and those that have not already received CARES Act funds.

III. USE OF FUNDS

Technical assistance in the form of consultant services to address a specific issue in the categories listed in Section V will be assigned to each business. Consultants will be chosen by the grant team. A grantee business can expect its consultant to develop a specific scope of services that may include design, content writing, website design and implementation, social media guidance and collateral, and a strategic outline of next steps. The business owner and consultant must agree upon a final product resulting from the technical assistance. Business owners must agree to share the final results with the grant team through reports.

The grant does not pay for staff salaries, software, or physical improvements. Please note that this grant will be paid by the Town of Ashland. Businesses will not be given any monies: payment will be sent directly from the Town of Ashland to the marketing team.

IV. MAXIMUM AWARD AMOUNT

The grant provides consultant services up to \$5,000 per award. The consortium communities reserve the right to reduce the amount of the award from the original request.

The technical assistance provided is limited. The total funds available are \$250,000. The grant team will fund as many qualifying projects as are possible from the funds available.

V. SERVICES PROVIDED

Applications will be accepted to address the following needs:

- **Marketing Assistance**

Requests for assistance may address any aspect of digital marketing for the business, including but not limited to: branding, website updates or creation, social media guidance, point of sales creation or update.

- **Website Design:**

Requests for assistance may address any design issues related to website design, including but not limited to: preliminary design guidelines, updating features, mobile ready platform.

- **Social Media:**

Requests for assistance may address any social media issue related to marketing and increasing followers and generating leads, including but not limited to: a review of current social sites, adding sites that may help increase visibility, preparing a plan for social posts for consistency.

- **Point of Sale Implementation:**

Requests for assistance may address any aspect of determining how to increase sales through a point of sale process on current or new websites, including but not limited to: a current upgrade or creation of point of sale for online sales.

It is the grant team's intention to award one grant per business. If an insufficient number of grants are received in any of the categories, or application scores are significantly lower in one or more categories, the consortium reserves the right to adjust the awards as needed.

VI: NEXT STEPS

- **Step 1:** Businesses will be assigned a marketing team. This team will work directly with the owner to identify the needs and problem areas to help the business increase sales. The marketing team will meet together and devise a plan to reach obtainable goals within 5 months of service. *Marketing Expert Team will consist of a branding specialist, website developer and social media marketing expert.*
- **Step 2:** A plan will be created that addresses the needs of the business owner and goals will be set to track Return of Investment and show the outcome and impact of the grant project.
- **Step 3:** The Marketing Expert Team will work to create content, photography, social media templates and posts, add online sales mechanisms if needed.
- **Step 4:** The business owner will have to show data that identifies click through and traffic to the site on an ongoing basis to show success of the program.

VII. APPLICATION REVIEW

Please include the following with your application:

- Application Cover sheet- with original signature
- Assistance you are requesting. Please specify which eligible activities you are requesting.
- Please indicate primary language preference
- List of individuals that will be completing the work during and after the technical assistance in complete.
- Narrative – The narrative should not exceed 2 pages. Please use 12 pt. Arial font, 1 inch margins, and submit as a Word document or PDF. Include:
 - Description of need for this grant.
 - The positive outcomes expected as a result of the requested assistance
 - A demonstration of the business’s ability to begin implementation of consultant’s recommended action(s) within one to six months of completion of Marketing Technical Assistance award.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed to determine overall consistency with the goals of the Marketing Technical Assistance Grant, and the impact on local business efforts. The grant team will evaluate applications based on the following:

- Presents a complete description of issue to be addressed.
- Describes long-term and tangible outcomes as a result of assistance.
- Demonstrates community’s ability to implement recommended action(s) within one to three months following the consultant’s final product/assistance.

B. Application Scoring

Applications are evaluated to determine how well the proposed projects meet the goals of the consortium. Points are given on the basis of how well the proposed assistance meets each of the five criteria below. A project can score to a maximum of 15.5 points.

0- Does Not Meet 1- Minimally Meets 2- Clearly Meets 3- Strong Response

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a complete description of issue to be addressed. -Brief history of issue and current situation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents reasonable/feasible project costs & scope of services. -Outline of the work that will be covered by consultant. This is not the final scope and can be modified if grant is awarded. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides evidence of need. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes long-term and tangible outcomes as a result of assistance. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates business’s ability to implement recommended action(s) within one to three months following the consultant’s final product/assistance. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not received Cares Act Funding previously 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls under the category of Women Owned, Minority Owned, LGBTQ+ Owned, Veteran Owned 	

VIII. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Business owners may submit only one application.
2. Applicants must designate **one-three** of the eligible activities listed above In order to qualify for this opportunity.
3. The cover sheet must be signed by the business owner. The application will not be considered complete if the cover sheet is not signed. This can be submitted as part of the electronic application.
4. Businesses must submit completed applications by e-mail only. Completed applications should be e-mailed to [Beth Reynolds at breynolds@ashlandmass.com](mailto:breynolds@ashlandmass.com). Please submit as a Word document or PDF. Fax copies will not be accepted.
5. All e-mailed applications (with signed cover sheet) are due by 5:00 pm on May 3, 2021.
6. The grant team reserves the right to request additional information from applicants during the review process in order to address omissions or seek clarification, as necessary.
7. Applicants are urged to consult with the consortium team to discuss their proposals in advance of application submission if there are questions. Please contact representatives in your business community for questions:
 - Ashland: Beth Reynolds, breynolds@ashlandmass.com; 508-532-7905
 - Framingham: Erika Oliver Jerram, ej@framinghamma.gov; 508-532-5455
 - Natick: Ted Fields, tfields@natickma.org; 508-647-6450

IX. AWARDS

There will be an initial review of all the applications, and a limited number may be selected for a site visit, prior to making awards. Awards will be based on scores and the degree to which the application supports the consortium’s priorities and initiatives. The consortium anticipates announcing awards for technical assistance by May 11th 2021.

Regional Pilot Program Application

1.) Marketing assistance you are requesting. Please specify which eligible activities you are requesting.

- Marketing Assistance
- Website Design
- Social Media
- Point of Sale Implementation

2.) Please note primary language preference

- English
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Other: _____

3.) List of individual that will be completing the work during and after the technical assistance in complete.

Name:	
Title:	
Phone:	
Email:	

If more than one individual will be completing the tasks, please list those names with contact information.

- 4.) Narrative – The narrative should not exceed 2 pages. Please use 12 pt. Arial font, 1 inch margins, and submit as a Word document or PDF.
- Description of need to be addressed.
 - Positive outcomes expected as a result of the requested assistance
 - Demonstration of a business's ability to begin implementation of recommended action(s) within one to six months of completion of Marketing Technical Assistance award.