Applications Open for Racial Equity Capital Fund

Last fall, Exelon, in partnership with the Exelon Foundation, established the $36 million Racial Equity Capital Fund. The fund is managed by RockCreek, one of the world’s largest diverse owned global investment firms. It will help minority-owned businesses in our service areas to grow, create additional jobs and reinvest in their communities.

Applications are now open for the fund. Estimated loan amounts are up to $300,000 and equity investments up to nearly $1 million. Employees’ family members are not eligible to apply, but please share the news with your neighbors, friends or business owners in your community.

You can direct interested businesses to submit an application or contact RockCreek at RECFInquiries@therockcreekgroup.com for more information.

Verizon Small Business Digital Ready, a free online learning program to help small businesses like yours succeed. By joining the free program, you’ll not only get access to courses, live coaching sessions, and invaluable learning materials, but can also qualify to apply for an exclusive pool of $10,000 small business grants.

With the partnership between Next Street and LISC, Verizon has committed over $1M in small business grants for 2022 and opportunities to apply will be available throughout the year. To unlock the application for the current round of grant funding, register on Verizon Small Business Digital Ready and complete two courses or live coaching events.

Applications opened on April 25, 2022 and close on June 30, 2022. All applicants will be notified about whether or not they have been selected to receive grant funding by July 11, 2022.

Register Today

Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant applications will open in June for Round 3!

The program will start in February 2022 and run through January 2023. Programs who submit applications and are deemed eligible will receive funding beginning in February 2022 for the first quarter (February 2022 – April 2022). Programs must opt-in each quarter, similar to the Child Care Restoration Grant (CCRG).

Quarters will run as follows:

- SGCC Round 3: August – October 2022 (Applications available in June)
- SGCC Round 4: November – January 2023 (Applications available in September)

Application Deadline:
The Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grants will be available to all programs who:
  • are licensed as a child care center, child care home, or group child care home.
  • were in operation as of March 2021 and continue to care for children today.
  • operate full-day and full-year, defined as a program that is open and offering at least eight consecutive hours of care per day, five days per week.
  • enrolled 10% or more of the program’s licensed capacity with children in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) during any month in 2020 or 2021 and currently participate in CCAP.
  • receive no more than 50% of total early childhood program/site revenue from Early Childhood Block Grant funding (including Preschool for All (PFA) and/or Prevention Initiative (PI)) or Head Start/Early Head Start.
  • do not accept a 2022 Child Care Restoration Extension Grant award (programs can apply for either 2022 CCRG Extension or SGCC, but not both)

The Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant will provide child care homes with $2,500 per program per quarter, group child care homes with $3,750 per program per quarter, and child care centers with $6,250 per classroom per quarter.

How to Apply:

The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) will administer the Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grants. INCCRRA will provide technical assistance through their website and via email throughout the life of the grant. Email grants@inccrra.org with questions.

The application for SGCC is available to programs in the Gateways Registry Director Portal. If your program meets the eligibility requirements above and you do not have the option to apply, please email grants@inccrra.org for technical assistance.

LEARN MORE

Small Business Improvement Fund, Executed by City of Chicago and SomerCor

The City of Chicago’s Small Business Improvement Fund provides small businesses with reimbursable grants for permanent building improvement costs.

Eligibility

  • Commercial and industrial business located in Chicago’s TIF districts
  • Industrial businesses must have 200 or fewer employees
  • Commercial businesses must gross average annual sales under $9M for the prior 3 years

Application Deadline: Determined by TIF districts – LEARN MORE

Upskilling Grant - Association of Women’s Business Centers with generous funding provided by AARP Foundation
The AWBC works to secure economic justice and entrepreneurial opportunities for women by supporting and sustaining a national network of more than 100 Women’s Business Centers (WBC). WBCs help women succeed in business by providing training, mentoring, business development, and financing opportunities to nearly 200,000 women entrepreneurs each year.

**Application Deadline:** Funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis so be sure to apply early. If you have questions, please contact info@awbc.org.

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**High Road Kitchens**, Executed by One Fair Wage and City of Chicago

One Fair Wage in partnership with the City of Chicago has launched the High Road Kitchens program, offering grants between $10,000 and $30,000 to Chicago restaurants.

**Eligibility**

- Restaurant located in Chicago
- Annual revenue of under $3 million
- Experienced financial loss due to COVID-19 totaling 25% of annual revenue

**Application Deadline:** Rolling basis

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**DishRoulette Kitchen $1k Campaign**

Recipients will be selected via a scoring system based on TEAM, NEED, and GROWTH. [Click Here for Further Details.]

Grant funds must be used for working capital (payroll, rent, contractors, insurance, taxes, etc.)

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Submit Questions to the DishRoulette Kitchen Grant team via these links:
- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)

Chicago’s [Small Business Resource Navigators](#) can provide assistance for this program and other financial opportunities.

**Eligibility**

- Located in Chicagoland area
- Majority Minority-Owned
- Less than $500,000 annual revenue
- In business for at least one year
- 25% decrease in revenue due to COVID-19

**Required Documents**
All winning applicants will be asked to provide the following documents before receiving funds (clear and legible pictures will be accepted):

- A business bank statement that includes the business address and business name
- A valid business license
- A valid identification card (Driver's License, State ID, CityKey, Consular ID, Passport, or other form of identification)
  - Undocumented immigrants and green card holders who own businesses are welcome to apply.
- A completed W9 form (access a fillable form here)

Chicago Recovery Grant Application for Community Development

The City of Chicago and Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot are committed to strengthening local business corridors and enhancing neighborhood vitality. Throughout 2021, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has supported a diverse set of projects that brought more than $500 million in development investment to Chicago’s neighborhoods.

The Chicago Recovery Plan provides additional opportunities for the City to invest in catalytic local development, expanding upon DPD’s existing investments and support. DPD is now accepting applications for grant funding to support local commercial, mixed-use, and light manufacturing development. All are welcome to apply. City staff will prioritize projects in areas of Chicago where there is a history of disinvestment or limited private investment.

**Eligibility**

- Grant funding can be used for pre-development, construction, or renovation costs for permanent capital improvement projects.
- Open to community developers, business owners and entrepreneurs, and property owners. Site control is preferred, but not required.
- Residential-only development is not eligible, but mixed-use projects are eligible. Further funding opportunities for residential projects are expected to be announced in Q1 2022.
- Priority will be given to catalytic projects with a strong local impact, that are able to leverage local talents, capacities, and institutions to strengthen and contribute to the community.
- Applicants from all areas of Chicago are eligible to apply. Priority will be given for projects in historically disinvested areas as well as projects that build upon existing efforts, such as Mayor Lightfoot’s INVEST South/West initiative and community safety initiatives.
- Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate momentum and are expected to break ground in 2022.
- The City expects awards to be capped at $5 million, though larger, catalytic projects may be considered.

**Deadline**

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. The deadline for this year’s final round is August 19, 2022. Applicants who are not prepared to apply this round are encouraged to review all relevant materials and prepare to apply for a potential future round in 2023.
Please do not submit duplicative applications for the same project.

LEARN MORE

Prepare to Apply
Applications will be segmented based on the size of the grant. Grant requests should represent no more than 75 percent of the anticipated total project cost.

#ComcastRISE has supported more than 6,700 underrepresented small businesses across the country (nearly 550 in Illinois, Northern Indiana and Southwest Michigan alone) and provided over $60M in grants, marketing and technology services. @Comcast just expanded the program to all women-owned businesses.

Click below to learn more about the program and apply for the chance to receive technology services from @ComcastBusiness or marketing services from @Effectv, Comcast’s advertising sales division.

Eligibility

- 51% owned and operated by someone who identifies as Black, Indigenous, a Person of Color, or a Female
- Independently owned and operated; and not a franchise location
- registered to conduct business in the US
- Has been operating for one or more years
- Is located within the Comcast Business or Effectv service area footprint


For questions about completing or submitting your application, please contact a Comcast RISE Representative at ComcastRISEInfo@comcast.com.

Please review your application prior to submission. Applications that are inaccurate, incomplete or unintelligible for any reason will be voided. Technology Makeover recipients will be required to provide the W-9 form for their business, to comply with IRS guidelines.

The next wave of applications for Comcast RISE Marketing & Technology Services opened on January 16, 2022, and will close on June 17, 2022. Click below to apply for Comcast RISE Marketing & Technology Services.

LEARN & APPLY HERE

Cleveland Avenue State Treasurer Urban Success Fund (CAST US)

A $70M initiative that will bridge the capital and resource gap impacting Black, Latinx, and women entrepreneurs in Chicago’s South and West Side neighborhoods.

CAST US will leverage the investment and entrepreneurial development expertise of Cleveland Avenue to support this historically underserved group and empower underrepresented entrepreneurs.
**Ideal Candidates**

- Founded by Black, Latinx, and women entrepreneurs
- Headquartered (or have significant business operations) in the South and West Side neighborhoods of Chicago
- Representing any industry and seeking early-stage growth capital
- Currently in operation (generating revenue)

Interested in partnering with CAST US to grow your business?

[LEARN MORE & APPLY HERE](#)

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**Fund Allocation:**

- **75%**
  - Of the fund will be invested in Black and Latinx owned companies.

- **75%**
  - Of the fund will be invested in South and West Side Chicago neighborhoods

- **50%**
  - Of the fund will be used to invest in Women Entrepreneurs

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**Giving Joy Microgrant** - Available to women 18 and older, you can use the grant to start a new business, or expand your existing business. You can also use the grant to start or expand a nonprofit, non-governmental organization (NGO), charity, or propose a specific activity or project you would like to implement. Grant for $500. Apply by 6/30/2022. Learn more [here](#).

**Jobber Grants For Home Service Businesses** - Any home service business owner or aspiring business owner 18 years old or older, residing in the U.S. and Canada, excluding Québec is eligible to apply for a grant from $2500-$15,000. Apply by 5/26/22. Learn more [here](#).

**Dear God Are We There Yet?** - Community social good activists in US and Canada are encouraged to apply (including Teachers, Students, Entrepreneurs, Small Business Owners, and Community Members). Additional grants for Hispanic women. Grants are $100-$500 and awarded quarterly. Learn more [here](#).
Derby Diversity Week Business Idea Competition - All submissions on innovative business concepts will be accepted with those ideas with a revolutionary “technological bent” being favored. Finalists will be chosen, introduced at the 2022 Derby Diversity Week in Louisville, Ky., and will receive support, mentoring, and resources to put your idea in motion. Finalists will also have the opportunity to compete later this year for the $50,000 grand prize which will include a host of benefits including monetary support for production. Learn more here.

Dream Big Awards - Must be a for-profit business operating for at least one (1) year primarily within the United States with less than 250 employees OR gross revenues of less than $20 million for each of 2021 and 2022. Grant for $25,000. Apply by 7/8/2022. Learn more here.

Fearless Strivers - Open to black women who are legal U.S. residents (including DC), 18+ and the principal owner of a U.S.-based small business. Grants for $10,000. Apply by 12/31/22. Learn more here.

Juntos Crecemos Hispanic Digital & Delivery Program - PepsiCo is inviting Latina entrepreneurs who work in food service to apply for eight weeks of personalized expert consultation, including best practices across operations, technology, marketing and digital presence. Learn more here.

UnderFUNDED Spring 2022 - Grant for $5000 for one deserving Black female small business owner. Learn more here.

You Glow Girl Women Entrepreneur Grant – Grant for $10,000 is open to all women entrepreneurs in the US. Apply by July 1. Top 25 will be announced for round 2 on July 8. Top 10 will be announced for round 3 on August 1. Winner announced mid-August. Learn more here.