

Main Street Digital Grant Program

Program Description & Guidelines

For San Clemente, Fall 2022



Program Overview

About the Program

The City is offering a six week Main Street Digital Grant Program, which will provide training and funding to small brick and mortar retail businesses and non-profit organizations with a mission of supporting local business, culture, and tourism. These San Clemente based organizations have continued need of financial assistance to increase their revenue due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses which have previously received alternative sources of funding such as the City Small Business Emergency Grant, the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) or Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan are eligible to apply. The program is based on the availability of funds, program guidelines and submission of all required information and supporting documentation. Small businesses with a minimum of two (2) employees – and a maximum of twenty-five (25) employees (full or full-time equivalent combination) may be eligible to receive a digital marketing grant of one thousand dollars (\$1000). The grant must be used for a paid advertising campaign, developed during the training program and in conjunction with a SBDC consultant.

Funding Availability

In May 2021 the U.S. Department of Treasury allocated funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) to the City for COVID-19 response, relief and reinvestment. The City is allocating up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for the Main Street Digital Grant Program. These funds are to be used to mitigate a business's financial hardship caused by declines in revenues due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The City's Economic Development Department will be responsible for oversight of Main Street Digital Grant Program and disbursement of funds will take place through the City's Finance Department. The City's Program Partner, the Orange County/Inland Empire Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will be responsible for program administration, marketing, application processing, underwriting, training and review/approval of financial and business documentation for disbursement approval. City staff is obligated to fulfill the terms and conditions of the funds as established by these program guidelines and Federal, State, and local rules and regulations.

Program Description

The SBDC created a new virtual training program aimed at assisting brick-and-mortar retail businesses with "Creating a Digital Presence" for their business. Each small business owner will learn how to set-up an online profile through Google, will reach out to customers for a Google review and will learn how to create and send Facebook or Instagram posts. The program will highlight how to use paid and non-paid advertising to generate leads that turn into sales. The program will culminate with business owners receiving their grant funds to put towards advertising that will generate customer traffic. The program will consist of two steps: Step 1 will focus on building a digital presence over four (4) weeks; and Step 2 will uncover the unique paid and non-paid advertising channels and what is the right path for each business owner. All sessions will take place in a group format and will be coupled with individual one-on-one consulting with SBDC

consultants. The program is only available in English at this time.

Step 1: Building a Digital Presence

Selected businesses will first complete three sessions on building a digital presence. At the end of three weeks, each awarded business will receive the grant funds to assist them in their digital/online paid-advertising promotion, developed in partnership with their SBDC consultant. We will be holding the Zoom sessions on **Tuesdays from 1 pm to 2:30 pm, starting Tuesday, October 25:**

Week 1 | Oct 25: All about Google (Tuesday, October 24)

Content

- Understanding how customers find you in a digital world
- Why Google?
- Creating your own Google profile

Homework

- Have a customer post a review
- Your Top 10 products you sell
- Who is your competition and what are they doing (digitally)?

Week 2 | Nov 1: Reaching my Audience through Facebook and Instagram

Content

- How to use social media, specifically Facebook and Instagram
- Capturing pictures and video
- Creating a successful: call to action

Exercise

- Create a Facebook or Instagram video or picture
- What is your call to action?

Week 3 | Nov 8: My First Facebook/Instagram Post

Content

- How to post a video or picture to Facebook or Instagram
- Each business owner will post their video/picture
- How to attract a fan base to social media
- Creating a successful social media campaign that increases sales

Week 4 | Nov 15: The Right Channel for My Business

Content

- How to generate leads/customers to your business
- Different forms of online advertising (PPC, social media, banners)
- Creating KPI's that Matter
- Understanding why a website is important

Exercise

- Choosing Social Media or Website Track

Step 2: Understanding How to Drive Traffic through Paid/Non-Paid Advertising

Week 5 | Nov 22: Advertising on Social Media

Content

- Different types of advertising campaigns on Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG)
- What is the cost to run an ad campaign? How much should you spend?
- What should you be measuring?
- What goes in a FB/IG ad campaign
- Are Twitter and TikTok a good option for your business?

Exercise

- Building a Content Calendar (Add from Weeks 1 - 3 along w handout/form)
- Verifying KPI's/goal
- Competition Analysis

Week 6 | Nov 29: Setting up the FB/IG Campaign

Content

- Let's put together and launch your FB/IG Campaign
- What are you offering (Call to action and image/video)?
- Who are you targeting?
- Which Keywords are you using?
- What is your goal?
- How much are you spending?

Exercise

- Setting Goals/Amounts for each Campaign
- Top 3 KPI's you will Track in your Grant

Wrap-up: Utilizing Grant for Paid Advertising – Measuring and Tracking

Each business owner will be assigned a SBDC business consultant to assist them with their paid advertising platform. The SBDC consultant will provide one-on-one assistance, customized to each business owner's needs. The SBDC will continue to work with each client through the program and beyond. Every quarter, the SBDC will track and measure the success of each business owner as they deploy their marketing campaigns. The SBDC will track change in sales, jobs created and increase in customer traffic.

City Reserved Rights

The City reserves the unqualified right, in its sole and absolute discretion at any time: (1) to amend or terminate this program with no recourse for any proposing applicant; (2) to choose or reject any or all applications received in response to this program; (3) to modify the application deadlines; (4) to request additional information of the applicants as deemed necessary and appropriate by the City; (5) to conduct further due diligence with applicants or any third party; (6) to modify the City's objectives or the scope of the program; (7) to modify program requirements, general terms and conditions, or eligible activities; and/or (8) to disqualify any proposing applicant on the basis of any real or perceived conflict of interest that is disclosed or revealed by materials submitted or by any data available to the City.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the Main Street Digital Grant Program, a business must meet certain criteria that has been established by the City of San Clemente and the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Department of Treasury for utilizing ARPA funds.

*General Terms and Conditions**

The applicant must meet the following minimum requirements to be considered for grant funding:

- The applicant must be a for-profit commercially-zoned brick and mortar retail business or a non-profit that supports business/culture/tourism and is physically located in the City of San Clemente;
- Cannabis-related businesses, gambling facilities, adult entertainment businesses, massage parlors, largely cash-based businesses and home-based businesses are not eligible;
- Residential or real estate projects including short-term rental operators are also not eligible;
- The applicant must have an active city business license since January 1, 2022;
- As of September 1, 2022, the applicant must have at least two employees and no more than twenty-five (25) full-time equivalent employees (two part-time employees equal one full-time employee);
- The applicant must be in good standing with the City (current on bills, no liens or judgements, etc);
- The business must submit the application and all required supporting documentation; and
- The applicant must attest that it experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- The amount requested (\$1000) cannot exceed the amount of lost revenue.

* City employees and elected and appointed officials are not eligible to participate in this program.

Eligible Activities

The funds must be used to develop a paid advertising campaign for the purpose of increasing revenue to offset lost revenue due to COVID-19 impacts. Each applicant will need to sign and verify that the use of funds will be spent on a paid advertising campaign, such as expressed above. Any use of funding other than for paid advertising is strictly prohibited. If there is a remaining balance after December 31, 2022, the business will be required to return the funds to the City by January 31, 2023.

Equal Opportunity Policy

The City and the SBDC shall not discriminate upon the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, marital status, ancestry or physical handicap in accepting applications and processing program application.

Application Process

Application

The Main Street Digital Grant application includes information about the small business/nonprofit, the number of employees in the organization, location of the organization, and amount of time in operation. The application and Grant Agreement will require the following Attestations:

- The business or nonprofit (“Organization”) experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- The Organization is a commercially-zoned retail business or a non-profit that supports business/culture/tourism and is physically located in the City of San Clemente.
- The Organization understands the grant is distributed as part of a six/seven week digital marketing training program.
- As of September 1, 2022, the business has a minimum of at least two employees and does not exceed a maximum of twenty-five (25) full or full-time equivalent employees (two part-time employees equal one full-time employee).
- Certification that funds will be spent by December 31, 2022.
- Certification that the Organization is able to produce financial records to show the economic losses, if requested.
- Certification that financial loss and grant amount spending records will be available for audit when requested. The Organization must maintain records for at least 6 years.

Application Period

The program application will be available at **9:00 am on Friday, September 30, 2022**. Applicants must apply for the training program by visiting <https://ociesmallbusiness.org/san-clemente-digital/> and submitting the application online.

Applications must be submitted online and will be accepted from **Friday, September 30, 2022 to 10:00 pm, Sunday, October 9, 2022**. The applications period will close promptly at 10:00 pm on October 9, 2022. Applications received online after this due date and time will be considered late and will not be accepted so long as the City has received at least 20 qualified applications by the stated deadline.

The City will then select twenty (20) recipients **by lottery** for the twenty (20) \$1000 grants if there are more than 20 eligible applicants with complete applications. **The City anticipates the number of applications will exceed the amount of funding available for disbursement. As a result, the City will implement a lottery system for all eligible small businesses.**

Documentation Requirements

Upon pre-approval and selection for the program, businesses will be required to submit the following documents by **October 21, 2022** for review and verification in order to receive the grant:

- The most recent monthly bank statement;

- W-9;
- Direct Deposit Form (includes voided check which matches account and routing numbers listed on Direct Deposit Form. Grant funds are directly deposited into your account); and
- A signed city Small Business Grant Agreement, which includes business impact statement and self-certification.

Although selection is not guaranteed, Organizations should begin to collect the required documentation in order to expedite the approval process in the event they are selected.

Grant Review and Approval Process

Review

The application will be reviewed by the SBDC to determine application completeness and preliminary eligibility. **The application must be complete by the application submittal deadline date of October 9, 2021, 10:00 pm.**

Lottery

The City is expecting the Main Street Digital Grant Program to have an overwhelming number of applications. If the number of applications far exceeds the amount of funding that is available for disbursement, the City will implement a lottery system for all eligible small businesses. Once applications and eligibility have been approved, they will be assigned a number and entered into a lottery. Potential program participants will be contacted by email, phone and/or letter **by Monday, October 17, 2022.**

Verification and Eligibility Determination

Upon pre-approval and selection, the SBDC shall request the applicant submit all required documentation for review and verification for grant approval. SBDC will assign a consultant to work with each individual grantee to assist with completing all required documentation. Grantees documentation will be submitted directly to SBDC on a secured site. If the grant request meets the criteria for program funding, all required documentation **must be submitted by Friday, October 21, 2021 by 5:00 pm to remain eligible.**

Grant Disbursement

After each business recipient submits a complete set of required documentation and attends the first three (3) weeks of the training program, the documents will be reviewed and verified, and funds will be disbursed to the individual business. The City will award grant funds in a single disbursement. **All grant funds shall be expended on a paid advertising campaign by no later than December 31, 2022.** Any portion of the grant funds not expended on eligible expenses shall be returned to the City by no later than January 31, 2023.

Grant Report

Eligible expenses are considered necessary expenditures that provide economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency. In the event a business does not expend the entire grant amount, the business will be required to return the remaining balance by January 31, 2023.

The business recipient shall keep documentation evidencing use of the Grant Funds. The City may request to evaluate the business's compliance with the Grant program. If it is determined the business did not expend the funds consistent with the Eligible Activities, it may constitute an Event of Default under the Grant Agreement.

Post Grant Follow Up

The SBDC will continue to work one-on-one with each grantee, throughout the next twelve (12) months. If contacted by the City or SBDC, all awardees will be required to update the City on their business and if additional employees have been hired or employees retained. A twelve-month report will be created by the SBDC and the City of city, to document the success of the program. By acceptance of the grant, the business agrees to comply with City information requests that may include use of photos or business logos.

Program Complaint and Appeal Process

Complaints concerning the city Main Street Digital Grant Program should be made to the City of San Clemente Economic Development Department. If unresolved in this manner, the complaint or appeal shall be made in writing and filed with the City Manager's Office.

Contact Information

For questions about the guidelines and application or assistance in completing the application and to set up a one-on-one consultation (at no cost), please contact the SBDC at:

Manal Richa, Director CSUF SBDC
15375 Barranca Parkway, Suite A111
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For additional information regarding the Main Street Digital Grant Program, please contact:

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