

Tustin Cares Program

COVID-19 Related

Main Street Digital Grant Program

Program Description & Guidelines



Program Overview

About the Program

As part of the Tustin Cares program, the City of Tustin has partnered with Orange County/Inland Empire Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to offer a six to seven-week Main Street Digital Grant Program, which will provide training and funding to woman-owned and/or minority-owned small brick and mortar retail businesses needing financial assistance to increase their revenue due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. All eligible retail businesses are invited to apply to participate in the learning program and receive a grant to assist in applying the practical skills learned in the program to be used for paid advertising on social media. Businesses which have previously received alternative sources of funding such as the City of Tustin 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 woman-owned and/or minority-owned businesses with a minimum of one (1) employee – not including the owner, and a maximum of twenty-five (25) employees (full or full-time equivalent combination) may be eligible to receive a digital marketing grant of five hundred dollars (\$500). 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 of Tustin for COVID-19 response, relief and reinvestment. The City is allocating up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in total for the Tustin Cares 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 the Tustin Main Street Digital Grant Program and disbursement of funds will take place through the City's Finance Department. The City's Program Partner, the SBDC will be responsible for program administration, marketing, application processing, underwriting, training and for the review and 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 the City Council, 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 a small grant 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 /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 first program will be conducted in English only.

Step 1: Building a Digital Presence

Each business owner will complete three sessions on building a digital presence. At the end of three weeks, each business owner will have the opportunity to apply for a grant to assist them in their paid-advertising promotion, developed in partnership with their SBDC consultant.

Week 1: All about Google

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: 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

Homework

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

Week 3: 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

Homework - Apply for Grant

- All participants that completed all three weeks will apply for grant

Week 4: 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

Homework

- Choosing Social Media or Website Track

Now business participants will choose Social Media or Google Track.

***Step 2A:** Understanding How to Drive Traffic through Paid/Non-Paid Advertising for businesses that have chosen to go the Social Media pathway for paid advertising*

Week 5 - 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?

Homework

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

Week 6 - 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?

Homework

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

***Step 2B:** Understanding How to Drive Traffic through Paid/Non-Paid Advertising for businesses that have chosen to go the Website pathway for paid advertising*

Week 5: How to Reach Your Customer Online through Google Ads

Content

- What goes into a Google ad campaign
- How to create the right words to attract your audience
- How to use Google search tool to conduct key word research
- Setting up Google ad builder
- How to do research what competitors are doing online for free

Homework

- Identify what your top 2-3 competitor's key words
- Identify the campaign you want to run

Week 6: How to Build Out a Successful Google Ad campaign

Content

- Overview of homework

- Core elements of a successful campaign
- Break down an example of a successful campaign
- How to use Google Analytics to measure a campaign
- Examples of how to utilize demographics for targeting your ads

Homework

- Create key word list
- Identify geographic area and audience demographics

Week 7: Putting it all Together

Content

- Review homework
- Launch a campaign live

Homework

- Work with your consultant to launch your ad

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 Tustin Main Street Digital Grant Program, a business must meet certain criteria that has been established by the City of Tustin and the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Department of Treasury for utilizing ARPA funds. The business must also demonstrate the need for financial support resulting from the temporary loss of revenue due to the impact of COVID-19.

*General Terms and Conditions**

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

- The business must be a for-profit commercially-zoned brick and mortar retail business and physically located in Tustin;
- The business must be a woman-owned and/or minority-owned business, at least 51% owned by one or more women/minorities;
- 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 business must have an active Tustin business license since January 1, 2020;
- As of July 1, 2021, the business must have at least one employee – not including the owner- and no more than twenty-five (25) full-time equivalent employees (two part-time employees equal one full-time employee);
- The business must be in good standing with the City (current on bills, no liens or judgements, etc.), unless directly correlated to COVID-19 impacts;
- The business must submit the application and all required supporting documentation; and
- The business applicant must certify it experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- The amount requested (\$500) 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, 2021, the business will be required to return the funds to the City by January 31, 2022.

In addition, the applicant cannot use these funds for paid advertising costs that have been or will be reimbursed or recovered through other funding programs.

Equal Opportunity Policy

The City of Tustin 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 Tustin Main Street Digital Grant Program application includes information about the small business, the number of employees in the business, location of the business, amount of time in business, woman-owned and/or minority-owned business status, and type a Retail business –

goods or services. The application and Grant Agreement will require the following Attestations:

- The business experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- The business is a woman-owned and/or minority-owned business, at least 51% owned by one or more women/minorities.
- The business is commercially-zoned retail business.
- The business understands the grant is distributed as part of a six/seven week digital marketing training program.
- As of July 1, 2021, the business has a minimum of at least one employee – not including the owner- 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, 2021.
- Certification that the business 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 business must maintain records for at least 6 years.

Application Period

The program application will be available at **9:00 am on Monday, October 11, 2021**. Applicants must apply for the training program by visiting www.tustinca.org/businessgrant and submitting the application online.

Applications must be submitted online and will be accepted from **9:00 am, Monday, October 11, 2021 to 10:00 pm, Sunday, October 17, 2021**. The applications period will close promptly at 10:00 pm on October 17, 2021. Applications received online after this due date and time will be considered late and will not be accepted.

The City will disburse twenty (20) \$500 grants, a total of \$10,000, to twenty (20) woman-owned and/or minority-owned businesses. 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 25, 2021** for review and verification in order to receive the grant:

- The most recent monthly bank statement; and
- Current City of Tustin Business License.

In addition, SBDC will provide the selected businesses with the following documents to complete and submit by **October 25, 2021**:

- 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);

- Check Request Form; and
- A signed Tustin Small Business Grant Agreement, which includes business impact statement and self-certification.

Although selection is not guaranteed, businesses 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 17, 2021, 10:00 pm.**

Lottery

The City of Tustin 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 **starting October 20, 2021.**

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 October 25, 2021 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, 2021.** Any portion of the grant funds not expended on eligible expenses shall be returned to the City by no later than January 31, 2022

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, 2022.

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 Tustin, 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 Tustin Main Street Digital Grant Program should be made to the City of Tustin 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 additional information regarding the Main Street Digital Grant Program, please contact the following:

City of Tustin
Economic Development Department
300 Centennial Way
Tustin, CA 92780
(714) 573-3117
TustinEconDevDept@tustinca.org

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:

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