



Sidney Small Business Advancement Program

Fostering Local Growth Through Job Creation and Retention

Program Overview

The Sidney Small Business Advancement Program (SSBAP) is an economic incentive developed by the City of Sidney to support and strengthen the local small business community. Modeled after the successful Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act (NSBAA), this program is designed to encourage entrepreneurship, assist with business expansion, and promote job creation and retention. By providing targeted financial assistance and access to professional services, the SSBAP aims to foster a resilient and prosperous local economy.

Program budget

The Sidney Small Business Advancement Program is funded annually with a total cap of \$100,000. This budget ensures sustainable support for multiple businesses while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The funding cap may be reviewed and adjusted annually based on program demand, economic conditions, and available city resources. This will be a competitive incentive program and showcase businesses that are striving for job creation and retention of their employees.

Program Objectives

The SSBAP seeks to:

- Foster the development and expansion of small businesses in Sidney.
- Stimulate job growth and help maintain existing employment levels.
- Encourage job creation and the retention of existing employment opportunities.
- Provide businesses with access to professional services critical for growth and sustainability.
- Support economic diversification and resilience in Sidney's local economy.

In order to address the concern that this will become a way to continue paying employees, we will make this incentive more competitive with a lower budget cap.



Incentive Categories

Professional Services Grant

- Maximum Award: \$5,000 per business.
- Purpose: To assist with essential business services such as business planning, accounting, legal support, marketing strategies, website development, and business formation (e.g., LLC or corporation setup).
- Eligibility Criteria:
 - The business must be located within Sidney city limits.
 - Must employ at least one, but no more than five, full-time equivalent (FTE) employees at the time of application within
 - The business must commit to creating or retaining at least one job, in addition to the owner, within 12 months of receiving the grant. The position must pay no less than the current Nebraska minimum wage or the prevailing wage for similar positions in the region, whichever is higher.

Startup Business Grant

- Maximum Award: \$15,000 per business.
- Purpose: To support startups with initial costs directly contributing to job creation, such as equipment purchases, leasehold improvements, or inventory acquisition.
- Eligibility Criteria:
 - The business must be less than two years old.
 - The business must create at least one new full-time equivalent (FTE) position within the first year of receiving the grant. The position must pay no less than the current Nebraska minimum wage or the prevailing wage for similar positions in the region, whichever is higher.
 - Businesses will give a description of how the grant, should it be awarded, would positively affect the community and the consequences of not being awarded the grant.
 - Businesses will identify and present how this funding would work in conjunction with other funding established for startup.

Existing Business Expansion Forgivable Loan

- Maximum Award: \$10,000 per business.
- Purpose: To assist existing small businesses in expanding operations, adding new employees, or retaining positions.
- Eligibility Criteria:
 - The business must be at least two years old.
 - The business must create at least one new FTE position or retain two positions. The applicant must show how it will assist in retaining those two positions.

Note: All incentive options are available to businesses undergoing an ownership transition.



Job Creation & Retention Requirements

All grant recipients must:

- Submit a Job Creation/Retention Plan with their application, detailing how the grant will result in new or sustained employment opportunities.
- Provide quarterly employment reports for the first 12 months following the receipt of funds.
- Acknowledge a repayment clause: If the business fails to meet job creation or retention commitments, the grant may convert into a 2% interest-bearing loan or require partial repayment based on a prorated formula tied to job performance metrics.



Application & Review Process

Application

Applicants must submit an application with supporting documentation, including:

- A summary of their business concept or expansion plan.
- Financial projections for the next three years.
- A job creation/retention plan.
- An itemized plan detailing the intended use of grant funds.

Review & Selection

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis by the Sidney Economic Development Advisory Committee; however, reviews and funding decisions will be made twice annually.

Spring Review: Applications submitted by March 1 will be reviewed with decisions announced by May 1. If further information is needed from an applicant, or further documentation submitted, the applicant will have until April 1 to submit the information/documentation. Applicants that submit all necessary information/documentation within their first application submission will be considered first.

Fall Review: Applications submitted by September 1 will be reviewed with decisions announced by December 1. If further information is needed from an applicant, or further documentation submitted, the applicant will have until November 1 to submit the information/documentation. Applicants that submit all necessary information/documentation within their first application submission will be considered first.

Upon agreement from the EDCAC, the application will be sent to City Council for final approval.

Note: Priority will be given to applicants who:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of their market.
- Show realistic financial planning.
- Propose significant job creation or retention impact.

Approval & Disbursement

Successful applicants will enter into an agreement outlining grant terms, job commitments, and reporting requirements. Funds will be disbursed upon execution of the agreement.

Please Note: All applications submitted to the Small Business Advancement Program will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness. Final decisions regarding the approval, denial, or level of award are made at the sole discretion of the advisory committee. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.



Program Administration

The Sidney Economic Development Advisory Committee will administer the SSBAP.

Business owners may work with E3 or other organizations to assist with business counseling, financial management, and mentorship to ensure the long-term success of participating businesses.

Program Accountability and Adjustments

The City of Sidney will publish an annual report summarizing:

- The number of businesses supported.
- Total funds disbursed.
- Jobs created and retained.
- Economic impact metrics.

Based on these results and feedback from participants, the program structure and funding cap may be adjusted in future years. Program Accountability Reports will be conducted after every fall cycle of the program.

Non-Compliance and Repayment Terms

All recipients of Sidney Small Business Advancement Program (SSBAP) funds must comply with the terms outlined in their grant agreement, including but not limited to job creation or retention commitments, use of funds for approved purposes, and timely submission of required reports.

If a business fails to meet the obligations stated in their agreement, the following actions may be taken:

Repayment Requirement

- The grant award may convert to a low-interest loan. The recipient will be required to repay all or a portion of the funds received based on a prorated formula reflecting the percentage of unmet job creation or retention goals.
- If no job creation or retention occurs, the full amount of the grant may be subject to repayment.

Notice and Cure Period

- The grant award may convert to a low-interest loan. The recipient will be required to repay all or a portion of the funds received based on a prorated formula reflecting the percentage of unmet job creation or retention goals.
- If no job creation or retention occurs, the full amount of the grant may be subject to repayment.



Ineligibility for Future Funding

- Businesses found to be in non-compliance may become ineligible for future incentives or assistance programs offered by the City of Sidney for a period of up to three years.

Legal Recourse

- The City reserves the right to pursue legal action or collection efforts if repayment terms are not fulfilled.

Exceptions and Appeals

- In cases of extenuating circumstances (such as natural disasters, unforeseen economic hardships, or other significant impacts beyond the business owner's control), the recipient may request a review by the Sidney Economic Development Advisory Committee.
- Appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the City may modify repayment terms or waive certain requirements if deemed appropriate.