



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

On March 1, 2022, the Merced County Board of Supervisors established the County's COVID-19 Business Assistance Program (Microbusiness COVID-19 Relief Grant). The program was created by CalOSBA to assist qualified microbusinesses, as defined, underserved small business groups – women, minorities (people of color), veteran-owned, businesses in low-to-moderate income (LMI), and rural communities that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted with grants of \$2,500 to each eligible microbusiness. The following FAQs regarding this program and the grant application process is intended only as a guide for general and easy reference.

Q1. How do I apply for this grant?

Please submit your complete application online at www.mcbizgrants.com

Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, for qualified applicants. Incomplete applications will NOT be considered.

Q2. What is a Microbusiness?

A microbusiness (micro-enterprise) is defined as a small business with zero or a handful of employee(s) and that operates on a very small scale.

Q3. What are the eligibility requirements for Microbusinesses?

1. A microbusiness that began its operation before December 31, 2019.
2. A microbusiness that is currently active and operating or has a clear plan to reopen when the state permits the reopening of the business.
3. A microbusiness that was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and saw a 10% deduction in revenue from 2019 to 2020.
4. A for-profit or non-profit microbusiness with less than fifty thousand dollars (**\$50,000**) in revenues in the 2019 taxable year.
5. A microbusiness that did NOT receive the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant.
6. A microbusiness that has fewer than five full-time equivalent employees and had fewer than five full-time employees in the 2019 and 2020 taxable years.

Q4. What kind of documentation is needed for the Microbusiness Grant requirements?

A microbusiness owner can provide an acceptable form of government-issued photo ID (**state, domestic, or foreign**), and documentation to demonstrate:

- Proof of business (**please have one of the following**)
 - Active business license or permit (county or city)



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

- State of California Seller's Permit
- Merced County tax bill
- Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Non-profit Organization (IRS Determination Letter)
- California State Child Care license (Childcare providers only)
- California Secretary of State filing document
- Recent Business Tax Returns
- Bank statement
- Alternate Verification Form, if none of the above exist
- 2019 Business Tax Returns (**please have one of the following**)
 - [1040, Schedule C](#)
 - Non-profits Form [990](#), Form [990-EZ](#), or Form [990-N](#)
- W9 filled out (to download a W9, visit <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>)

Q5. Are there limits on the size of the grant I can request?

Yes. Every grant is exactly \$2,500.

Q6. How must the recipient utilize the grant for their business?

The grant funds should be used for one or more of the following uses:

- Purchase of equipment;
- Investment in working capital (ie., payroll, rent);
- Application for, or renewal of, a local permit including, but not limited to, a permit to operate as a sidewalk vendor;
- Payment of business debt accrued due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and/or,
- Costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and related health and safety restrictions or business interruptions or closures incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q7. I own a business in Merced County and a business outside of Merced County – can I still apply?

Yes. But only for businesses headquartered in Merced County. Please also confirm that your business meets the eligibility requirements.

Q8. I have received financial assistance from county or federal government, or from other programs, will that affect my eligibility?

Past receipt of a county or federal grant program does not disqualifies applicants.



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

However, if you received funding assistance from the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program, you will not qualify for this grant.

Q9. If I received funding from the CA COVID-19 Relief Grant, would I still be eligible for the grant?

No. Applicants cannot have received a grant from the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program.

Q10. What does it mean to be in “good standing” with the County?

As a starting place, all businesses physically located and/or conducting business in Merced County must have an active business license either with Merced County (for the unincorporated areas) or with one of its incorporated cities (Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos and Merced). In this regard, please take note that a business can still be in good standing without a business license if that business is exempted or excluded from that jurisdiction’s business license ordinances.

For example, in unincorporated Merced County, many agriculture- oriented businesses are exempt and do not require a business license.

Those businesses would still be in good standing for the purposes of making an application. Should you have questions about business licenses, please contact the County’s Department of Community & Economic Development at (209) 385-7686 for issues within unincorporated Merced County. For business license questions within one of the cities, please contact their offices directly.

Other examples of being in good standing include the following:

1. The applicant business must not be in breach of contract or agreement with the County or one of its incorporated cities;
2. The applicant business must not have unpaid or delinquent property taxes. However, those with existing payment plans already in place at the time of application, may still apply; and,
3. The applicant business must be fully compliant with all federal, state and local laws and regulations.

We have developed this program to make it as simple and easy for applicants to apply. We simply want to ensure that all of our applicants are treated fairly and equitably, so that we can help them during these most challenging times.

Q11. Can I mail my application?

No. We are only accepting electronically submitted applications because applicants are being reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. However, if you



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

need help applying for the grant, contact Mario Pena at (209) 724-2046. Our team and/or partners can walk you through the application process. You can also get in person assistance from our team.

Q12. Is a Matricula Consular acceptable as a form of identification?

Yes. A Matricula Consular can be a valuable identification card living in the U.S.

Q13. If I received Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), am I still eligible?

Yes. You are eligible to apply as long as your business meets all other eligibility requirements.

Q14. Are nonprofit organizations eligible to apply?

Yes. A 501 (c) 3 organization can apply and must meet the eligibility requirements.

Q15. Can an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) eligible to apply?

Yes. As long as the applicant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Q16. Can a nonprofit 501 (C) 6 or (C) 19 apply for this grant?

Yes. Nonprofits are eligible if they comply with all eligibility requirements of the program.

Q17. Are religious organizations/churches eligible to apply?

No.

Q18. Are sole-proprietors eligible to apply?

Yes. As long as the applicant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Q19. I am self-employed, am I eligible to apply?

Yes. Self-employed applicants can apply if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Q20. I am a swap meet vendor. Am I eligible to apply for the grant?

Yes. Vendors can apply if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Q21. What if I am a Gig worker (ex: Uber driver)? Am I eligible to apply for the grant?



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Yes. Uber, Lyft, or other forms of drivers are independent contractors and can apply if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Q22. If my business has multiple locations, can I apply for more than 1 grant?

No. Each individual/business entity may only apply for one (1) grant.

Q23. If I run two businesses, can I apply twice?

No.

Q24. Who can apply on behalf of a business?

Only owners can apply on behalf of their business. Microbusinesses must be the applicant's primary source of income. Microbusiness owners must own at least 51% of the business.

Q25. What if my microbusiness is a side business and I have another job. Am I eligible?

No.

Q26. What is the minimum and maximum revenue threshold? Is it based on gross or net revenue?

Microbusinesses must have a minimum of \$1,000 in annual gross revenue to qualify, and revenues must be less than \$50,000 in the 2019 taxable year.

Q27. My revenue exceeds \$50,000 but my net income is below \$50,000. Am I eligible to apply?

No. The grant requires applicants to display less than \$50,000 in revenues in the 2019 taxable year.

Q28. Can this program award grants to short-term rental business owners?

Microbusinesses operating as passive income (such as rentals) are not eligible for the grant program.

Q29. If I start the application and have to stop, will it save my place or will I need to start over?

You will need to start the application over. We've worked hard to ensure that the application can be completed in a single session. We encourage you to have all of the



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

necessary documents available when you begin the application.

If you are on your mobile device, take photos of your required documents before you start.

Q30. How many grants will be issued?

Merced County will issue 115 grants to qualified microbusiness owners.

Q31. Are home-based businesses eligible to apply?

Yes. Home-based businesses are eligible and must meet all of the requirements.

Q32. Is this a loan?

No. The microbusiness grant is not a loan and does not require paying back. However, each applicant will receive a 1099-G from Merced County to report for taxes.

Q33. How long will it take to fill out the application?

If you have all of your documents, it should take 15 minutes.

Q34. Will I get a confirmation that my application was received?

You will receive a confirmation email once the application is submitted.

Q35. Who can I contact if I have more questions?

Please contact Mario Pena, Staff Services Analyst, at (209) 724-2046.

Q36. What if I make a mistake on my application?

We may reach out if we have a question. Your final application will be reviewed after completed applications.

Q37. When will checks be sent out to eligible recipients for the grant?

Merced County will begin to distribute award confirmations starting June 15, 2022. Businesses will receive a grant agreement by Adobe Sign to confirm the terms of the grant. Once the grant contract is signed and verified, Merced County will send out grant checks via USPS to the business address on your W9. Checks could take two to three weeks to arrive at your destination. Business can expect to receive funds around July 15,



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

2022.

Q38. When will you review applications?

We will review applications as they are received. We will begin to award grants (make award decisions) on June 15, 2022.

Q39. When will the program end?

The grant will close August 9, 2022, or until the program funds have been exhausted.

Q40. I prefer to apply in person. Can I setup an appointment?

Yes. If you prefer to apply in person, please contact Mario Pena at (209) 724-2046 and schedule an appointment. We will walk you through the online submission. You can also contact one of our community-based organizations for assistance.

- Central Valley Opportunity Center – (209) 357-0062
- Los Banos Chamber of Commerce – (209) 826-2495
- Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – (209) 384-9537
- Merced Lao Family – (209) 384-7384

Q41. How can I apply if I do not have access to a computer?

If you do not have a computer, the application is very mobile-friendly. We suggest using your smartphone or tablet to fill out the application. If you prefer to use a computer, you may contact your local job center (Worknet) or library to schedule a time to use one of the computers.

Worknet Merced County

Atwater – 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, 209.724.2046

Merced – 1205 W. 18th Street, Merced, 209.724.2100

Los Banos – 800 7th St, Los Banos, 209.710.6140 – Wednesdays

Merced County Library

Merced Main Library	2100 O Street	(209) 385-7484
Dos Palos Branch Library	2002 Almond Street	(209) 392-2155
Gustine Public Library	206 6 th Street	(209) 854-3013
Le Grand Branch Library	12949 Le Grand Road	(209) 389-4541
Snelling Library	15916 CA-59	(209) 563-6616
Irwin-Hilmar Public Library	20041 Falke Street	(209) 632-0746



MICROBUSINESS COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q42. Do I need to upload scanned documents, or can I upload a photo of a document taken from my phone?

You can use a photo of a document. Please be sure the photo is clear enough to verify the information needed. Blurry or cropped photos may delay your application.