

SMALL BUSINESS MOBILITY FUND

# Entrepreneurship Academy Grants



economic mobility initiative

department of economic opportunity  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### What is the Small Business Mobility Fund Entrepreneurship Academy Grants?

The Small Business Mobility Fund Entrepreneurship Academy Grants provide \$2,000 grants to help EMI Entrepreneurship Academy graduates countywide, either launch their business or take their business to the next level. The program is part of the County's Economic Mobility Initiative (EMI), designed to reduce barriers to business success through education, training, technical assistance, and access to capital.

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### Who is eligible for this grant?

To qualify:

- Applicants must be a Graduate of a DEO Economic Mobility Initiative (EMI) Entrepreneurship Academy
- Must be a for-profit business headquartered in the County of Los Angeles
- Applicant must reside in LA County
- Applicant must be the majority owner and manager
- Business must have less than 100 employees
- Must be domiciled in California and have required filings with the California Secretary of State
- Annual gross business revenue must not exceed \$6 million according to most recent tax return (2023 or later). If no tax return is filed, household income cannot exceed \$300,000.
- Existing businesses must be in good standing with all local, state, and federal taxing and licensing authorities
- Cannot be in list of ineligible businesses available at [opportunity.lacounty.gov/SBMF](https://opportunity.lacounty.gov/SBMF)

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### How much funding can I receive?

Applicants of the Entrepreneurship Academy Grants may be eligible for up to \$2,000 in grant funding.

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### What can the grant funds be used for?

Funds may be used for essential start-up expenses, such as permit and license fees, website development and branding, start-up and set-up costs, accounting software, intellectual property protections, packaging, inventory, equipment, required building permits, facade and tenant improvements.

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### How will awards be distributed across the County?

The Entrepreneurship Academy Grants ensure equity by requiring at least 15% of awards be awarded to applicants in each Supervisorial District, so funding reaches communities across Los Angeles County. In addition, priority is provided to businesses dislocated by recent wildfires or opening a business in the unincorporated areas of the County in close proximity to the fires, among other factors such as number of employees and location in areas with comparatively high unemployment rates.



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### How do I apply?

Please visit [opportunity.lacounty.gov/SBMF](https://opportunity.lacounty.gov/SBMF) for a link to the application. Applications are available in English and Spanish. Businesses can also call ICON CDC at (818) 616-4118 or email [info@iconcdc.org](mailto:info@iconcdc.org) for assistance in other languages.

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### When does the application window open and close?

Applications launched on January 8, 2026, at 12:00 PM and will remain open until February 13, 2026, at 11:00 PM.

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### Can I save my application and finish it later?

Yes, applicants can save and return to their application at any time using the same email address

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### What documents will I need to submit?

Applicants will need:

- A completed Business Plan with planned use of funds
- Proof of residency
- Proof of graduation from a DEO Economic Mobility Initiative Entrepreneurship Academy
- Government-Issued photo identification
- Business license and any required filings, such as Doing Business As (DBA)/Fictitious Business Name (FBN), or Corporation filing
- CA Secretary of State filings
- Any related industry permits from the State and the County of Los Angeles (i.e. Health Permit, Establishment License, etc.)
- Signed most recent business tax return (2023 or later). Personal return if a new business and has not filed a tax return.
- Form 941, if firm has employees

Additional post-award documentation, such as bank information, a media release agreement with media follow-up from ICON CDC, will be required. Please note, awardees will receive a 1099 tax form. Please refer to the main application site for additional details and requirements.

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### What if I do not have a business plan?

ICON CDC can provide you a business plan template for you to use. A basic business plan should briefly outline the business's purpose and goals, describe its products or services and target market, explain how it will operate and attract customers, identify the management or ownership structure, and summarize key financial information such as startup costs, revenue expectations, and funding needs, providing a clear and cohesive picture of how the business will be launched, managed, and sustained.





## Frequently Asked Questions

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### What should I do if I do not have a copy of my EMI Entrepreneurship Academy graduation certificate?

Please ensure you note where you graduated from and when you graduated in the application.

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### Will there be support to help me complete the application?

Yes. DEO in partnership with ICON CDC will host five virtual workshops and five in-person workshops/application clinics (one in each Supervisorial District, in English and Spanish). Please refer to website for dates and logistical information.

For questions and technical assistance:

**ICON CDC**

**North Valley:** 13168 Van Nuys Blvd., Pacoima, CA 91331

**South Valley:** 5805 Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 801,  
Van Nuys, CA 91411

**Email:** [info@iconcdc.org](mailto:info@iconcdc.org)

For general questions:

**DEO Office of  
Small Business**

**Address:** 4716 E. Cesar E. Chavez, Los Angeles 90022

**Email:** [osb@opportunity.lacounty.gov](mailto:osb@opportunity.lacounty.gov)

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### What support is available for applicants who do not speak English?

Multilingual assistance, including application support is available. Please contact ICON CDC for assistance.

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### How much will be distributed?

Through the Entrepreneurship Grants, a total of approximately 68 grants will be distributed at this time, with at least 15% of awardees operating in each Supervisorial District.

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### How will applicants be selected?

Funding is limited, and eligibility does not guarantee a grant. Eligible applicants will be scored based on a predetermined priority matrix, which includes number of employees, locations in areas with comparatively high unemployment rates, and Business Plan, among other factors. While not a requirement, priority is also provided to businesses dislocated by recent wildfires or opening a business in the unincorporated areas of the County in close proximity to the fires. A blind lottery system will be applied for instances where there are more eligible applicants within the same score bracket than grants available.





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### How will I know if I am selected for funding?

Applicants will receive notifications from ICON CDC by email regarding award status, additional document requests, or denials. ICON CDC has a secured site to secure confidential information.

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### When will I find out if I've been selected?

Award notifications are expected to go out through March and April 2026 following the review and selection process.

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### What happens after I receive the grant?

Awardees will be asked to:

- Sign a grant agreement confirming eligibility and agreeing to use of funds for approved business expenses
- Complete a post-award survey to help measure program impact
- Provide information to secure tax forms (W-9)
- Sign a Media Release form (allowing ICON CDC and DEO to use testimonial/success stories)
- Work with an assigned case manager to track grant use and business milestones
- Provide receipts and proof of eligible expenses
- When applicable, be referred to a Concierge Services Representative from DEO's Office of Small Business to get individualized support acquiring permits from the County or other small business service providers in designated cities.

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### If selected, how will I get my payment?

Payments will be sent directly to the applicant's business bank account through ACH transfer.

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### Will I be expected to report the grant on my taxes?

Please contact a tax professional to discuss your specific situation. However, please note that a 1099 MISC Form will be issued by ICON CDC.

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### What if I am a sidewalk or street vendor or home-based business, do I qualify for Entrepreneurship Academy Grants?

Only if you graduated from the EMI Entrepreneurship Academy program. As a sidewalk vendor you can also apply for a Small Business Mobility Fund Formalization Grant, providing grants for up to \$5,000 to help vendors formalize their business. You can learn more at [opportunity.lacounty.gov/small-business-mobility-fund](https://opportunity.lacounty.gov/small-business-mobility-fund).

