



Small Business Technical Assistance Program

Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2026
Lead Division: Business and Community Development
<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised 7/1/2025
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Loan <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Credit <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance

Introduction

Background Information: The Small Business Technical Assistance (SBTA) Grant was originally developed as the Entrepreneurship Partner Grant (EPG) in FY22 as a combination of the previous Seed Accelerator and Capacity Building Entrepreneurial Support programs. The programs were combined to simplify program offerings and provide support outside the structure of a traditional accelerator.

In FY23, the EPG program was changed to a completely competitive application process. This change was completed to further clarify and simplify eligibility and review parameters. In addition, WEDC implemented application rounds with a focus on increasing opportunities in underserved communities (rural, veteran, and minority-focused).

In FY26, the program is renamed and moved from E&I to BCD to enhance its focus on providers of technical assistances to traditional small businesses

Program's Purpose: The SBTA program provides grants to technical assistance providers, which can be used for their operational costs and for accelerator or more in-depth programs. These funds support technical assistance programming for all stages of a small business's life cycle.

The SBTA program is intended to increase traditional small business activities across Wisconsin. The program will strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem by utilizing community building, capacity building, technical assistance, and other similar support. Those served by the funded programs may be provided with a wide range of support, including, experienced hands-on mentorship, educational programming, community building, leadership training, entrepreneurship and networking events, idea validation, and business development strategies.

The program provides an entity operating a not-for-profit traditional small business technical assistance program with grant funding used to support its direct operational expenses for specific projects and initiatives. Program funds may also be used for technical assistance program participation and development.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants: SBTA applicants must meet the following criteria:



- Be a not-for-profit organization, to include nonprofit entities, units of government, educational institutions, community organizations, foundations, Tribal entities, or non-profit entities acting as a fiscal agent on behalf of another organization.
- Is requesting funding to create and/or manage programs to foster entrepreneurial community development, enhance capacity, offer technical assistance, or support other similar entrepreneurial initiatives or program(s) to support the local entrepreneurial and traditional small business ecosystem.

Eligible Use of Funds: SBTA grants can fund the following activities. Costs can only be applied to grant and matching fund expenses after WEDC approval.

- Operational expenses related to the project and provision of technical assistance to businesses.

Matching: Applicants must provide matching funds at a rate of 1:1 of the SBTA funds. Matching funds may be cash or in-kind contributions.

Available Incentives

FY26: \$2,000,000

Award Sizes: The maximum SBTA grant amount is \$200,000.

Award per Applicant: Applicants may receive no more than one award per fiscal year.

Activities and Expected Outcomes

Assist 15 organizations which will assist 365 businesses.

Impact: Enhance the statewide startup ecosystem to support and accelerate the success of Wisconsin's small business companies through innovative technical assistance programs. Enhancing the growth and long-term success of Wisconsin's traditional small businesses and entrepreneurs through technical assistance programs offered by SBTA applicants as a partner ultimately increases the number of startups, fosters growth opportunities, and creates more jobs.

Metrics: As both a business development and local entrepreneurial network support program, performance reporting metrics for SBTA are focused on measuring assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses as well as measuring the connection of project and community. SBTA program metrics include the following list, and each project will include one or more of these metrics in its reporting requirements depending on the project's specified use of funds.

- Pass-Through Businesses Assisted (Technical)
- Individuals Served/Engaged
- Leverage – Total



Application Guideline

Timeline: Applications will be accepted, evaluated, and awarded up to twice per fiscal year during the summer and winter. The grant is a competitive program, and award rounds may have a focus such as expanding existing programs, pilot programs, and programs focused on identified themes at the time of the announcement.

Scoring Criteria: WEDC will include but not limit the SBTA scoring criteria to the items below. Specific scoring criteria will be announced along with the opening of each round of applications.

- Project Alignment and Feasibility:
 - The extent to which the work plan is feasible, including project range, duration, and impact.
 - The extent to which the applicant and project collaborators may have relevant experience and historical performance in program administration, including previous WEDC awards, if applicable.
- Financial Viability:
 - The extent to which matching resources are available and utilized within the project budget.
 - The extent to which the project budget supports entrepreneurs compared to supporting operations as it relates to the overall intensity, duration, or rigor of the project.
 - The extent to which WEDC funds impact the applicants' ability to assist individuals and/or companies.
- Outcome and Impact:
 - The extent to which the applicant demonstrates and plans to track impact within measurable, feasible, and impactful project outcomes.
 - The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a unique position to meet community needs for the target population or location.
- Innovation and Sustainability:
 - The extent to which the program model can be replicated and/or sustained in other areas of Wisconsin.
- Additional Considerations:
 - Presence of partnering and collaborating organizations and extent of community support.
 - Use of novel and innovative approach to supporting individuals and/or companies
 - Alignment to WEDC priorities for industry sectors, local economic factors, geography, and target populations.

How to Apply: An interested applicant should contact a WEDC Account Manager to determine if their project is right for the program. Upon review of the project, and alignment with eligibility criteria, an applicant will be invited to submit their application through Network Wisconsin.

Award Process: The completed application will be assigned to a scoring committee for review and recommendation. A WEDC underwriter will be assigned to review each recommended award and go through the award review process.



Performance Reporting: Recipients must submit periodic reports on project activities and the number of businesses technically assisted where applicable, and any other contract deliverable.

WEDC annually selects awards on a sample basis for an audit. All backup to the performance report and financial records must be maintained by the recipient for at least three (3) years after the last performance report is due.

WEDC may impose additional reporting requirements to evaluate project performance and to ensure compliance with contract deliverables.

Revision History

Program Inception – Fiscal Year 2022

- 7/1/2022: Clarifies program description; expands eligibility; adds factors that WEDC may consider when considering funding; shifts to fully competitive program.
- 7/1/2025: Transfers program to the Business and Community Development division; includes only technical assistance programs aimed at traditional small business and is renamed to Small Business Technical Assistance.



Program Review

This document has been reviewed by the following parties:

- ☐ Chief Operating Officer
- ☐ Chief Legal Officer
- ☐ Chief Financial Officer
- ☐ Senior Vice President of Strategic Investment & Evaluation
- ☐ Senior Director of Policy

Division Vice President: _____

Date: _____

CEO or Designee: _____

Date: _____

Chair of Awards Administration Committee: _____

Date: _____

Chair of the Board of Directors: _____

Date: _____