

Small Business Workforce Stability Grant

Questions & Answers

Questions & Answers (Round 2 funding)

- Can the online application be saved and returned to later, or does it need to be completed in one session?

The online application needs to be completed in one session.

- I noticed the PowerPoint presentation and the Questions & Answers links don't appear to be available on the website. Will those materials be posted, or is there another way to access them?

The website has been updated to include the most current Q&A and presentation.

- If a proposed project includes several eligible activities—such as technology upgrades, workforce training, targeted marketing to replace lost revenue, and business development—is it preferable to present them as one integrated stabilization project or describe each activity separately within the application?

Applicants may include multiple eligible activities within a single proposed project. The application should clearly describe each activity, how the requested funding will be used, and how each activity supports the overall goal of business stabilization, revenue recovery, and/or employee retention. When the activities are related, applicants are encouraged to present them as part of a cohesive stabilization plan while providing enough detail for each individual activity to demonstrate its purpose and connection to the business impact.

- Can the grant be used to hire new employees?

No. Funding cannot be used to hire new employees or cover payroll-related expenses. However, funding may be used for eligible employee training and upskilling activities. Additional guidance, including funding activity examples, is available at solanoemployment.org/funding.

- Can the grant be used to purchase a vehicle to deliver goods to customers?

No. Vehicle expenses are specifically excluded as an allowable use of grant funding.

- If a sole proprietor does not have formal employees but hires people as contractors, is that prohibitive/disqualifying?

This grant is intended to support business stabilization and layoff aversion by helping businesses adapt their operations and retain employees. While sole proprietors without current employees would not otherwise meet the employee-retention intent of the grant, they may still submit an application explaining their business model and how the proposed use of funds could potentially lead to permanent staffing. WDB will review the application and proposed activities to determine eligibility.

- Is there any way i could actually log into the application portal to see what the application process involves and what it looks like?

The application and additional details about this grant funding opportunity are available at <https://solanoemployment.org/funding/>. A blank application is also available to help applicants prepare their responses and gather the necessary information before completing and submitting the final application.

- Do you know if the review panel will consider any information in a supplemental narrative that could be included in the supplemental files section? I'm not talking about a long narrative, but at least an opportunity to more clearly explain the impact on the business without some of the constraints typical of an online application.

Applicants are welcome to include any supplemental documentation that they feel will strengthen their application. All documents will be presented to the evaluators.

Questions & Answers (Round 1 funding)

- How many applications will be awarded?

WDB anticipates awarding grants to up to 13 businesses, with individual awards of up to \$10,000, for those impacted by the Anheuser-Busch and Mare Island Dry Dock closures. For those impacted by the Valero Refinery closure, WDB anticipates awarding grants to up to 10 businesses, with individual awards of up to \$25,000. Final award amounts will be based on each individual funding request and the amount approved.

- Is there a total funding pool, or is the award amount fixed per business?

There is a defined total funding pool for this grant. While applicants may request funding up to the maximum allowable amount per category, final awards are not fixed and will be determined based on each individual request and the amount approved through the review process. Funding will be awarded until the available funds are exhausted. Additional funding opportunities may be available in the future.

- Is the estimate of 10–13 awards for each closure, or combined across categories?

WDB anticipates awarding grants to up to 13 businesses, with individual awards of up to \$10,000, for those impacted by the Anheuser-Busch and Mare Island Dry Dock closures. For those impacted by the Valero Refinery closure, WDB anticipates awarding grants to up to 10 businesses, with individual awards of up to \$25,000.

- Are applications reviewed all at once after the deadline, or is it first-come, first-served?

All qualified applications submitted between April 1 and May 1 will be reviewed together after the deadline.

- Are nonprofit organizations eligible to apply?

This grant funding is primarily intended to support small, for-profit businesses impacted by the identified closures. However, nonprofit organizations that meet all eligibility criteria and can clearly demonstrate impact, alignment with the program's goals, and the ability to fulfill all application requirements are welcome to apply. All applications will be reviewed based on the strength of the submission and alignment with the intent of the funding.

- Are schools eligible to apply, or is eligibility limited to certain types such as daycare providers?

Schools are eligible to apply, provided they meet all eligibility criteria, can clearly demonstrate impact, and align with the program's goals. Applicants must also be able to fulfill all application requirements. All submissions will be evaluated based on the strength of the application and alignment with the intent of the funding.

- Do you distinguish between employees and independent contractors?

This program's requirements focus on employee headcount and workforce retention, which indicates that the term "employees" refers to W-2 employees rather than independent contractors. Businesses should base their responses on employees when reporting workforce numbers and retention commitments.

- Is an EDD number required to apply?

Applicants are required to provide an EDD account number as part of the application and must be in good standing with the Employment Development Department (EDD).

- Can you provide more examples of how a business may demonstrate impact from the closures?

Businesses must demonstrate a clear connection between the closure and a negative impact on their operations. Examples of impact may include:

- A measurable loss of revenue or decline in customers following the closure
- Loss of contracts or consistent business tied to the affected company
- Reduced employee hours, wages, or staffing levels
- Layoffs or risk of future layoffs
- Disruptions to supply chains or vendor relationships

For example, a restaurant may experience a decrease in weekday customers if employees from a closed facility were part of its regular customer base. A childcare provider may see reduced enrollment if families impacted by layoffs can no longer afford services. Similarly, a business that previously held a contract with one of the closed companies may lose a significant portion of its revenue.

Applicants should clearly explain this connection in their application and provide supporting documentation where possible.

- Is there a specific template or guidelines applicants should follow?

There is no specific template or guideline that application should follow. The application includes all necessary questions. Responses should be clear, detailed, and specific.

- Will applicants be able to attach supporting documentation beyond the standard input fields?

Applicants will be able to upload all supporting documentation while completing the application.

- What are examples of things that should not be included in the application as part of the use of funding?

Applicants should avoid including any costs that are not allowable under the grant guidelines, as these may result in disqualification. Examples of unallowable uses include payroll, employee wages or benefits, rent, utilities, credit card or debt payments, construction or renovation expenses, and transportation or vehicle-related costs. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the list of allowable and unallowable costs and ensure their funding request aligns with the intent of the program.

- What is the scoring criteria for applications?

Applications are evaluated based on the overall strength of the submission and alignment with the intent of the funding. This includes clearly demonstrating the impact of the closure on the business, providing a detailed and specific plan for how funds will be used, and showing how the proposed activities will support business stability and employee retention. Strong applications should present a clear and cohesive narrative, include a well-defined budget, and effectively connect the requested funding to measurable outcomes.

- Will the presentation slides from this session be shared?

Yes, we will make the presentation available on the landing page.

- For the webinar on the 21st, will it be the same session, or will there be additional information?

Both sessions will provide the same information.