

Economic Gardening Program Questions and Answers

This page provides responses to Economic Gardening program questions received during the priority question period from March 9 to March 30. Responses are intended to clarify program requirements and support applicants in preparing competitive submissions.

1. Q: What types of businesses are a good fit for the Economic Gardening program?

Economic Gardening is designed for established, growth-oriented businesses that are preparing to expand into new markets, launch new products or services, or scale operations.

Strong candidates typically:

- Demonstrate consistent revenue and operational stability
- Are seeking to capture additional market share
- Can benefit from advanced market research and strategic guidance

The program is not intended for startups or businesses primarily seeking general technical assistance to stabilize operations.

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a for-profit, privately held company headquartered and operating in the city of Sacramento
- Have approximately \$1 million to \$50 million in annual revenue
- Generate approximately 25% or more of revenue from the export or sale of goods and services to markets outside the county of Sacramento
- Employ at least 5 but no more than 99 employees (including the owner) at the Sacramento headquarters
- Demonstrate growth in employment or revenue for at least 2 of the past 5 years

2. Q: My business operates a venue or service that attracts customers from outside Sacramento. Does this qualify?

Potentially, yes. Businesses that bring customers, clients, or spending into Sacramento from outside the region may meet the program's intent. Applicants doing business in tradable sectors are ideal.

Applicants should demonstrate that a meaningful portion of their revenue is derived from outside Sacramento County. This may include:

- Sale of products to customers outside the region
- Revenue generating contracts with customers or partners outside the region
- Customers or attendees traveling from outside the region

The key consideration is whether the business generates new economic activity for the city, rather than recirculating local spending.

3. Q: How should I demonstrate revenue from outside the region?

Applicants should be able to provide reasonable evidence that their business generates revenue from outside Sacramento County.

Exact methodologies may vary by business type, but examples may include:

- Sales reports showing geographic distribution
- Customer or client location data
- Ticketing or booking data
- Contracts with out-of-region clients

4. Q: What does the Economic Gardening program provide?

The program includes three primary components:

1. **Market Research**

Up to 40 hours of customized research conducted by the National Center for Economic Gardening (NCEG), focused on market expansion, customer targeting, and competitive intelligence.

2. **Strategic Advising**

Support from Berkeley Strategy Advisors to translate research findings into a practical growth strategy.

3. **Matching Grant Funding**

Eligible participants may apply for up to \$50,000 in reimbursable matching funds to implement identified growth strategies.

5. Q: How involved do I need to be in the research phase? I do not have 40 hours to work with researchers.

The National Center for Economic Gardening team conducts the majority of their 40 hours of research independently. Business CEOs take part in several meetings with the NCEG and Berkeley Strategy Advisors to direct this work by engaging in intake and goal setting discussions, identifying research topics, reviewing and evaluating findings, providing feedback, and working to apply findings when satisfied. Participants who are fully engaged in this process find the program most valuable.

6. What types of activities are eligible for grant funding?

The City encourages grant funding for projects that directly support business growth, capacity expansion, and market competitiveness. Eligible activities may include:

1. **Digital presence and marketing enhancements**
Website upgrades, e-commerce development, SEO, branding, and digital marketing strategy.
2. **Workforce expansion and talent development**
Hiring new staff, workforce training, and professional development to support growth.
3. **Facility expansion or relocation within Sacramento city limits**
Securing, expanding, or improving commercial space to increase operational capacity.
4. **Equipment and technology investments**
Machinery, tools, or technology upgrades that increase production capacity or efficiency.
5. **Strategic, financial, and operational planning**
Business planning, financial modeling, growth strategy development, and market expansion plans.
6. **New product or service development**
Research, prototyping, testing, and commercialization support.
7. **Professional advisory services**
Specialized consulting or technical expertise that directly supports project implementation and measurable growth outcomes.

7. How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted through the City of Sacramento's online Grants Management System.

Applicants must:

- Create an account
- Complete all required application sections
- Upload supporting documentation (e.g., financials, resumes)
- Submit the application prior to the April 20 deadline

Incomplete applications will not be considered and late applications will not be accepted.

8. Are non-profits eligible to apply for Economic Gardening?

No. Business must be for-profit, privately held companies headquartered and operating in the city of Sacramento to be eligible for the Economic Gardening program.

9. Can I prepare my responses in advance?

Yes. A full list of application questions is available in the program guidelines. Applicants are strongly encouraged to draft responses in advance and then upload them into the system.

10. What documents are required as part of the application?

Applicants should be prepared to submit:

- Profit and loss statements or financial documentation
- Business information and growth plans
- Leadership team experience (resumes optional)

- Any additional materials requested in the application portal

Applicants must also have an active City of Sacramento Business Operations Tax Certificate and be registered with the California Secretary of State. Businesses, such as sole proprietorships, that do not file with the Secretary of State must upload a statement that explains their situation.

11. Can two or more different businesses apply for this grant if the same individual holds an ownership stake?

Yes. Separate businesses that share common ownership may each submit an application. Each business must apply independently and meet all eligibility requirements. The City will evaluate all applications on their own merits and select the most competitive application(s).

However, only one business per majority owner or controlling individual will be selected for funding.

Please disclose any common ownership across multiple applications at the time of submission in the first question of the “Business Information” section of the application.

12. How can I submit questions about the program?

Questions were to be submitted through the online Grants Management System to ensure they were tracked and addressed consistently.

Responses to submitted questions are included in this document.

13. Is there a deadline to submit questions?

The deadline for submitting questions was Monday, March 30, to be included in this official question and answer list.