

# 2025 Sacramento Innovation Grant Program



## Agenda

- Sacramento Innovation Grant Overview
- Platform Walkthrough

- Grant Details
- Individual Solicitations Overview & Questions





# Program Background

The Innovation Grant Program offers up to \$1 million in grants annually to support the development of Sacramento's entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.

#### Objectives:

- Expand the reach of entrepreneurial support organizations
- Increase opportunities for startups to grow
- Increase the number and viability of startups
- Increase VC investment in Sacramento
- Marketing broadly to change the perception of the ecosystem
- Foster and facilitate high-growth startups



The 2025 program aims to create a pipeline for entrepreneurs at different stages of their journey

Sacramento's entrepreneurial ecosystem thrives when new participants are welcomed, early-stage founders are nurtured, and growth-ready companies have the support they need to secure customers and capital

## Three Grant Categories

- Entrepreneurship Education and Access Grants fund workshops and trainings to provide access points for entrepreneurs with tech-enabled and scalable business looking to skill up
- Incubator and Accelerator Grants fund incubator and accelerator programs that help early-stage founders grow through mentorship, product development, and connections to funding and partnerships
- Innovation and Investment Readiness Grants fund targeted programming that helps companies commercialize
   technology, secure investment, and acquire customers.





## Platform Walkthrough

Grant Opportunities page

- https://grants.cityofsacramento.gov/grants/s/grantopportunity/Grant Opportunity c/00B1U00000EP9oOUAT
- Resources page
- https://grants.cityofsacramento.gov/grants/s/public-resources



# Applicants must submit:

#### **Application form**

- Applicants must complete all required questions
- Guidelines include questions

#### Project budget narrative and table

 Proposed budget detailing how the award funds will be used to accomplish the proposed activity

#### Workshop details (Category A Only)

- A list of the workshops or trainings proposed
- Include topic, format, length, and intended audience for each



# Minimum Eligibility

- Applicants must operate from a fixed place of business within the Sacramento city limits, except as follows:
  - Applicants that do not operate from a fixed place of business within the city limits are eligible if grantsupported programming is provided within the city limits
  - Programming must be located within Sacramento city limits
- Applicants must be in compliance with current and past
   City grants.



## Participant Requirements

- For Categories B and C
  - Grants must commit to at least 90% of participants of grant funded activities having either a residence or business with and address within Sacramento city limits
  - The remaining 10% must have demonstrable economic investment within Sacramento city limits



# Additional Consideration

May be a new undertaking or further development for an established program

Completed within a 12-month contract period.

Must be open and advertised to the general public, and include publicity that recognizes the funding received from the City of Sacramento.

## Fundable Expenses

- Program development and delivery
- Staff salaries and benefits
- Training supplies and equipment
- Office space and coworking membership fees
- Marketing for recruitment

- Professional contract services
- Software subscription fees
- Food and beverage excluding alcohol (5% limit)





## **Goals & Metrics**



Revenue generated by participants, funding raised, grants won



Jobs created, number of businesses participating, new businesses started, new BOTCs, customer acquisitions.



Workshop attendance, cohort graduation rates, participant satisfaction, testimonials

#### **Review Process**

City staff review for minimum criteria, completeness, and perform initial scoring

Judges will review and score all eligible application applications using scoring criteria and designate top applicants as finalists

Council will vote to approve awards



## Review Criteria



30 Points – Program Design and Approach



20 Points – Outcomes and Metrics



20 Points – Organizational Capacity



15 Points – Budget and Use of Funds



15 Points – Impact on Underserved Entrepreneurs



# Timeline

- Applications open: October 27, 2025
- Innovation MIX Event: November 20, 2025
- Questions accepted until: November 26, 2025, 11:59pm
- Question answers posted: December 3, 2025
- Application close: December 22, 2025, 2:59 p.m.
- Awardees notified of conditional award and contract development begins: week of February 23, 2026
- City Council approval: March 2026
- Programming begins: April 2026



## Organization Requirements



Be registered to conduct business in the State of California via the Secretary of State's business registry and be in active/good standing



All applicants must possess an active City of Sacramento Business Operations Tax certificate (BOTC) or have a valid exemption

Documents due with application!

# Basic Contract Preparation and Requirements

 Non-profits must be registered as a charity with the State of California via the State Attorney General's Office and be in active/good standing

- Be registered as an active City of Sacramento supplier this allows payments to be made!
  - Business entity W9 and 590 forms needed

- Provide valid proof of liability insurance
  - Evidence of commercial general liability coverage of at least \$1 million per occurrence
  - Evidence of Workers' compensation coverage of at least \$1 million per occurrence – if applicable

# Contract Payments and Reporting

#### 100% Reimbursement Basis

Grantees must incur expenses then ask City to pay them back

### Activity and Expense Reporting -

- Grantees must track time logged by employees/contractors
- Grantees must have invoices for all contractor expenses
- Grantees must show proof of payment to employees/contractors
- Grantees must itemize all expenses with receipts!
- No Exceptions!



# Entrepreneurship Education and Access Total Budget - \$100,000

- Provide access to early entrepreneurs, business owners, and individuals interested in skilling up.
- Building awareness, confidence, and fundamental skills for entrepreneurs in tech or scalable startup entrepreneurship
  - Standalone or progressive workshops
  - Business seminar training series
  - Open lab coaching hours
- \$10,000 minimum and \$15,000 maximum grant request
  - No more than \$3,000 per workshop or training



# Entrepreneurship Education and Access

Applicants must complete the required template for all proposed workshops, trainings, or other proposed sessions to demonstrate alignment with program goals.

Workshop Title	Topic	Format	Length	Intended Audience	Learning or Skill Outcomes
Digital Tools for Growth	Using Canva & Shopify	In-person lab	2 hrs	Creatives & makers	Basic digital literacy for e- commerce in Canva and Shopify; Basic marketing concepts
Building a Scalable Idea"	Lean startup & business model design	In-person class	90 min	Early-stage founders	Learn how to apply lean startup principles to test scalable business ideas and models
Startup Finance Basics	Financial modeling for growth companies	Virtual Class	90 min	Aspiring entrepreneurs	Learn fundamentals of startup cost structures, revenue streams, and break-even analysis
From Prototype to Product	Minimum Viable Product (MVP) development	In-person	2 hrs	Tech entrepreneurs	Learn rapid prototyping techniques and iteration strategies for scalable product launches
Pitch Your Concept	Investor pitching & customer discovery	In- person	90 min	Tech-curious founders	Create and deliver a simple pitch deck for investors

# Incubator and Accelerator Total Budget - \$500,000

- Cohort-based programs nurturing and supporting earlystage businesses with an end goal of participants starting or growing their own business
- Programs should provide support through a combination of:
  - Mentorship and coaching; Educational programs; Product development support; Legal and administrative support; Marketing and branding support; Strategic partnerships; Access to funding; Office space
- \$50,000 minimum and 100,000 maximum grant request



# Innovation and Investment Readiness Total Budget - \$400,000

- Connect established startup and tech businesses to funding opportunities
- Potential programs to apply
  - Technology commercialization programs
  - Programs that aim to provide access to capital or grants
  - Programs that help companies with customer acquisition
- Applicants in this category are not eligible to apply for other categories
- \$100,000 maximum grant request



# Please Review Guidelines!

- More detailed information
- Fundable activities
- Ineligible activities
- Contracting
   Considerations
- Payment and reporting
- ... And more!







# Thank you!

cityofsacramento.gov/innovationgrants