



2025 Grant Application for Small Businesses **\$10,000 per business**

Date released: 04/11/25

Small Business Development enables 1) pre-venture businesses to open their businesses and 2) existing businesses to grow in a way that stabilizes or expands their presence in the Castro District.

This grant is for pre-venture and existing businesses and can be used to pay for permits, contractor services, advertising, or other business expenses that contribute to the successful opening of a new small business or an expansion of an existing business. These grants are not limited to activation events. A total of \$20,000 will be awarded with this breakdown: Two \$10,000 grants.

Timeline

Info Session / Q+A: Monday, April 21, 2025 at 5:00pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81310763111?pwd=p92vbBRvqfAbTb5VP8vZmoaGw48ahl.1>

Meeting ID: 813 1076 3111

Passcode: 149168

The deadline for applications is Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 5PM. All applications (no more than 3 pages) should be emailed to taguirre@castrolgbtq.org. Please include with your application a completed and signed W-9 form to facilitate processing of payment information should your business be awarded a grant. Applications will not be considered complete without a completed and signed W-9. A blank form from the IRS can be found using this link: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>

- Review of grant applications: no later than May 14, 2025
- Notifications: May 15, 2025
- Distribution of Funds: July 31, 2025
- Submission of report of use of funds by small businesses: January 31, 2026

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All businesses should be on the [map](#) of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District if they have a brick and mortar space; businesses that cater to the Castro are eligible (including pop-ups). All businesses should be [registered](#) with the City and their permits in good standing before applying. Pre-venture businesses and existing businesses may apply for these funds. **Previous grantees from the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District's**

small business grants are not eligible to apply for this round of grants. Non-profit organizations or entities with a fiscal sponsor are not eligible for these grants.

SCORING

Grant proposals that meet our Eligibility Requirements will be scored, ranked, and receive a funding recommendation based on the ranking. Proposals that do not satisfy the Eligibility Criteria will be determined as non-responsive to this RFP and will not be reviewed.

APPLICATION FORMAT

Proposals will be reviewed and will be evaluated by the following criteria and scoring rubric for a total of 100 points. Please note that each question may have additional questions that pertain to the type of grant you are applying for as either a pre-venture or an existing business.

In narrative format using a 12-point font (no handwritten applications will be accepted), please provide the following information and answer the questions below. Please keep your answers to three pages maximum and use 1-inch margins for your document.

At the top of your application, please share the following:

- **Your full name, mailing address, email address, and phone number**
- **Name of your business, location of your business, date of incorporation, Tax ID #, and small business account # for the City of San Francisco**
- **The status of permits related to your business, especially for pre-venture businesses that are going into a new space**
- **Any grants that you or your business has received in the last two years from the City of San Francisco or any cultural districts**

1. What is your experience as an entrepreneur? 10 points

For all applicants: Please share your experience with owning and operating a small business. Please share your successes and challenges with operating a small business. How does your experience help you navigate running a business considering challenges like inflation and getting permits for your business?

For pre-venture business grant applications: Please share the support you have in place to help you succeed, sustain, and grow your business in the next 12 months. Also, please share with us why you are starting this business and how it fits into the landscape of other businesses in the Castro.

2. How will you use the grant? 50 points

Please share in narrative format and in simple budget format how your business will use this grant. Please include goals you will be able to achieve with this grant.

3. What positive impact will your business have on economic and workforce development in the Castro district? 10 points

Please let us know the number of staff your business employs, other businesses in the Castro that will benefit from your business, and your commitment to a diverse workforce. Please share if you have experience with a small business in the Castro that centers LGBTQ entrepreneurship, culture, and customers.

4. How does your business model align with the mission and work of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District? 30 points

Please include any specific information on how your small business aligns with the mission and work of the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District.

APPEALS PROCESS

Proposals will be determined as non-responsive if they are incomplete, undelivered, or do not meet the Eligibility Requirements. If we determine your proposal to be non-responsive, we will inform you. Applicants may appeal a determination of non-responsiveness to this application process by submitting notice by email to the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District setting forth the grounds for the appeal by no later than five (5) business days after receiving Castro LGBTQ Cultural District's determination.

All applicants will be notified if a proposal was not selected for an award. If there is disagreement with the decision, you may file a formal appeal within five (5) business days of the award announcement. The Castro LGBTQ Cultural District must receive the appeal on or before the fifth business day. The appeal must include a written statement of each of the grounds for appeal. An individual authorized to represent the respondent must submit the appeal by email to taguirre@castrolgbtq.org. The appeal must cite all applicable procedures or provisions that we did not follow faithfully, as documented in this application process. The appeal must specify facts and evidence enough for us to determine its validity. Disagreements about program quality or value do not constitute grounds for appeal. Failure to object or appeal in the manner and within the times set forth above will constitute a complete and irrevocable waiver of any appeal of Castro LGBTQ Cultural District's decision.

Castro LGBTQ Cultural District will only accept appeals of non-responsiveness or an award decision by email. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure email delivery prior to the deadline specified.

A panel selected by Castro LGBTQ Cultural District will review all eligible appeals, and the panel decisions will be final. If necessary, we will schedule a meeting with the respondent within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the appeal.

Mission: The Castro LGBTQ Cultural District is committed to preserving, sustaining, and promoting the rich cultural legacy of the Castro and its significance to San Francisco's LGBTQ+ community and beyond. Our goals are to highlight the structures and sites important to our history; foster racial, ethnic, gender and cultural diversity among residents and businesses; and create a safe, beautiful, and inclusive space for LGBTQ+ and allied communities, to visit from around the world and call the Castro home.