

EXPERIENCE GENERATOR

2026 GRANT APPLICATION

The 2026 Experience Generator Grant Program is available to new “experience-based” businesses including axe throwing, museums, arcades, art studios, etc, which are open to the general public. Merchandise retailers, restaurants and taverns might also qualify. These businesses would be new or unique to Fond du Lac and would result in high volume customer traffic, adding significantly to the vibrancy of downtown Fond du Lac.

The Experience Generator Grant is an incentive to assist Downtown Fond du Lac entrepreneurs with expenses associated with starting a new business. New (or significantly expanding) retail, restaurant or experience-based businesses are eligible for a \$5,000 grant to be used to assist in starting their business.

A. Eligible types of businesses:

- New (or significantly expanding) retail, restaurant or experience-based businesses
- Businesses relocating from outside of the City of Fond du Lac
- Locally owned franchises
- For profit, property tax paying businesses
- Businesses located within the Downtown Fond du Lac Business Improvement District

Ineligible types of businesses:

- Ineligible business activities include but are not necessarily limited to: national chains, multi-level marketing or pyramid businesses, non-profit agencies and entities, schools, day care centers, currency exchanges including check cashing agencies and some non-bank financial retail outlets, liquor stores, gun shops, tattoo parlors, pawnshops, and passive real estate ownership and management.
- Non-profit organizations
- Other ineligible businesses are in alignment with those defined by the U.S. Small Business Association eligibility requirements. www.sba.gov
- The committee may decide on a case-by-case basis to exclude other business activities, which they believe do not benefit the health, safety, and welfare of the community and/or do not meet the objectives of this fund.
- Businesses who received the Downtown Fond du Lac New Business Grant

B. Use of funds: Grant funds can be used for the following types of activities:

- Startup expenses
- Purchase of furniture, fixture and equipment (FF&E)
- Interior and exterior renovation costs

C. Other considerations:

- Applicants are eligible to apply for the grant program until the date of their business opening.
- The applicant must own the real estate, or present a fully executed lease. Minimum of 2 years
- Square footage requirements are greater than 1000 square feet and on street level
- Individuals or entities that are delinquent in any form of public payment to national, state or local government agencies are not eligible to receive grant funds
- No application will be reviewed or presented to the committee for their consideration on behalf of an individual or entity that is delinquent in their City of Fond du Lac property taxes. Neither the grant recipient nor the landlord (if not the same entity) can be delinquent

- on any property taxes in the City of Fond du Lac on any property located in the City.
- No application will be reviewed or presented to the committee for their consideration on behalf of a project situated in a building with unabated Building Inspection Orders. Neither the grant recipient nor the landlord (if not the same entity) can have outstanding unabated Building Inspection Orders on any property they own in the City of Fond du Lac. All permits must be up to date.
- Grant funds cannot be disbursed until all conditions of the grant contract have been fulfilled.

D. Conditions of Agreement:

- Applicant must work with a local economic agency to complete a business plan, and periodic check-ins to adjust their business plan as needed to be eligible for grant funds. This would include three-year financial projections.
- Applicant must act in good faith, with the full intent of moving forward with the business startup.
- Entrepreneurs will receive checks in their business name to be used for startup related expenses.
- Businesses receiving the grant will receive follow-ups and site visits from their local economic development agency within the first year to review benchmarks and need for additional assistance.

E. Schedule of Payments:

\$2,500 upon grant approval
 \$1,000 on opening date and positive check-in report
 \$500 on one-month anniversary and positive check-in report
 \$500 on two-month anniversary and positive check-in report
 \$500 on three-month anniversary and positive check-in report

F. Provisions for Refusal, Termination or Reducing Payment:

- 1) If the applicant has any outstanding payments owed to the City of Fond du Lac, Business Improvement District or Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership.
- 2) If the applicant has participated in any prior grant program funded through the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership or City of Fond du Lac and were non-compliant with any of the requirements or provisions of the program.
- 3) If the applicant fails to meet or comply with any of the grant program requirements.
- 4) If the applicant alters the business plan such that the business no longer meets the goals of the grant program.
- 5) Failure to respond to email communication or telephone communication from the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership.
- 6) Projects that have not successfully completed the above stated requirements by the end of the calendar year will be considered for termination of contract and rescission of the grant. A waiver of this provision may be requested by the grantee and will be considered by the grantor.

Dated: May 1, 2026



2026 EXPERIENCE GENERATOR GRANT APPLICATION

Contact

Name _____

Contact

Email _____

Contact

Phone _____

Business

Name _____

Property

Address _____

Attachments - Please email or US Mail all documents together in one envelope or email.

1. Copy of fully executed 2-year lease beginning after January 1, 2026 or proof of property ownership.
2. A current business plan including a description of the products made or sold, services offered, an assessment of the business market and competition and three-year financial projections.
3. Proof of legal entity - Articles of Organization and Operating Agreement if an LLC; or if a partnership, a copy of the Partnership Agreement.
4. A completed and signed application form

An application without the requested attachments is considered incomplete and will not be processed until all information is on file.

Signature

Date

For questions or to apply for the 2026 Experience Generator Grant Program, please contact:

Downtown Fond Lac Partnership
131 S. Main Street, Suite 101, Fond du Lac, WI 54935
920-322-2006 or info@downtownfdl.com