

Small Business Grant Application Instructions

The second round of grant applications will open on **December 1, 2023, and be accepted until January 31, 2024**. We encourage you to attend an information session and/or meet with an ESO or business advisor. **For more information and to apply to this grant, visit our website: www.e3connector.com**

If you have any questions, please contact one of the members of our team:

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Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible for the grant, the answers to the following questions must be “yes”. As part of the application, you will be asked to submit the following documentation as proof of your eligibility:

- Have you been in business for at least one year (as of the date of your application submission) with a record of sales?
- Is your business in good standing with the CT Department of Revenue Services?
- Is your business registered in CT?
- Does your business utilize formal digital bookkeeping/financial (e.g., QuickBooks, Sage, FreshBooks, Wave Accounting)? Do you have an established business checking account?
- Is the business a for profit business?
- Is the business owned by a person at least 18 years old?

Additionally, the following businesses **are not eligible**:

- Medical marijuana; liquor stores and alcohol distributors; adult businesses such as strip clubs; vape retailers; tobacco shops and smoking lounges; businesses having to do with gambling; gun stores and ranges; cash advance, check cashing, or pawn shops; bail bonds; collection agencies or services; and auction or bankruptcy or fire or “lost our lease” or “going-out-of-business” or similar sale. Other ineligible activities include speculative real estate investing and capital improvements for rental properties.

If your business is a start-up or ineligible for this grant at this time, our entrepreneur support organizations and businesses advisors are available to work with you to support your business, at no cost to you. If you would like to schedule an appointment to meet with a NHE3 business advisor or ESO, please register your business at www.e3connector.com. To apply for a NHE3 start-up grant, please see the required materials at the end of this document.

Creating a Profile

Before you access the application, you will be required to create a profile in eCenter to provide general information about you and your business. Register your business here at www.e3connector.com. Below are instructions on setting up your account.

1. Create an account here:

The screenshot shows the 'New Account' registration page. On the left is a navigation menu with links: Home, New Client Signup, Contact Us, Library of Documents, and Useful Links. At the top, a progress bar indicates six steps: 1. Get Started (active), 2. Select Center, 3. User Details, 4. Company Details, 5. Agreement, and 6. Area of Assistance. Below the progress bar, a message reads: 'Thank you for your interest in our program's services! To begin, please enter your e-mail address and name below. If you already have an eCenter login account, please enter your e-mail address and password above.' The 'New Account' form contains fields for First name, Last name, Email, and Password, followed by a green 'Submit' button.

2. Once you create an account, you will be taken to a landing page that looks like this:

The screenshot shows the landing page for the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (CFGNH). The left navigation menu includes: Home, Contact Us, My Information, My Documents, Library of Documents, Useful Links, and Logout. The main content area has a heading 'Welcome to the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (CFGNH)' and a paragraph: 'Please feel free to explore the resources that we have provided for you on the left-hand menu. Click on "My Informa; important that you provide us as much detail as possible about your organization. You can also click on the "My Doc

3. Click the "My Documents" tab on the left side to upload your application documents:

The screenshot shows the 'My Documents' page. The left navigation menu is the same as in the previous screenshots, with 'My Documents' highlighted. The main content area has a heading 'My Documents' and a message: 'The private documents below are available for download. Changes that you make to downloaded documents will not be to replace any of these documents with an updated document, please contact your business counselor.' Below this is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the text 'Search: (All)'. A section labeled '(No documents)' contains an 'Upload' link with a plus icon. Below the upload link is a form with a 'File:' label, a 'Choose File' button, and the text 'No file chosen'. There is also a 'Description:' label and a text input field. At the bottom of the form is a 'Submit' button.

Application Overview

There are three sections to the application:

Section A: How you would use the grant

Section B: Narrative of your business

Section C: Upload supporting documents

*Section A and Section B should be two separate PDF documents

** Please download and save a copy of your submitted application to keep for your personal records.

There is no “submit” button for the grant application. To apply, upload the materials for the three sections to your profile. Once all of your application materials are uploaded, please send an email to nhe3info@cfgnh.org with the subject line “Completed NHE3 Application Round 2”. This will let our team know that your application is ready to be reviewed.

Useful links for application:

Start your profile here: www.e3connector.com

Find the Certificate of Legal Existence here: https://business.ct.gov/certificates-of-legal-existence?language=en_US

Download DRS Certificate of Good Standing here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DRS/myconneCT/Status-Letter>

Download a business plan template here: www.bplans.com

Download a financial projection template here: <https://www.score.org/resource/template/financial-projections-template>

Grant Narrative Questions

Section A: How You Would Use the Grant (each question has a 400-word limit)

1. Grant request: How much are you requesting from NHE3?
 - a. Disclaimer: The amount you have requested may not equal the amount you are approved for.
2. Description of your NHE3 Small Business Grant project:
 - a. Describe the project you would like to use the grant for. Include how this project will help your business grow and benefit your customers and your company. Explain how the investment will increase your customers or expand your capacity, and any market research you have done to support your expectation of growth. If the investment will impact your operating costs, please describe how. *Please note that grant funds cannot be used towards reimbursement for past purchases or debt repayment.
3. Use of funds:
 - a. Describe what you will spend the grant funds on. Be specific about what goods or services you will purchase with the grant. Below in Section C, you will upload back up evidence for how you will use the grant (e.g., proposal, estimate, screenshots of proposed purchases, or other evidence to support the amount you are asking for). If the investment you want to make is more than the amount of the grant, also explain how you will fund the remaining portion. *Please note that grant funds cannot be used towards reimbursement for past purchases or debt repayment.
4. Impact of the grant:
 - a. Describe how the grant will help your business grow and reach your goals. Be specific. Explain what your business will look like once you have integrated the grant-funded project into your business. Whatever you explain here should be reflected in your financial projections.
5. Why you? Explain why you believe your business should be a NHE3 Small Business Grant recipient.
6. Have you previously received a NHE3 Small Business Grant?

Section B: Narrative of Your Business (Each question has a 400-word limit)

1. **Business Description:**
 - a. In the first sentence, please describe your business. Then elaborate to include the year your business was founded, the product or service that you deliver, and the problem you solve for your customers, or unmet need you satisfy.
2. **Business Performance:**
 - a. Describe how your business is doing today. Explain the recent decline or growth of your business and how your business has performed since COVID-19.
3. **Customers:**
 - a. Describe your current customers. Include who they are, how they find you, and why they buy your product or service. Explain who the customers are that you want to attract in the future to grow your business, and how they are different or the same from your current customers.
4. **Competitors:**
 - a. Describe your competitors. Name three. Describe how their product or service is different from yours. Describe how you think your product or service better meets customer needs than your competitors.
5. **Marketing:**
 - a. Explain how you market your products or services, and how you pitch them to customers. Describe the channels you use to sell to your customers (e.g., website, retail, wholesale). Explain your branding. Describe the channels you use to communicate with your customers (e.g., email, website, advertising, social media, physical advertising) and which you find most effective for which groups of customers.
6. **Pricing:**
 - a. Explain how you price your products and why you charge different amounts for different products or services, and different customer groups. Describe how your pricing compares to competitors. Explain why you have selected these prices and what your profit margins are for different products or services.
7. **Location:**
 - a. Describe your physical location(s) and how your space meets your current and future needs.
8. **Growth Plans:**
 - a. Describe the future plans over the next 5 years and how you're going to make them happen.
9. **Owners & Team:**
 - a. Describe your background, how you got into the business, your relevant experience, and the number of employees you have. Describe who is on your team and how their experience and expertise support your company and its growth.

Section C: Upload Supporting Documents

The following is a list of documents you will need to prepare for submission. Please read the directions before uploading your documents.

- Only PDF files can be uploaded to your application, except for an excel file for balance sheets.
- Only one PDF can be uploaded for each question. Please combine multiples files into a single PDF.
- Please do not upload password protected files to the application. Password protected files will be counted as incomplete.

Documents:

1. **Section A Questions**
2. **Section B Questions**
3. **Certificate of Legal Existence from the State of Connecticut Secretary of State Office**
4. **Letter of Good Standing from the Department of Revenue Services (DRS)**
5. **Back up documentation for Use of Funds (e.g., proposal, estimate, screenshots of proposed purchases, or other evidence to support the amount you are asking for).**
6. **Year-to-date 2023 balance sheets**
7. **Year-to-date 2023 profit & loss statements**
8. **2021 business federal tax return (Schedule C for LLC)**
9. **2022 business federal tax return (Schedule C for LLC)**
10. **Three years of financial projections (2024, 2025, 2026), clearly demonstrating impact of the grant funds on the business**
11. **Copy of the most recent bank statement for the business checking account in the name of the business, and showing CT address for the business**
12. **Government issued form of ID (e.g., Driver's License)**

For Start-Up Businesses:

1. **Section A Questions**
2. **Section B Questions**
3. **Articles of Incorporation**
4. **Certificate of Legal Existence from the State of Connecticut Secretary of State Office**
5. **Detailed Business Plan**
6. **Three years of financial projections (2024, 2025, 2026), clearly demonstrating start up costs and related funding sources**
7. **Copy of the most recent bank statement for the business checking account in the name of the business, and showing CT address for the business**
8. **Government issued form of ID (e.g., Driver's License)**

Application Checklist

Section A:

- ☐ How you would use the grant (Questions 1-6)

Section B:

- ☐ Narrative of your business (Questions 1-9)

Section C: Upload supporting documents

- ☐ Back up documentation for Use of Funds (e.g., proposal, estimate, screenshots of proposed purchases, or other evidence to support the amount you are asking for).
- ☐ Year-to-date 2023 balance sheets
- ☐ Year-to-date 2023 profit & loss statements
- ☐ 2021 business federal tax return (Schedule C for LLC)
- ☐ 2022 business federal tax return (Schedule C for LLC)
- ☐ Three years of financial projections (2024, 2025, 2026), clearly demonstrating impact of the grant funds on the business
- ☐ Copy of the most recent bank statement for the business checking account in the name of the business, and showing CT address for the business
- ☐ Letter of good standing from the State of Connecticut Secretary of State Office
- ☐ Government issued form of ID (e.g., Driver's License)
- ☐ Department of Revenue Services (DRS) Status Letter
- ☐ Detailed business plan (only if start-up business)
- ☐ Articles of incorporation (only if start-up business)