



DENISON E-COMMERCE ACCELERATOR INCENTIVE

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goal of this program is to encourage businesses within the City of Denison to diversify by establishing and promoting e-commerce sales to complement their brick-and-mortar storefront sales. E-commerce has become increasingly important for businesses in the past decade and the pandemic magnified its significance in business models. Consumer behavior continues to change rapidly. Growing e-commerce businesses during this consumer shift will result in stronger Denison businesses.

DDA is committing funding to this marketing program that provides a maximum \$6,000 matching grant per business to reimburse up to 75% of costs in an \$8,000 project to establish, operate, and promote e-commerce for their business. Applications for the grant will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to availability of funds. This grant program is available to businesses who have a brick-and-mortar facility within the Denison city limits and who collect Denison sales tax. Once awarded each business (and their service providers) will begin e-commerce improvements and report monthly progress and monthly statistics to DDA for six full months.

GRANT DETAILS

Eligible expenses for funding include but are not limited to:

- Preparation:
 - Website creation (must include e-commerce capabilities)
 - E-commerce platform set-up and annual subscription fee (shopping carts, online security tools, membership, etc.)
 - App Creation
 - POS system upgrades necessary to integrate with e-commerce platforms
 - Contactless Payment
 - Online Reservations
 - Logo Creation
 - Social Accounts Established
 - Online ID: Claiming Google My Business, etc.
 - Marketing Strategies, Plans, Budget, Digital Ad Creation

- Promotion:
 - Clickable advertising, including social media promotional & digital advertising campaigns (Google Ads, social media boosts, etc.)(Content and strategy are preparation expenses.)

GRANT AMOUNTS AND USE

Grants will be made on a first-come, first-served basis with a maximum grant amount of up to \$6,000 (75%) of \$8,000 total project cost. Grant funds are to be used to cover approved costs as determined by the Denison Development Alliance staff and board, and are subject to the eligibility requirements (below).

Grantees will qualify under one of two Levels:

1. LAUNCH e-commerce: Online presence established and e-commerce sales begin. Promotional efforts begin. Expense ratio up to 75% Preparation & 25% Promotion.
2. AMPLIFY e-Commerce: E-commerce enhanced & promotions increased. Expense ratio up to 25% Preparation & 75% Promotion.

ELIGIBILITY

Businesses must be for-profit.

Business must operate at least one storefront location within the Denison city limit. Excludes: temporary locations, farmer's market vendors, consignment vendors, etc.

All of e-commerce transactions for the Denison business location must be fulfilled in Denison. All e-commerce transactions must generate Denison City sales tax.

Businesses must be in good standing with the City of Denison with respect to taxes, fees, utility payments, or other financial obligations, and is in compliance with all applicable zoning, land use, and other ordinances.

Business must be a member of the Denison Area Chamber of Commerce.

Participation in instructional e-commerce videos & webinars by providers is encouraged but not required.

OTHER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- Businesses that have an existing website must enhance the website to accept online payments and offer online shopping (catalog or cart) as noted above in Grant Details Preparation. The grant can be used for other clearly identified enhancements to increase traffic and commerce to the business as determined by DDA staff.
- Where the applicant has no presently existing website, a new website must be established as part of the e-commerce grant.
- Eligible reimbursement expenses excludes sale fees/commissions charged for applicants online sales transactions.

ACCEPTABLE PROVIDERS

Businesses may choose the provider they feel best meets their needs. DDA encourages getting multiple opinions and/or estimates for proposed work but this is not “required”.

APPLICATION & REPORTING PROCESS

Application

1. Early Application submission is encouraged as proposals will be evaluated as received. Funding is limited and subject to availability.
2. Applicant will access and download the application from www.denisontx.org/e-commerce
3. Applicant will prepare a proposal that includes a Scope of Work with itemized project details and marketing plans, provider/consultant contact info, timelines, and budget line item details such as one-time expenses and reoccurring expenses. For example, if applicant’s proposed project includes website design, e-commerce subscription, and ad placement services from the same consultant then itemized details will be needed for the proposal and monthly reports. The submitted Scope of Work should be specific enough for the DDA to evaluate whether the proposed services are eligible under program guidelines.
4. Applicant will include baseline statistics: current number of website visits, website bounce rates/engagements, website length of visits, page reports (Facebook, Instagram Business, etc.), number of e-commerce sales/transactions, value of e-commerce sales/transactions, etc.
5. Applicant should complete, sign, and submit the grant application (including itemized projects, chosen provider(s), budget, and timelines via email to apply@denisontx.org)
6. DDA staff will email notification to the applicant acknowledging receipt of their application.
7. Applications will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the DDA staff.
8. Applicants will be notified of the decision via email. If approved, the email will serve as authority for the applicant to begin work. An Agreement will be signed by DDA and the grantee to finalize the grant award conditions.
9. Website/e-commerce provider completes the project preparation as quoted.
10. E-commerce promotion will begin once preparation is complete/near complete.

Reporting

1. Monthly reports from the business will include completed preparation, completed promotion, and statistics updates, along with paid invoices for reimbursement.
2. DDA staff will verify project compliance as detailed in the proposal and provide grant reimbursement to the applicant business.
3. To receive the approved grant reimbursement, approved applicant business pays the service provider(s) in full and submits an invoice marked paid to DDA once per month with their monthly update report.
4. After six months DDA involvement and monitoring will be complete.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Denison Development Alliance has allocated in Marketing Funds for this program. Should funding for the program be reduced in the future, we reserve the right to discontinue or modify funding for this program.

GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Participant's application must include a written Scope of Work that includes specific goal(s), cost estimates, and a timeline for completion of each goal. (See Scope of Work worksheet)

Participants must provide grantor performance reports on a monthly basis during the grant period (six months from approval). Reports will include, as a minimum: baseline statistics: website visits, website bounce rates/engagements, website length of visits, page reports (Facebook, Instagram Business, etc.), number of e-commerce sales/transactions, value of e-commerce sales/transactions, etc. These statistics will be updated in participants' monthly reports.

Promotional/Advertising data must show overall amount spent, with details separated by media, social media platform, other source(s).

Website traffic must show overall visitor counts for identified time blocks (weekly, daily, etc.).