

LES DAMES D'ESCOFFIER INTERNATIONAL
KANSAS CITY CHAPTER

Microgrant Program Policies and Guidelines

Board Draft for Review and Approval

July 19, 2026

Chapter reference: Throughout these guidelines, “LDEI Kansas City” refers to the Kansas City Chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI).

1. Program Overview

Mission

The LDEI Kansas City Microgrant Program supports women-owned culinary businesses by providing financial support for projects that strengthen long-term business success and contribute to the vitality of the Kansas City culinary community.

About LDEI Kansas City

LDEI Kansas City is a chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International. Its members are accomplished leaders across the culinary industry, including chefs, bakers, farmers, food writers, wine professionals, event planners, food scientists, educators, restaurateurs, retailers, nutritionists, marketers, and innovators. The chapter is committed to supporting and advancing women in the culinary profession.

2. Grant Awards

LDEI Kansas City expects to award up to five (5) Microgrants of up to \$1,000 each per grant cycle, subject to the availability of grant funds and the selection of qualified applicants.

Eligible businesses must be located in the Kansas City metropolitan area, including the following counties:

- Missouri: Jackson, Clay, Platte, Ray, Cass, and Lafayette Counties.
- Kansas: Johnson, Miami, Wyandotte, and Douglas Counties.

3. Eligible Businesses

Definition of a Culinary-Related Business

For purposes of this program, a culinary-related business is any business engaged in the production, preparation, service, education, marketing, distribution, or innovation of food and beverages. Eligible businesses include, but are not limited to, restaurants, bakeries, catering companies, food trucks, farms and agricultural producers, specialty food manufacturers, beverage producers, food retailers, culinary educators, personal chefs, and other food- or beverage-focused enterprises.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be a woman who owns at least 51% of a culinary-related business.
- Operate the business within the eligible Kansas City metropolitan area.
- Be legally organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company (LLC), S corporation, or C corporation.
- Be an existing, operating business at the time of application. Businesses in the planning stage or startup ventures that have not yet commenced operations are not eligible.
- Be in good standing with applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

The following individuals are not eligible to apply for or receive a Microgrant:

- Current members of the LDEI Kansas City Board of Directors.
- Current members of the LDEI Kansas City Scholarship Committee.

All other LDEI Kansas City members are eligible to apply. However, no more than 20% of the Microgrants awarded in any grant cycle may be awarded to LDEI Kansas City members.

4. Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses must directly support the growth, sustainability, or long-term success of the applicant's culinary business. Examples include:

- Equipment purchases.
- Website development or enhancements.
- Social media development.
- Marketing and branding.
- New product development.
- Expansion or improvement of an existing business location.
- Technology or systems that improve business operations.

Professional Development

Professional development expenses must demonstrate a clear business benefit and be directly related to the applicant's culinary enterprise. Eligible examples include:

- Business coaching or mentoring.
- Industry conferences, workshops, and seminars.
- Culinary education or specialized skills training.
- Food safety or sanitation certification, such as ServSafe.
- Consulting services in marketing, finance, operations, technology, or business planning.
- Memberships in professional culinary organizations.

If the total cost of an approved purchase exceeds the grant award, the applicant is responsible for paying the remaining balance. LDEI Kansas City reserves the right to determine whether a proposed expense meets the intent of the Microgrant Program.

5. Ineligible Expenses

- Personal expenses.
- Debt repayment.
- Salaries, wages, or stipends.
- Rent or utilities.
- Taxes or government fees.
- Labor or contractor costs unrelated to the approved project.
- Food inventory or routine operating supplies.
- Academic degree programs.
- Training or education unrelated to the culinary business.
- Any expense not approved by LDEI Kansas City.

6. Grant Administration

Grant funds will be paid directly to the approved vendor or service provider. Grant funds will not be distributed directly to a grant recipient.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring they have the financial resources necessary to pay costs that exceed the grant award before requesting payment from LDEI Kansas City.

If a grant recipient is unable to complete the approved purchase or project, or if the approved goods or services are not received, the grant recipient must immediately notify LDEI Kansas City. Any grant funds refunded by the vendor or otherwise recoverable must be returned to LDEI Kansas City.

LDEI Kansas City reserves the right to request documentation confirming completion of the approved purchase or project.

7. Application Timeline

2026 Grant Cycle

- Applications available: August 1, 2026.
- Application deadline: October 1, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

- Grant recipients notified: October 15, 2026.
- Grant funds must be used by: December 31, 2026.

2027 Grant Cycle

- Applications available: July 1, 2027.
- Application deadline: August 1, 2027, at 11:59 p.m.
- Grant recipients notified: August 15, 2027.
- Grant funds must be used by: December 31, 2027.

8. Recipient Responsibilities

- Provide a photograph for publication.
- Provide a brief description of the business and how the grant will support its growth.
- Authorize LDEI Kansas City to use these materials in newsletters, on its website, and through social media for recognition and promotion of the Microgrant Program.
- Promptly provide reasonable documentation requested by LDEI Kansas City to confirm completion of the approved purchase or project.

9. Selection Process

The Scholarship Committee will evaluate applications using the published eligibility requirements and selection criteria. The Committee will make recommendations to the LDEI Kansas City Board of Directors for final award approval.

LDEI Kansas City reserves the right to interpret these guidelines, determine applicant eligibility, request additional information, and make all final funding decisions at its sole discretion. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Any member of the Scholarship Committee or Board of Directors with a personal or financial relationship with an applicant must disclose the conflict and recuse themselves from the evaluation and voting process for that application.

10. Non-Discrimination Policy

LDEI Kansas City is committed to administering the Microgrant Program in a fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory manner. All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the published program criteria, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.