

WOMEN UNITED GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Organization Information

Organization Name

ASSETS Lancaster

EIN

23-2827808

Address

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Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603
United States

Contact Name

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Executive Director / President (If different)

Jaime Arroyo

Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization a registered nonprofit organization with an official letter of determination of 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service?

Yes

Has your organization operated in Lancaster County for at least one year (operating in Lancaster before July 1, 2024?)

Yes

Does your organization or program you are requesting funding for in this application serve primarily women over the age of 18?

Yes

Does your organization provide services to families at or below the ALICE threshold in Lancaster County?

Yes

Is your organization delinquent on any state or federal debt?

No

Does your organization share United Way's view of collaborative and inclusive service to the entire community, without excluding anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other factor not relevant to a person's eligibility for service or ability to contribute?

Yes

Has your organization update your listing with PA 211 in the last 12 months?

Yes

Application Elements

Organization Description

ASSETS cultivates entrepreneurial leadership to create economic opportunity for underserved communities. We envision a human-centered economy that prioritizes the well-being, needs, and values of individuals and communities over purely profit-driven motives. In this model, the goal is to enhance the quality of life for all people, ensuring that economic activities contribute to human flourishing and sustainable development.

Key characteristics of a human-centered economy may include:

- Inclusive Growth: Prioritizing equitable and inclusive economic growth that benefits all segments of society, reducing income inequality and promoting social cohesion.
- Social and Environmental Sustainability: Balancing economic activities with the protection of the environment and the well-being of future generations, emphasizing sustainable practices and responsible resource management.
- Quality of Life: Focusing on metrics beyond GDP, such as health, education, and overall well-being, as indicators of a nation's success.

Our core values are:

- Trust
- Ownership
- Equity
- Justice
- Excellence

ASSETS offers in-depth training and financing for entrepreneurs, and works with established businesses to improve their social and environmental footprint. We believe in harnessing the power of business to help build vibrant and sustainable communities.

Commitment to Equity

We are committed to having our services accessible to all in the Lancaster community, regardless of background.

In 2024, 62% of our clients were from low-to-moderate income (LMI) backgrounds and faced barriers to accessing business resources. Clients self-identified their race/ethnicity and 5% were Asian/Asian American, 30% Black/African American, 31% Hispanic, and 29% White.

Our current economy isn't working for everyone; some benefit while others are excluded. With economic equity, our community's GDP would increase by \$1.9 billion.

Our diverse staff and board are representative of our communities. Our Anti-Discrimination Policy has evolved to better state our objective as an economic justice organization and many members of our staff have participated in professional development activities on related topics. Programs are created/implemented through an equity lens; we are working with Communications Essentials to audit/enhance our language access to build language justice into our organization.

By empowering our community with actionable strategies and a unified voice, we can build a future where all can access resources and opportunities for growth and prosperity.

We connect with United Way's mission in the areas of education and economic mobility.

Proposal Details

Main Priority Area

Women's Financial Stability

Grant Dollar Amount Requested

\$20,000.00

What percent of the overall project budget is covered by the Women United grant?

7

Project Description

We propose to use these funds to improve financial stability for women by:

- 1-strengthening our existing Idea Incubator curriculum (40+ hours of training)
- 2-hosting alumni events for Idea Incubator graduates to continue receiving follow-up business support (new program)
- 3-helping more female entrepreneurs secure a loan with us

ASSETS educates women entrepreneurs through Entrepreneur Training and Community Lending. Our signature program is the Idea Incubator, a 9-week cohort that helps entrepreneurs de-risk business ideas through customer discovery, market research, and building minimum viable products (MVPs); it has grown steadily over the years. We provide financial literacy training in the curriculum. We review startup financials, discuss profit vs. revenue; fixed vs. variable costs, calculate a breakeven point for their business; and develop preliminary financial projections for year 1-3.

Recent client feedback has included the desire for more hands-on activities and ongoing training touchpoints upon program completion. Additionally, we've identified a gap between the number of female clients and borrowers; while more female clients are receiving pre-loan technical assistance (TA) and financial education than male clients, we have more male borrowers than female borrowers.

We will improve our Idea Incubator curriculum by having our Senior Loan Officer present an in-depth review of our lending program, including what documentation is needed. We will add more interactive coursework between weekly classes, including assigned readings and worksheets from books and online tools.

Additionally, we will offer 4 Alumni gatherings annually to provide ongoing follow-up support for Idea Incubator graduates in an intimate, yet informal setting for female entrepreneurs to share current challenges and lessons learned. These events will provide a space for us to learn how to best assist these women-owned start-ups. To increase female borrower numbers, we will provide additional, targeted TA and education to those with businesses to ensure they are capital ready.

Collaboration

To overcome systemic, endemic barriers of injustice, and build an equitable, regenerative economy, we cannot do this work alone. Our work with entrepreneurs enhances and complements the work of other organizations in the community. Collaborators include:

- SBA: ASSETS is a Microlender and hosts a Women's Business Center.
- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE): Refers aspiring entrepreneurs for the Idea Incubator. Once they have a business plan, we refer them to SCORE for mentorship.
- Finanta (formerly Community First Fund): They refer clients to us who need loans less than \$50,000 and TA. We refer clients to them when they are capital ready for larger amounts.
- Cultivate Lancaster: 20 cross-sector partners, including Lancaster County Community Foundation, provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to connect, collaborate, and grow. ASSETS is a founder and active participant.
- National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB): provides access to funding opportunities, information on policy changes and advocacy issues, and connection to a network of CDFIs and economic justice organizations.

- PA CDFI Network member, where we learn micro lending best practices
- Reimagining Our Community (ROC): cross-sector collaboration developed to: strengthen trust among resource providers and BIPOC-owned small businesses, build equitable access to capital, and strengthen community.

Implementation Plan

ASSETS' fiscal/program year runs from July through June. To implement this program, ASSETS will execute the following activities and Technical Assistance (TA) session:

- July: Redesign the Idea Incubator curriculum, including implementing required interactive coursework; ordering new course supplies and materials, including a "welcome kit" with a tote bag, pen, notepad, The Mom Test book, and class binder
- July: Host group TA event for female Lending applicants to address their capital readiness needs
- August: Host 2nd group TA event for female Lending applicants to address their capital readiness needs
- July-September: Fall Idea Incubator Cohort and Social Enterprise Pitch Event
- October: Schedule 1:1 TA check-ins with female borrowers to assess progress and current needs
- December: Seminar Followed by Alumni Social Hour
- January-February: order new course supplies & materials for Idea Incubator
- February: Schedule 1:1 TA check-ins with female borrowers to assess progress and current needs
- March: Seminar "Women Owned Business Certification" by SBA followed by Alumni Social Hour
- March-May: Spring Idea Incubator Cohort and Pitch & Brew Event
- June: Seminar "Start Up Funding" followed by Alumni gathering

Outcomes & Evaluation

Outcome 1:

- Attainable Goal: Providing women entrepreneurs with relevant financial literacy education, to achieve business success.
- Measurable Outcome: Increased number of Idea Incubator female graduates
- Program Metric: 16 female businesses launch as a result of Idea Incubator participation

Outcome 2:

- Attainable Goal: Fostering a supportive environment where women learn from each other and build valuable connections
- Measurable Outcome: Host 4 alumni social hour events, which will include TA on various topics, including getting ready for funding
- Program Metric: 10 female entrepreneurs attend each Alumni event (total = 40)

Outcome 3:

- Attainable Goal: Providing women entrepreneurs with financial education to prepare for business loans
- Measurable Outcome: Number of Lending education sessions and 1:1 check-ins with female clients
- Program Metric: 15 female applicants. 10 female borrowers

We design offerings with the entrepreneur's journey in mind to ensure relevant content. At the end of each year, we review, evaluate, and decide what to offer next based on outcomes and gaps. Data is tracked by:

- Outcome Tracker (program milestones, demographics, participant outcomes)
- Downhome Solutions (loans disbursed, client demographics)
- Pre-/Post-Surveys measure client experience ensuring relevant content and continuous improvement

Historically, women have faced barriers to sustaining and growing their businesses due to gender disparities, a lack of generational wealth, and limited business ecosystems. ASSETS works to level this playing field by offering business resources and a safe place to convene, share, and grow together.

Although communities are growing more diverse, that is not reflected in county businesses. ASSETS envisions a Lancaster County where women-owned businesses (33%) reach parity with the women population (51%).

Entrepreneurship is the vehicle ASSETS uses to build economic prosperity for underserved communities and promote

family financial health.

Documents

Required Documents

- [Women-United-Budget-ASSETS-2025.xlsx](#)
- [2024-2025-ASSETS-Board-of-Directors.docx](#)
- [Assets-Lancaster-Audit-2024.pdf](#)
- [FY-2024-2025-Budget-ASSETS.pdf](#)
- [Assets-IRS-501-C3-determination-full-original-updated.pdf](#)