

# WOMEN UNITED GRANT APPLICATION FORM

## Organization Information

### Organization Name

North Star Initiative

### EIN

27-3129156

### Address

939 Lititz Pike  
Lititz, Pennsylvania 17543  
United States

### Contact Name

Hannah Greiner

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### Executive Director / President (If different)

Melinda Clark

## 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

North Star Initiative works to end trafficking and empower survivors to reclaim the lives they were created to enjoy through healing their whole person. We envision a community that is trafficking-proof because the vulnerable are loved, equipped, connected, and healed.

According to Polaris 79% of domestic sex trafficking victims are female. Once she rescues herself, a survivor has the chance to consider what she needs to pursue her dreams and goals. North Star provides transitional care to build sustainable rhythms to bridge the gap between structured support and independent living. Our holistic approach helps survivors develop sustainable rhythms and routines while accessing continued guidance, sustainable housing, and timely resources.

To further close systemic gaps, we took decisive action in 2024 to open emergency access housing and launch a social enterprise, Florissant Collective. Florissant provides survivors with essential soft skills, meaningful work experience, a dignified wage, and a path to financial independence, all within a trauma-informed space.

### Commitment to Equity

North Star Initiative serves resilient, capable women who have chosen the path to freedom and were formerly defined by their vulnerabilities. Trafficking can happen to anyone, but certain factors can put some individuals at higher risk. Vulnerabilities include poverty or housing insecurity, as well as those who have experienced trauma or struggle with addiction. Individuals from marginalized communities, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ individuals, are disproportionately affected due to past and present discrimination and are more susceptible to exploitation and trafficking.

According to the Safe House Project, 80% of those affected by trafficking will be revictimized without the appropriate wraparound services. NSI refuses to accept this statistic and instead believes that, with the right resources, survivors can flourish, and our community can be trafficking-proof. Florissant Collective provides the opportunity for survivors to gain marketable skills, valuable workforce experience and a pathway to financial autonomy through a social enterprise led by and designed for them.

NSI believes that survivors are the experts of their own stories and seeks to empower them to share their voice in their own time and on their own terms.

## 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?

23

### Project Description

North Star Initiative launched Florissant Collective in the summer of 2024. North Star's programs provide the support and time needed to move towards a sustainable and independent future. Florissant empowers women to earn a dignified wage in a trauma-informed space, equipping them to return to the community whole and flourishing. Florissant offers handmade, small-batch products, including wax melts and sachets, with plans to expand its product

line in the near future. Each product is thoughtfully handcrafted with uncommon scents, preserved botanicals and intentionally sourced, high-quality ingredients. We've found that it is an incredibly empowering experience for the survivors to create a tangible item and see it received and valued by the community. If we are awarded the Women United Grant, NSI would use the funds to grow Florissant Collective in the following specific areas.

In order to flourish, the right infrastructure and systems need to be created to holistically create a space that strengthens and empowers the vulnerable. Our goal is to create a structured work environment that fosters the development of essential soft skills, including onboarding processes, handbook navigation, QuickBooks proficiency, skill assessments, and effective communication.

We are building a sustainable business model designed to provide long-term support for survivors, empowering them to achieve their personal and professional goals. Our goal is to create an informational catalog that will foster connections with independent retailers and generate wholesale partnerships. Specifically, investing in marketing resources to expand our online reach will help us develop our virtual presence creating further connections, engagement, and revenue growth.

As mentioned previously, Florissant's product line includes incorporating preserved botanicals. These are currently sourced from outside suppliers, but a future expansion of Florissant would include a small, rural flower patch to grow our own flowers for preservation. This will allow us to not only control the quality of our supplies, which supports our pursuit of an exceptional product, but also expands the opportunities for growth and development for the survivors in an agricultural context.

### **Collaboration**

North Star plans to collaborate with and support other businesses in its pursuit of a successful social enterprise. Specifically, a collaboration is planned with Flourish Flowers, a florist and flower farmer located in East Earl, PA to gain knowledge and expertise about growing and preserving flowers.

Additionally, we plan to connect and foster relationships with other social enterprises that operate in the same arena. There are several social enterprises, like Hon's Honey, and The Worthy Co., who have a similar model of providing survivors with workforce readiness opportunities. It is our goal to converse with them and streamline our growth by learning about their experiences.

To support revenue streams, we plan to connect with local businesses regarding stocking Florissant's product. We will be intentional and thoughtful about those we partner with, ensuring that sufficient market research has been conducted regarding the potential success of the partnership.

North Star and Florissant's ultimate goal is the sustainable employability of the survivors, it is also vital that we cultivate internship and employment opportunities with local businesses. It is a delicate process connecting survivors with potential employers and Florissant would serve as an appropriate liaison to nurture relationships with local businesses to provide potential employment positions.

### **Implementation Plan**

Continuing to develop a robust business plan that pursues mission clarity specifically:

- Ongoing innovation and research of exceptional products that are intentionally tailored to meet gaps in the market.
- Conducting test batches to refine product quality and consistency. Utilizing feedback to garner an accurate assessment of user needs.
- Training survivors on production techniques and safety procedures.
- Implementing work shifts for survivors to develop skills and personal responsibilities.

To develop and implement infrastructure and systems that holistically create a structured work environment, fostering essential soft skills for vulnerable individuals through:

- Developing a streamlined onboarding process, including digital and physical documentation, orientation materials, and training schedules (i.e. job description, building resume, interview, and offer letter that outlines expectations, role responsibilities, and compensation).

- Creating a user-friendly participant handbook with interactive resources and training outlines. The handbook would educate the survivors around communication, conflict management, and workforce etiquette.
- Establishing a financial framework through QuickBooks that will engage in efficient tracking of revenue, inventory, and costs.
- Developing tools to evaluate essential skills and create personalized development plans based on the survivors' goals. The ongoing evaluation of effectively meeting the survivors' needs is paramount to the health and mission of the organization.

Create and implement a sustainable marketing strategy by:

- Collaborating with a local design team to create a digital and physical catalog that summarizes Florissant's mission and product lines. The informational catalog can be utilized to educate and connect with independent retailers and generate wholesale partnerships.
- Investing in marketing resources to expand our online reach will help develop our virtual presence, creating further connections, engagement, and revenue growth.
- Ensuring website is optimized for search engines with relevant keywords.
- Developing a posting schedule on Social Media platforms with engaging content to expand reach.
- Building and segmenting an email list of potential consumers. Developing automated emails introducing our mission, catalog, and new products.

To implement the product expansion into growing and preserving botanicals through a local flower field we would pursue the following:

- Learning from the expertise of local flower farmers to advise on cultivation in the local plant growing zone.
- Engaging with local landscaping companies to gain agricultural expertise in planting fields.
- Sourcing seeds and seedlings.
- Providing trauma-informed training focused on empowerment through agricultural work.

## **Outcomes & Evaluation**

Business Plan goal: To develop market-aligned products, refine their quality, and train survivors.

Infrastructure goal: To holistically create a structured work environment.

Marketing goal: To create sustainable marketing strategy through the development of product catalog and expanding online reach.

Flower field goal: A clear plan to partner with a local flower farmer.

Business Plan outcome: Introduce two new products in 2025, including candles and car diffusers. Train at least 5-6 survivors in roles in Florissant.

Infrastructure outcome: Creation of orientation and handbook materials. Implementation of Quickbooks. On-going evaluation at 30 days and 90 days.

Marketing outcome: Development of the catalog and a social media strategy.

Flower field outcome: Create a feasible timeline for the planting and harvesting of flowers.

The business plan goals will create a platform for survivors to gain marketable skills, build self-confidence, achieve financial independence, and have access to employment opportunities, empowering them to support themselves and their families.

The proposed infrastructure will create a safe environment by clearly communicating expectations.

Marketing goals will provide a sustainable business model that will continue to support survivors' employment pursuits.

The flower field will cultivate a space for agricultural engagement that promotes healing and regulation, enhancing mental and emotional well-being.

Business Plan Metrics: Number of new products developed, and number of survivors trained in roles in the organization.

Infrastructure Metrics: Completed orientation and handbook materials, operating QuickBooks, and evaluations created and implemented.

Marketing Metrics: Completion of the catalog. Increase Instagram followers and email recipients by 75% by the end of the year.

Flower field Metrics: A timeline is created for 2025 planting and 2026 harvesting and preserving.

## Documents

### Required Documents

- [Board-of-Directors-Roster.pdf](#)
- [Annual-Audit.pdf](#)
- [2025-NSI-Budget.pdf](#)
- [2025-Florissant-Budget-Proposal.pdf](#)
- [NSI-IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf](#)