



INNOVATIVE BUSINESS RESOURCE OPPORTUNITY CENTER

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Small Business & Entrepreneur Support Programming

Issued by the Innovative Business Resource Opportunity Center (IBROC)

RFP Number	IBROC-SP-2026-001
Issue Date	June 1, 2026
Proposals Accepted	Rolling basis — proposals accepted and reviewed continuously through November 30, 2027 or until funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first
Submit To	https://airtable.com/appXxb3oG2NcA0Ryw/paq2bv2BFqy0OnG7B/form
Eligible Applicants	Nonprofit organizations, community-based orgs, and individual entrepreneurs
Total Budget	Up to \$75,000 — awards range from \$5,000 – \$25,000; 4–10 awards anticipated
Contact	Karen Y. Jackson, MPA, CNP Capacity Building Manager, IBROC info@daytonibroc.org

Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis through November 30, 2027 or until funds are exhausted. Early submission is strongly encouraged — funding is limited and awards are made as qualified proposals are approved.

1. Introduction and Purpose

The Innovative Business Resource Opportunity Center (IBROC), an initiative of Entrepreneurs' Center (EC) and Miami Valley Urban League (MVUL) in Dayton, Ohio, invites proposals from organizations and individual entrepreneurs to design and deliver programming that supports the launch, recovery, and growth of small businesses in underserved communities.

Dayton's small business ecosystem is home to entrepreneurs at every stage — and too many of them, particularly those from Black, Brown, and underserved communities, face barriers that traditional programming was never designed to address. IBROC exists to change that. Through this RFP, we are investing in programs built by and for the communities they serve.

Multiple awards will be made. IBROC will select the best-qualified applicants for each funded program — meaning different awards may go to different organizations or individuals.

2. Background

2.1 IBROC — Innovative Business Resource Opportunity Center

IBROC is a collaborative hub for Dayton's entrepreneurs — built to streamline access to resources, bridge gaps in the small business ecosystem, and elevate the city's untapped potential. IBROC brings together the full strength of Dayton's entrepreneurial ecosystem under one roof. Working with trusted business support organizations, our collective model ensures that both new and established entrepreneurs benefit from aligned, relationship-driven support rather than a maze of disconnected services.

2.2 Target Populations

IBROC programming is intended to serve small business owners and entrepreneurs who face systemic barriers to business success, including but not limited to:

- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) entrepreneurs
- Women-owned and women-led businesses, particularly in underrepresented sectors
- Low-income entrepreneurs and businesses in economically distressed communities
- Immigrant, refugee, and English-language learner business owners
- Returning citizens and justice-impacted entrepreneurs
- Rural entrepreneurs in low-access geographies
- Veteran and military spouse business owners
- Entrepreneurs with disabilities

3. Areas of Interest

IBROC is seeking proposals for programs that directly serve small business owners and entrepreneurs from underserved communities. We do not prescribe a program model — applicants define the problem they are best positioned to solve and propose their own solution. Priority will be given to proposals that are community-connected, feasible, and grounded in lived experience.

Proposals may address any stage of the entrepreneurship lifecycle, including but not limited to:

- Pre-launch ideation, validation, and feasibility support
- Business formation, legal structure, and financial foundations
- Access to capital — including alternative and community-based financing
- Market development, sales strategy, and customer acquisition
- Peer networks, cohort programming, and mentorship
- Sector-specific accelerators (food and beverage, creative economy, construction, retail, technology, and others)
- Digital literacy, e-commerce, and technology adoption for small businesses
- Business recovery and stabilization
- Re-entry and justice-impacted entrepreneur support
- Succession planning and business acquisition support
- Wraparound services that address personal barriers affecting business sustainability

Applicants who have never received a grant before are encouraged to apply.

4. Eligibility

Both organizations and individual entrepreneurs are eligible to apply, including:

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations
- Community-based organizations (with fiscal sponsor documentation if needed)
- CDFIs, SBDCs, SCORE chapters, and chambers serving underserved communities
- Faith-based organizations with documented community programming capacity
- Individual entrepreneurs proposing programs for themselves and/or a peer cohort
- Informal community groups with a fiscal sponsor arrangement

Individual entrepreneurs are explicitly welcome. If you need help identifying a fiscal sponsor, contact IBROC. Organizational applicants must be in good standing, have no unresolved federal debarment, and have the fiscal capacity to receive and manage grant funds.

The following are not eligible uses of IBROC funding: programs with no direct entrepreneur interaction, lobbying, religious instruction, research without participant programming, or general operating support unconnected to a defined program.

5. Proposal Requirements

IBROC accepts proposals on a rolling basis through November 30, 2027 or until funds are exhausted. There is no single deadline, proposals are reviewed and awards made continuously. Early submission is strongly encouraged, as total funding is limited and awards will be made throughout the solicitation period.

5.1 Required Proposal Content

1. **Applicant Overview** — Your name or organization, why you are positioned to deliver this program, and your connection to the community you will serve.
2. **The Problem You Are Solving** — The specific gap your program will address. Use data where you have it; community knowledge and lived experience count.
3. **Program/ Initiative You Are Proposing** — clearly identify who will participate, how you will recruit participants, modality and location that the programming will be delivered, and facilitators. If you are proposing multiple programs each must be addressed separately in your proposal.
4. **Your Expertise in Each Proposed Program** — for each program, describe your hands-on experience and knowledge base. What qualifies you to facilitate this program? This does not need to be a credential list — real-world experience counts. Be specific.
5. **Proposed Session Design** — describe how you would structure the session. What will you cover? In what order? What activities, tools, or formats will you use to make it interactive? How long will the session be? What will participants be able to do after the session that they couldn't before?
6. **Participant Resources** — describe what participants will receive.
7. **Goals and How You Will Measure Them** — 3–5 specific, measurable outcomes and how you will track them.
8. **Budget** — for each program proposed, provide your fee and a brief explanation of what it covers (preparation, facilitation, materials, and travel if applicable). The total program budget is \$75,000, distributed across all selected proposals. Individual awards will vary by scope. Submit a cost that accurately reflects your preparation and delivery — IBROC will evaluate proposals on value, not lowest price.
9. **References** — provide up to three professional references with contact information. References should be able to speak to your expertise in the proposed program and/or your ability as a facilitator.

Optional but welcomed: Letters of support from community partners or prospective participants.

5.2 Performance Indicators

IBROC will evaluate the success of funded programs against the following indicators.

- Number of participants enrolled
- Number of program sessions or hours delivered
- Number of 1:1 technical assistance sessions
- Demographic breakdown of participants
- Participant satisfaction (target: 80%+ positive)

5.3 Submission Instructions

- Upload to: <https://airtable.com/appXxb3oG2NcA0Ryw/pag2bv2BFqy0OnG7B/form>
- Format: PDF preferred; Word accepted. Combine all materials into a single file when possible.
- Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis through November 30, 2027 or until the \$75,000 budget is exhausted — whichever comes first. There is no single submission deadline. Early submission is strongly encouraged.
- Confirmation of receipt will be sent within 2 business days. If you do not receive confirmation, contact IBROC immediately.
- Questions welcome at any time — contact Karen Y. Jackson, MPA, CNP, Capacity Building Manager, IBROC, at info@daytonibroc.org. IBROC is available for brief pre-submission conversations — contact us to schedule.
- Applications may be submitted in English or Spanish.

6. Evaluation Process

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel that includes at least one current or former small business owner from an underserved community. Applicants will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Criterion	What Reviewers Are Looking For
Community Need & Problem Statement	Is the problem clearly defined? Is there evidence of real need? Does the applicant demonstrate genuine understanding of the people they will serve?
Program Design & Feasibility	Is the proposed approach creative, realistic, and well-suited to the target population? Are barrier-removal strategies built in? Is the plan achievable with the requested funding?
Applicant Capacity & Community Connection	Does the applicant have the relationships, experience, and capacity to deliver the program? Do they have trust with the target community?
Measurable Outcomes & Learning Plan	Are the goals specific and realistic? Is there a clear plan to track what works and what doesn't?

Equity, Inclusion & Lived Experience

Are culturally responsive practices evident? Are people with lived experience of the target population involved in program design or delivery?

Appendix A: Proposal Checklist

Use this checklist to confirm your proposal is complete before submitting.

	Required Element
☐	Who You Are — name/org, mission, and connection to target population
☐	Problem Statement — specific gap, evidence of need, and community knowledge
☐	Program Description — participants, recruitment, activities, location, timeline
☐	Why It Will Work — evidence, experience, or community insight
☐	Goals and Measurement — 3–5 outcomes and tracking plan
☐	Line-item budget with brief narrative justification

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply if I have never received a grant before?

Yes — absolutely. IBROC actively encourages first-time applicants. Our review process is designed to evaluate ideas and community credibility, not grant-writing experience. If you need help, contact us.

Do I need to be a nonprofit to apply?

No. Both organizations and individual entrepreneurs are eligible. For-profit entities and informal groups may apply with fiscal sponsor documentation. Contact IBROC for guidance on finding a fiscal sponsor.

Can I apply if my organization was recently formed?

Yes, with some conditions. Organizations less than one year old will need to provide additional documentation or identify a fiscal sponsor. Exceptions may be made for organizations with strong community roots even if newly formalized.

Can I submit in Spanish?

Yes. Applications may be submitted in English or Spanish. Contact IBROC in advance if you need support in another language.

How will I know if my proposal was received?

You will receive confirmation within 2 business days of submission. If you do not receive confirmation, contact info@daytonibroc.org immediately.

What happens after I submit?

Your proposal will be reviewed within 30 days of receipt. You may be contacted for clarification. A decision will be issued within approximately 60 days. If awarded, you will be asked to sign a grant agreement before funds are disbursed.

Appendix C: Glossary

- **Rolling Review:** A process in which proposals are reviewed and awards are made on a continuous basis throughout the solicitation period, rather than all at once after a single deadline.
- **Fiscal Sponsor:** A nonprofit organization that agrees to receive and manage grant funds on behalf of an applicant who does not have the legal status or infrastructure to receive funds directly.
- **Period of Performance:** The authorized timeframe during which grant-funded activities may occur and funds may be expended.
- **Indirect Costs / Overhead:** Administrative and operational costs not directly tied to program delivery. Capped at 15% of direct costs under this RFP.
- **Underserved Entrepreneur:** An individual or business owner who faces systemic barriers to economic participation due to race, gender, income, geography, disability, immigration status, or other factors.
- **BIPOC:** Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- **IBROC:** Innovative Business Resource Opportunity Center — an initiative of The Entrepreneurs' Center and Miami Valley Urban League, Dayton, Ohio.
- **EC:** The Entrepreneurs' Center — a Dayton, Ohio-based 501(c)(3) organization supporting entrepreneurship since 1999.
- **Capacity Building Manager:** The IBROC staff member responsible for program capacity building and the primary point of contact for this RFP. Current Capacity Building Manager: Karen Y. Jackson, MPA, CNP.