

**AGENDA SUMMARY**  
**GRAND COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**10/18/2022**

<b>TITLE:</b>	Award of Sustainable and Resilient (STAR) Business Grants
<b>FISCAL IMPACT:</b>	\$709,135
<b>PRESENTER(S):</b>	August Granath, Economic Development Director Ben Alter, Economic Development Specialist

**Prepared By:**  
 Ben Alter, Economic Development Specialist

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**  
**Attorney Review:**

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

I move to approve the following STAR Business Grants awards:

- \$4,800 to Real Green Clean, LLC
- \$7,000 to Wild Raven Soap Company LLC
- \$10,000 to Canyonlands Field Institute, Inc.
- \$11,068 to Friends of Moab Folk Festival
- \$12,500 to Sundial Medicinals, LLC
- \$14,750 to TerraSophia LLC
- \$17,494 to Farm Yard, LLC
- \$20,000 to Science Moab Engagement Initiative
- \$22,735 to Desert Sun Ceramics
- \$25,000 to Grounded Healing Therapy, LLC
- \$31,226 to Tres Flojos, LLC
- \$33,500 to Blaze Bicycles, Inc.
- \$40,250 to Arches Handyman LLC
- \$45,000 to Wildland Scapes LLC
- \$46,312 to Community Rebuilds
- \$47,500 to Seekhaven, Inc.
- \$50,000 to Westside Woodworks LLC
- \$70,000 to Heron School LLC
- \$100,000 to ABC Thompson LLC
- \$100,000 to Moab Free Health Clinic

**BACKGROUND**

During the week of September 11, 2022 the STAR Business Grant Evaluation Committee convened and reviewed all complete applications to this year's STAR Business Grant round. During this period, the committee made funding recommendations for 35 organizations as either "partial" or "full" awards based on the criteria laid out in the program.

Approval of these awards will not trigger the immediate disbursement of award checks, as the Grand County Economic Development Department (EDD) and the Grand County Attorney's Office continue to work on a grant award contract that outlines awardee expectations, match requirements, and funding exclusions (such as advertising, rent, and products intended for mark-up and/or resale); however, as the evaluation committee has made these funding recommendations, the EDD is eager to carry them out. Awards will be provided on a 90/10 basis.

All STAR Business Grant applicants (whether they are to receive an award or not) will receive feedback forms that provide insight into how the evaluation committee ruled on their application.

The EDD was only able to announce funding awards on October 12, 2022 and is only presenting the awards that received an affirmative response from awardee representatives that day. A second, smaller cohort of STAR Business Grant awards is expected to be submitted for approval at the November 1, 2022 Grand County Commission meeting.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

- 1 Summary of proposed STAR Business Grant awards
- 2 STAR Business Grant program pilot as approved by the Grand County Commission on April 19, 2022

**Proposed STAR Business Grants 2022**  
First Cohort

Real Green Clean	\$4,800	Applicant will purchase an electronic bike and trailer from a local electric bike dealer to alleviate travel burdens for their employees.
Wild Raven Soap	\$7,000	Applicant will create sustainable employment for the organization's owner-operators with the goal of developing an additional paid position through an increase in business revenue via increased productivity, expanded events participation, and enlarged wholesale capacity.
Canyonlands Field Institute	\$10,000	Applicant will hire, train, and grow a full-time Development Director and Development Office. The Director will focus on growing revenues from grants, foundations, and individuals. Applicant aims to triple its revenues over three years with a full-time fundraiser that focuses on statewide and national-level grants.
Friends of Moab Folk Festival	\$11,068	Applicant proposes a dynamic approach to ensuring the organization's long-term success and defining what it means to be a progressive, sustainable organization in 2022. Applicant strives to provide staff with a fulfilling place to work and affords a comfortable quality of life, which includes updating its infrastructure to reduce waste and increase safety for our events as well as increasing accessibility for all attendees so that a disability does not limit event attendance.
Sundial Medicinals	\$12,500	Applicant aims to expand the production and open hours of its retail shop while offering livable wages. Applicant's goal is to grow their business sufficiently during their year of grant support to sustain increased wages and extended

		employment hours into the future. This will the applicant to delegate management tasks to employees, creating capacity that will allow for client expansion, marketing, and development. Increased retail hours will result in increased sales and business expansion.
Terra Sophia	\$14,750	Applicant will develop and deliver a watershed-friendly training program to effectively prepare employees for work in this expanding field. The program will focus on creating training pathways in low-tech erosion control and watershed-friendly landscaping practices such as greywater, rainwater harvesting, and drip irrigation. The project includes contracting graphic design and video production services and providing on-the-job training to develop this project and support business operations
Farm Yard LLC	\$17,494	Applicant is repurposing a building that has been moved from a Main Street business into a studio on the applicant's property. This studio will support event design and education and will have cool storage in the form of a Cool Bot walk-in cooler system. The project will support the applicant's move from a personal kitchen and allow for the expansion of flower sales by increasing holding times from harvest to distribution.
Science Moab	\$20,000	Applicant will use funds to support its School to Science program. School to Science works to increase local students' scientific knowledge, academic achievement, college & career readiness, and - ultimately - economic mobility by partnering with Grand County High School's (GCHS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) program to offer job shadows, internships, & field trips with scientists working locally. It leverages hands-on science education as a workforce development tool, equipping

		students to enter the STEM field, the fastest-growing national job sector.
Desert Sun Ceramics	\$22,735	Applicant will build a Mud Barn; a 12' x12' temperature controlled, insulated shed located behind the organization's main studio. The Barn will store bulk clay, clay scraps and equipment for reclaiming used clay and chemicals for mixing glazes. The Barn will help alleviate crowding during the winter months, which is the organization's busy season. The extra space will allow more wire shelving to accommodate more members. Clay and glaze chemicals have a high silica content. Relocating them outside of the studio will also increase the air quality and reduce exposure to silica harmful dust. Additionally, the applicant is requesting funding to get tutored on Quickbooks and accounting.
Grounded Healing Therapy LLC	\$25,000	Applicant organization is comprised of local therapists offering nature-based therapy, workshops, and retreats. Applicant's services are aimed to support those in self-awareness, discovery, growth, healing, and wellness. Workshops and retreats consist of 1-3-day long adventure outdoor activities, where the organization also provides food that comes from a local farm, promoting holistic wellness. The applicant aims to create diverse safe places that inspire clients to take control of their mental health and live an authentic life. STAR funds will act in part as start-up funds.
Tres Flojos, LLC	\$31,226	Applicant will use the funds to jumpstart their construction of employee housing.
Blaze Bicycles	\$33,500	Applicant aims to significantly increase production and sales by expanding from a boutique bicycle frame building operation into a small production facility with CNC machining capabilities. This grant will help the applicant undertake larger production runs of existing parts, produce more complicated parts, expand

		their product line, support other frame builders, and boost sales.
Arches Handyman LLC	\$40,250	Applicant will build a shop to house new and used excess materials/project waste that can be reused instead of wasted, housing inventory. The space will add space for work/fabrication and create space for employees. The applicant will also purchase a tractor to help complete jobs more efficiently/cost-effectively.
Wildland Scapes	\$45,000	Applicant will procure a soil-making machine to increase productivity and reduce the cost of labor for plant production by reducing soil-making time from 8+ hours per 1/2 cu yard to less than 1 hour total time per 1/2 cu yard. The applicant will also increase its shaded areas to improve plant establishment, speed plant growth, and improve working conditions. These improvements will increase the availability of hard-to-find, drought-tolerant plants in SE Utah for landscapes through increased production capacity and selection.
Community Rebuilds	\$46,312	Applicant will establish an in-house drafting and consultation branch. Applicant's goal is to offer sustainable building plans at a sliding scale rate to the people of Grand County to take advantage of current building ordinances controlling subdividing, Accessory Dwelling Units, and Internal Accessory Dwelling units in order to allow folks to produce their own affordable housing units without having to involve the time and labor our programming typically entails.
Seekhaven	\$47,500	Funding will support the first phase of the applicant's facility expansion and the personnel costs associated with managing this sustainable, well-organized growth. Seekhaven's new Business & Grants Officer will oversee the agency's pending facility and associated service expansion. GC-STAR

		funding will also be utilized to support design and engineering costs associated with phase 1 of the facility expansion (Architectural Squared and SET Engineering proposals).
Westside Woodworks	\$50,000	Applicant's project will focus on expanding the main workshop area in the applicant's current building. The applicant will add an L-shaped wing on the side and back of the North end of the building. This expansion will impact the organization's employees and the local community by providing more workspace and allowing the organization to meet the demand for services.
Heron School	\$70,000	Funds will aid the applicant in hiring 2 new full-time positions; a dean of students/teaching lead and a lead humanities teacher for the 2022-2023 academic school year.
ABC Thompson LLC	\$100,000	Applicant will use STAR Grant funds to restore, bring up to zoning code, and reopen the cafe & mini-mall in Thompson Springs, UT. Restored and new infrastructure will provide for future community events.
Moab Free Health Clinic	\$100,000	The applicant purchased the former USU-Moab campus to convert into the Moab Community Resource Center with the goal of addressing multiple social determinants of health in underserved populations. Multiple nonprofits will occupy one building and contribute a subsidized cost share (20-20% below market rental rate) to help support operations. STAR grant funds will support needed renovations, including the creation of functional common spaces to best support nonprofits in their work serving the community.

**NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL**  
**for ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION**  
**GRANT PROGRAM - PILOT**

**I. Background**

Pursuant to Grand County Utah Resolution NO. 3260 (2021), the Grand County Economic Development Department (EDD) seeks to create and fund programs that shorten the gap between wages and the cost of living for local residents while addressing the need for an increasingly resilient and diverse economy. The EDD pursues greater economic diversification in Grand County by supporting the existence and expansion of organizations that provide year-round, stable employment opportunities and are resistant to both economic shocks and seasonality.

The EDD currently defines “economic diversification” as the following:

**Economic diversification is economic development that supports a sustainable, livable, and resilient Grand County:**

- ❖ **Sustainable, in that we actively protect our public lands and preserve our community's natural resources;**
- ❖ **Livable, in that we support the creation of year-round, high-paying jobs in a community that offers a high quality of life and economic mobility; and,**
- ❖ **Resilient, in that we foster a diverse mix of industries that can withstand an array of economic shocks.**

**II. Overview**

The EDD proposes the creation of a grant program pilot with the aim of supporting businesses, non-profits, and other organizations that contribute to the economic diversification of Grand County. The current stated goal of this grant program pilot is:

**To support projects that sustainably raise wages or lower the cost of living for Grand County workers. Provided with free capital, businesses are able to invest in improvements that boost productivity. Resulting increased profits can be invested in workforce opportunities and retention.**

The EDD has budgeted \$500,000 to fund this pilot via the Economic Diversification carve out of transient room tax (TRT)<sup>1</sup> revenue expected to be collected in fiscal year 2022. The EDD will conduct significant public outreach in the months prior to the application launch to provide information on how to craft a robust application and access other business resources in our region. Applications will be scored for basic business health and across four criteria by a committee consisting of no EDD staff.

The EDD expects to disburse about 27 awards from this fund during FY22. All awards will require a small match from the recipient organizations with the sources of match being flexible. Awardees will be given one year to spend their grant award.

### **III. Costs & Resource Requirements**

The EDD expects the total cost of this pilot not to exceed the \$500,000 allocated. No application fees will be charged.

The EDD will generate application resource materials, possibly including and not limited to the following listed items, in order to support applicants:

- Webinar(s) guiding applicants through the process and addressing frequently asked questions
  - Separate webinars may be created to assist for- vs. non-profit operators
- A frequently asked questions resource (web and physical page)
- An application tips and best practices resource (web and physical page; possible video)
- A list of example projects and disallowed projects (web and physical page)
- An email distribution list to receive grant timeline updates and other grant-related communications from our office
- An online feedback form assessing the grant application process
- An online feedback form assessing the grant design (already created and circulated, see: <https://rb.gy/bnclst>)
- Offer of in-person assistance to applicants
- A list of verified grant writing resources, including contractors (web and physical page)

The EDD will require applicants to meet with our region's local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) staff prior to crafting their grant application. The EDD will work with the SBDC staff in the weeks prior to the application opening date to build an understanding of Grand

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<sup>1</sup> "Purposes of Transient Room Tax and Expenditure of Revenue -- Purchase or Lease of Facilities -- Mitigating Impacts of Recreation, Tourism, or Conventions -- Issuance of Bonds. (Effective 5/5/2021)." *Utah Code Section 17-31-2*. [https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title17/Chapter31/17-31-S2.html?v=C17-31-S2\\_2018050820180508](https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title17/Chapter31/17-31-S2.html?v=C17-31-S2_2018050820180508). See Section (2) (a) (iii).

County grant programs as well as other resources that applicants should be directed to. The goal of this requirement is to connect Grand County businesses, non-profits, and other organizations with the office of the SBDC, a free resource that provides year-round organization assistance on matters including but not limited to funding opportunities.

As of the date of the submission of this proposal, an individual has yet to be placed in the role of SBDC staff member for our county. The role requires nearly three months of training before the new staff member is fully-equipped to assist organizations; therefore, this requirement may be amended during the program design process so that applicants are connected with other available resources.

#### **IV. Timeline**

The following timeline was created by the EDD. Currently, the creation of this pilot has aligned with the timeline set out:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Note</b>
3/1/2022	<b>County commission workshop</b>	Completed
3/3/2022	<b>Community engagement session:</b> land use open house at Star Hall	Completed
3/8-10/2022	<b>First governing bodies review:</b> Grand County Economic Development Advisory Board, Grand County Economic Diversification Advisory Council, Moab Area Travel Council Advisory Board	Completed
3/29-31/2022	<b>Community engagement sessions:</b> public workshops at Grand Center and Moab Arts & Recreation Center	Completed
4/12-13/2022	<b>Second governing bodies review:</b> Grand County Economic Diversification Advisory Council	Completed
4/19/2022	<b>County commission review for approval</b>	Underway
5/1/2022	<b>Grant program pilot launch</b>	Beginning of public engagement campaign publicizing grants and application resources

7/1-31/2022	<b>Application period</b>	This period is dependent on the hiring of an SBDC staff member for Grand County
8/1/2022	<b>Evaluation committee convenes</b>	This date is an estimate
9/1/2022	<b>Grants disbursed</b>	This date is an estimate

**V. Eligibility**

All locally-owned, established organizations, including for- and non-profit businesses, will be eligible to apply to this grant program. Applications will require applicants to list a tax ID number and business name, allowing newly-established organizations that have been licensed to apply but excluding organizations that have not yet been created.

**A. Definition of a “locally-owned” business or organization**

For the purpose of this pilot, the EDD has chosen to define a “locally-owned” business or organization as one in which:

- The owner or primary operator resides in Grand County or the Spanish Valley region of San Juan County; or,
- A majority of the employees work in Grand County.

**VI. Evaluation Criteria**

The EDD has established five points of criteria with which to evaluate applications:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Basic Business Health	Is the applicant a viable and established business or organization?	Yes/No - applications cannot move forward without a “yes”
Impact	What is the likelihood that this project will boost any of the following metrics for Grand County residents in the short term?	1-10 points

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pay or pay rate(s) for existing employees</li> <li>● Benefits provided to employees</li> <li>● Revenue or services provided</li> <li>● Investment in workforce training</li> <li>● Investment to offset employee living costs</li> <li>● Creation of new, high-paying jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ at or above 110% of the county median wage</li> <li>○ at or above 110% of the industry median wage<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Diversification	Does the project or business meet the county’s diversification goals of sustainability, livability, and/or resilience?	1-10 points
Feasibility and Duration	How achievable is this? Does the reviewing committee member foresee the potential impacts of this project extending into the future (“having a lasting impact”)?	1-5 points
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	<p>Does the organization engage underserved or minority populations? Does the organization encourage a diverse and accepting environment within the organization and/or within our region? Is the organization owned or operated by, OR, does the organization employ or significantly serve the following communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women or non-binary</li> <li>● LGBTQ+</li> <li>● Minority races and ethnicities</li> <li>● Individuals w/ disabilities</li> <li>● Veterans</li> </ul>	1-5 points

Applications that receive a “yes” in the Basic Business Health category and the greatest number of points will receive first consideration for funding.

**VII. Evaluation Committee**

To maintain impartiality throughout the grant application, disbursement, and reporting process, the EDD will not participate in the assessment of any applications and will serve solely as the

<sup>2</sup> 110% of the county median wage is \$3,568. Applicants will be provided data by the EDD to determine 110% of their industry’s median wage, categorized by NAICS code. The EDD has compiled data on industry median wages and industry economic multiplier indicators which can be found [here](#).

administrator of this grant program. Application criteria will be assessed by a committee assembled by the EDD and consisting of:

- One Grand County commissioner
- One Moab City representative
- One Grand County community non-profit representative
- One Grand County community business representative
- One State of Utah representative (potentially a member of the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity)

Committee members are responsible for revealing any conflicts of interest related to applicant organizations and will be expected to recuse themselves from scoring those applications.

Committee members will be asked to score each application by the criteria listed above. Committee members will then meet, review each application and their individual assessments, and work to generate a list of funding recommendations for the EDD. The EDD will review these recommendations with the committee and draft individual grant contracts should no concerns over the recommended projects arise. Following county commission approval of these grant contracts, the EDD will disburse funds.

During the evaluation process, applicants may be asked to provide further information related to their application.

## **VIII. Grant Match Requirement**

Awardees are required to match their grant awards. Awards below \$5,000 will require a 10% match and awards of \$5,000 and above will require a 20% match.

Of any match requirement, half must be contributed as cash. For the remaining half of the required match, awardees can apply any of the following sources:

- Cash
- Materials and supplies
- Services
- Value, volunteers, or donated labor<sup>3</sup>
- Donations

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<sup>3</sup> The value of one volunteer hour in the state of Utah in 2020 was \$27.82, up 6.2% from 2019. The EDD intends to value volunteer hours based on the 2020 value. See: Independent Sector. “The Value of Volunteer Time / State and Historical Data.” April 19, 2021. [https://independentsector.org/resource/vovt\\_state\\_2021/](https://independentsector.org/resource/vovt_state_2021/).

- Other grants, excluding any grant provided by Grand County

Non-profit and other organizations that rely primarily on grant funds for their operational budget may apply grant funds to part of the economic diversification grant's required cash match; however, any grant funds applied as cash must be related to the economic diversification project.

## **IX. Grant Disbursement**

Awardees who receive funding through this grant program will be required to sign a grant contract to be approved by the county commission. Awardees will have one year to spend their award.

Grants will be disbursed on a 90/10 basis: upon grant contract approval, awardees will initially receive 90% of their total award. To access the remaining 10%, awardees must spend their initial 90% disbursement as well as the project's total match funds.

For this pilot, the EDD aims to disburse 20 grants of less than \$5,000 each and 7 grants of \$5,000-\$100,000 each. Award sums will ultimately depend on the applications received and approved.

The EDD intends to disburse funds beginning in September 2022. This is contingent upon the hiring and training of an SBDC staff member for Grand County.