

Elevate Culver City

The Elevate Culver City Program provides technical assistance and advising for up to 30 small businesses to enhance existing operations and encourage long-term success.

The cohort designed program features virtual workshops and one-on-one advising, designed to support small business owners with tools and strategies to optimize growth, and strengthen core functions. The City is partnering with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)/ PCR Business Finance to administer the program.

The Elevate Program includes four virtual workshops held once a month. Workshop topics will include Goal Setting for your Business, Marketing and Branding, Business Planning for Growth, Managing Business Financials and Cash Flow. Participants will also be assigned independent work specific to their business to support program outcomes. Additionally, each small business will receive four hours of one-on-one advising from a business advisor.

At the completion of the four-month program, a grant of \$1,000 will be awarded to participants by the City of Culver City. To be eligible for the grant, businesses are required complete at least three virtual workshops, assigned independent work and attend advising sessions.

To be eligible for the Elevate program, a small business must:

- Operated in Culver City for less than two years;
- Completed taxes for year 2023 and year 2024;
- Demonstrate revenue generation, no minimum required
- Hold Current Culver City Business License; and
- Compliant with all City of Culver City, County and State regulations.

The application process will include an online application and will require submittal of a current Culver City Business License and a copy of filed taxes for year 2023 and year 2024.

Program Timeline:

Marketing Period:	February 9, 2026, to March 20, 2026
Application Period:	March 30, 2026, to April 30, 2026
4-month cohort program:	June 2026 to October 2026
City celebration:	October/ November 2026

Certain businesses are not eligible for the program and include political, religious, businesses that sell products, goods, and services related to adult themes, smoking, firearms, alcohol (as the primary use), or cannabis.

WORKSHOP DETAILS			
Workshop Topic	Why is this Important for Businesses	What Businesses Will Learn	Independent Work
Goal Setting for Your Business	<p>Goal setting provides clarity in mission for organization and staff.</p> <p>Setting clear goals is correlated to better results and tracking.</p>	Businesses will learn techniques and strategies for effective goal setting and benchmarking.	Using the workshop tools, participants will identify business gaps, create a goal framework and develop and step-by-step action plan.
Branding and Marketing Your Business	Clear and consistent branding provides for targeted and effective marketing to desired customer base.	Business will learn to clarify their business brand and audience, identify their uniqueness in the market and build marketing/ branding messages via various marketing channels.	Creation of a business avatar relative to their business branding/ marketing message and headline.
Business Plan for Growth (Live Plan Access)	A business plan creates a road map for decision making and scaled growth.	Businesses will create or revise their business plan to enhance current operations to enhance organizational effectiveness and achieve short- and long-term goals.	Businesses will assess their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) relative to business planning.
Managing Business Financials and Cashflow	Management of financials and ensuring cash flow are critical for growth, investment and future lending opportunities.	Businesses will refine skills relative to cash flow projections and budgeting for seasonal changes.	Business will create a simplified cashflow projection that will inform a new/ revised business plan.

The Jumpstart Permit Reimbursement Program

The Jumpstart Permit Reimbursement Program supports new Culver City small businesses by reimbursing up to \$5,000 of City permit fees. The program will be launched in two phases with \$25,000 in each phase. Phase 1 will launch in March 2026 and Phase 2 will launch in September 2026.

To be eligible for the Jumpstart Fund, small businesses must:

- Operate a commercial, “brick and mortar” space within the boundaries of the City of Culver City
- Received an approved Culver City business license
- Compliant with all City and County regulations.

The application process for Phase 1 will open in March 2026 and will include an online application. Submission requirements include an invoice of paid permit fees issued from the City for approved plans/work relative to Planning and Development Services, Engineering or Fire.

Once applications are received, applications will be vetted with the issuing department. All approved businesses will be required to submit a W-9 form to the City for reimbursement. The program will be conducted on a first-come, first served basis.

Definition of a small business: The general requirements to be classified as a small business according to the U.S. Small Business Administration are:

- Be a for-profit business of any legal structure
- Be independently owned and operated
- Not be nationally dominant in its field
- Be physically located and operate in the U.S. or its territories

In addition to the general requirements there are numerical requirements (total employees and/or total number of employees). The City’s programs will not use the numerical requirements used by the U.S. SBA but will use the general requirements.