

# LEDA Funds: Fueling Small Business Growth in Los Alamos County

I am writing to propose a solution that aligns perfectly with Los Alamos County's strategic goal of Economic Vitality and addresses the valuable insights from the recent National Community Survey commissioned by the county.

As we are all aware, the ability of our community to diversify, develop, grow, and sustain various elements necessary for a flourishing local economy is paramount. To this end, I would like to introduce the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funds as an option for small businesses within Los Alamos County to apply for financial support.

LEDA was established with the primary objective of promoting economic development, creating jobs, and enhancing the overall economic vitality of communities across New Mexico. It was crafted to serve as a strategic tool to foster business growth, drive investment, and ultimately strengthen our local economy. By utilizing LEDA funds, Los Alamos County can fulfill its Strategic Goal of Economic Vitality as it encompasses the very essence of our economic aspirations.

One of the key features of LEDA is its "anti-donation" provision, which ensures that LEDA funds are invested strategically to drive local economic development while safeguarding against the unauthorized use of public money. This provision aligns perfectly with our commitment to fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Furthermore, I would like to draw your attention to the National Community Survey conducted in 2022, where a staggering 73% of residents identified "enhancing support and opportunities for the local business environment" as the single highest priority for Los Alamos County Government in the next five years. This underscores the urgency and importance of creating avenues for local businesses to thrive and succeed.

By offering LEDA funds to our local small businesses, we not only address the expressed needs and desires of our residents but also provide a tangible solution to enhance the support and opportunities available within our community. This will lead to job creation, diversified economic activity, and a stronger, more resilient local economy.

I propose that we initiate a comprehensive outreach campaign to inform our local businesses about the availability of LEDA funds and provide them with the necessary resources and support to navigate the application process successfully. Through this concerted effort, we can empower our small businesses to leverage LEDA funds effectively and contribute to the economic vitality of Los Alamos County.

I look forward to discussing this proposal further and exploring how we can collaborate to make LEDA funds accessible to our local businesses. Together, we can achieve our shared goal of enhancing our community's economic vitality and providing valuable support to our local business environment.

**Here are some key points to consider in our LEDA outreach effort:**

- Education and Awareness: We can organize workshops, webinars, and information sessions to educate small businesses about LEDA, its purpose, and the application process.
- Support and Assistance: Establish a dedicated support system to assist businesses in preparing strong LEDA applications. This includes offering guidance, templates, and application reviews.
- Promotion of Success Stories: Showcase businesses that have thrived with LEDA support, highlighting the positive impact on job creation and economic development in Los Alamos County.
- Collaboration and Networking: Encourage businesses to collaborate on joint LEDA applications, leveraging partnerships to maximize project impact.
- Continuous Improvement: Collect feedback from businesses and evaluate the LEDA support program regularly to refine and enhance services.

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### Step 1: Introduction to LEDA

- Objective: Provide an overview of LEDA and its significance for small businesses.
- Activities:
  - Develop a clear and concise LEDA informational brochure or booklet.
  - Create a dedicated section on the county or municipality's official website explaining LEDA.
  - Share introductory videos or webinars on social media platforms.

### Step 2: Workshops and Information Sessions

- Objective: Educate small businesses about LEDA's eligibility criteria and application process.
- Activities:
  - Host virtual or in-person workshops with LEDA experts.
  - Cover topics like project eligibility, funding types, and community benefits.
  - Offer guidance on assembling a strong LEDA application.

### Step 3: Online Resources

- Objective: Provide accessible LEDA resources for businesses.
- Activities:
  - Create an online LEDA resource center with downloadable guides, templates, and FAQs.
  - Develop a step-by-step application tutorial video series.
  - Offer an online Q&A session for businesses to ask specific questions.

### Step 4: Application Assistance

- Objective: Help small businesses navigate the LEDA application process effectively.
- Activities:
  - Establish a dedicated LEDA application assistance hotline or email.
  - Offer one-on-one consultations for businesses that need personalized support.
  - Collaborate with local business support organizations to provide application guidance.

### Step 5: Success Stories and Case Studies

- Objective: Showcase how LEDA funds have benefited small businesses in the community.
- Activities:
  - Compile and share success stories and case studies of businesses that have thrived with LEDA support.
  - Organize webinars or panel discussions featuring LEDA beneficiaries sharing their experiences.

#### Step 6: Networking and Collaboration

- Objective: Encourage businesses to collaborate and explore joint LEDA applications.
- Activities:
  - Host networking events or mixers where businesses can meet potential partners.
  - Facilitate partnerships between complementary businesses for LEDA projects.
  - Promote collaboration as a means to increase project impact.

#### Step 7: Application Preparation Workshops

- Objective: Help businesses prepare a strong LEDA application.
- Activities:
  - Conduct workshops focused on application documentation, budgeting, and project planning.
  - Provide templates and checklists for assembling comprehensive applications.
  - Offer mock application reviews and feedback sessions.

#### Step 8: Application Submission Assistance

- Objective: Ensure businesses are ready to submit their LEDA applications on time.
- Activities:
  - Provide a final application review service to catch any errors or omissions.
  - Offer assistance in gathering and organizing required documents.
  - Set up a submission deadline reminder system.

#### Step 9: Post-Application Support

- Objective: Assist businesses throughout the LEDA application review process.
- Activities:
  - Maintain ongoing communication to provide updates on application status.
  - Offer guidance on addressing any feedback or additional documentation requests.
  - Celebrate successful LEDA awards with businesses.

#### Step 10: Evaluation and Feedback

- Objective: Continuously improve the LEDA support plan based on feedback and results.
- Activities:
  - Solicit feedback from businesses and LEDA beneficiaries on the support program.
  - Conduct regular evaluations to assess the impact of the LEDA assistance plan.
  - Use feedback and data to refine and enhance LEDA support services.

### **Types of Retail Businesses That Can Apply for LEDA Funds:**

1. **Small Retailers:** Independent shops, boutiques, and specialty stores that are looking to expand, upgrade, or modernize their retail spaces.
2. **Supermarkets and Grocery Stores:** Food retailers aiming to enhance their facilities, expand product offerings, or implement sustainability initiatives.
3. **Franchise Retailers:** Franchisees of well-known retail brands seeking funds for opening new locations or renovating existing ones.
4. **Local Craft and Artisan Retailers:** Retailers selling locally produced goods and crafts looking to increase their market presence.
5. **Community Markets:** Farmers' markets, local produce markets, and community-oriented retail spaces that serve as hubs for local products.

### **How Retail Businesses Can Use LEDA Funds:**

1. **Store Expansion and Renovation:** LEDA funds can be used to expand the retail space, renovate the interior or exterior of the store, and create a more attractive and customer-friendly environment.
2. **Technology and E-commerce Integration:** Retailers can invest in technology upgrades, including point-of-sale systems, e-commerce platforms, and online marketing to expand their reach beyond the local community.
3. **Inventory Expansion:** Funds can be used to increase inventory, offer a wider range of products, and attract more customers.
4. **Energy Efficiency Improvements:** Retailers can invest in energy-efficient lighting, HVAC systems, and insulation to reduce operating costs and minimize their environmental footprint.
5. **Local Sourcing and Promotion:** LEDA funds can support initiatives that promote locally sourced products, collaborations with local artisans, and marketing campaigns that highlight the store's commitment to the community.
6. **Job Creation:** Retailers can use funds to hire and train additional staff, thereby contributing to local job creation.
7. **Marketing and Promotion:** LEDA funds can be allocated for marketing and promotional activities, including advertising campaigns, events, and loyalty programs to attract and retain customers.
8. **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Retail businesses can invest in making their stores more accessible to people with disabilities, creating a more inclusive shopping environment.

9. Sustainability Initiatives: Funds can support sustainability efforts, such as waste reduction, recycling programs, and eco-friendly store practices, which can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.
10. Community Engagement: Retailers can organize community events, workshops, or charity initiatives that not only promote their business but also benefit local causes.
11. Training and Skill Development: LEDA funds can be used for employee training and development programs to enhance customer service and retail skills.
12. Business Expansion: For successful retail businesses, LEDA funds can be used to open additional locations in different areas, expanding the reach and impact of the business.

1. Tech Startups:
  - Use of Funds: Tech startups can apply for LEDA funds to support research and development efforts, prototype development, and hiring skilled talent.
  - Benefits to the Community: These startups can stimulate innovation, create high-paying jobs, and enhance the local technology ecosystem, attracting more talent and investment.
2. Agricultural Enterprises:
  - Use of Funds: Agricultural businesses can invest in modernizing farming equipment, expanding irrigation systems, or building processing facilities.
  - Benefits to the Community: LEDA funds can help increase agricultural productivity, create jobs in rural areas, and promote local food production, contributing to food security.
3. Renewable Energy Companies:
  - Use of Funds: Renewable energy firms can use funds for infrastructure development, such as solar or wind farm construction, or the installation of energy-efficient technologies.
  - Benefits to the Community: These projects reduce carbon emissions, create green jobs, and contribute to sustainable energy production, benefiting both the environment and the local economy.
4. Small Manufacturers:
  - Use of Funds: Small manufacturers can apply LEDA funds to expand production facilities, purchase advanced machinery, or implement energy-efficient processes.
  - Benefits to the Community: This can lead to increased manufacturing output, job creation, and potentially attracting related supply chain businesses.
5. Tourism and Hospitality Businesses:
  - Use of Funds: Businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector can invest in infrastructure improvements, marketing campaigns, or training programs for staff.

- Benefits to the Community: Enhanced tourism offerings can bring more visitors, boost local businesses, and generate revenue for the community through increased tourism-related activities.

#### 6. Healthcare Providers:

- Use of Funds: Healthcare providers can use LEDA funds for expanding facilities, purchasing medical equipment, or supporting training and education programs.
- Benefits to the Community: Improved healthcare services can lead to better community health outcomes, attract medical professionals, and stimulate economic growth in the healthcare sector.

#### 7. Cultural and Arts Organizations:

- Use of Funds: Arts and cultural organizations can invest in facility upgrades, artistic programs, and community engagement initiatives.
- Benefits to the Community: These investments can enrich the cultural fabric of the community, attract tourists, and stimulate local artistic expression.

#### 8. Green Businesses:

- Use of Funds: Eco-friendly businesses can use LEDA funds to implement sustainable practices, develop green products, or construct environmentally friendly facilities.
- Benefits to the Community: Such businesses contribute to environmental conservation, create jobs in the green sector, and align with the community's sustainability goals.

#### 9. Education and Training Centers:

- Use of Funds: Educational institutions and training centers can use funds to expand facilities, upgrade technology, or develop specialized training programs.
- Benefits to the Community: These investments can enhance the local workforce, attract students and professionals, and contribute to workforce development.

#### 10. Community Development Projects:

- Use of Funds: Funds can be allocated to community development initiatives, such as building affordable housing, improving public infrastructure, or revitalizing downtown areas.
- Benefits to the Community: These projects directly benefit the community by enhancing living conditions, creating jobs, and promoting economic growth.