

Marion Economic Development Resources for Business and Real Estate Development

Growing Marion Entrepreneurs (GEM) – An 8-week entrepreneur training teaching the basics of entrepreneurship. Is the idea feasible? How will it be financed? What is the best legal structure of ownership? Effective marketing practices. All aspects of starting a new business are covered. This program is a very good refresher for existing businesses. Businesses participating in the program are eligible to apply for a grant providing up to \$5,000 of rent and utility assistance for a period of up to six months. To qualify, businesses must be in the retail or food service sectors, locate in Downtown Marion, create at least 1.5 jobs and be open a certain number of hours per week.

Marion Façade Grant Programs – For improvements to building facades including free design assistance. \$15,000 in City funding is available to cover up to **100% cost of paint and window materials** for façade renovations for qualifying buildings in the Downtown Marion. One-half of the costs of labor or for materials (other than paint and windows) can be funded by the Historic Marion Façade Grant, funded by the Marion Business Association and McDowell Economic Development Association, and supported by the City of Marion and McDowell County. Free Design Assistance is available from the N.C. Main Street Center for buildings in Downtown Marion.

City of Marion Revolving Loan Program – Available in late 2016. The City of Marion hopes to make available in late 2016 or early 2017 a \$100,000 revolving loan program, funded by a grant from the N.C. Rural Center. The grants will be targeted to new businesses in Downtown Marion or businesses expanding to the Downtown area.

Contact Freddie Killough at 828-652-2215 or freddiek@frontier.com for more information for the programs above.

SCORE Counseling – A free counseling service for new or existing businesses, provided through the McDowell Chamber of Commerce. Contact McDowell Chamber of Commerce Executive Director **Steve Bush** at **828-652-4240** or sbush@mcdowellchamber.com for more information.

McDowell Tech Small Business Center – Free counselling for new and existing business. Contact **Dean Kanipe** at **828-652-0633** or deank@mcdowelltech.edu

VEDIC – Based in Valdese, VEDIC operates loan programs focused on helping entrepreneurs start businesses and existing businesses to expand. VEDIC bridges the gap for those businesses that need funding, but cannot qualify for a bank loan. It is our hope that through this loan program, businesses will prosper and become credit worthy for bank funding in the future. www.vedic28690.com

N.C. Main Street Program – Main Street Solutions Fund - Used to assist planning agencies and small businesses with efforts to revitalize downtowns by creating jobs, funding infrastructure improvements and rehabilitating buildings. Downtown Redevelopment Fund - Designed for infrastructure upgrades of downtown buildings in order to meet current code requirements. The upgrades should be for vacant or underutilized downtown commercial buildings. An underutilized building is defined as a property that is less than fully utilized or used below its potential. This fund is designed to return vacant or underutilized commercial buildings to economic use for new and/or expanded business. For more information or visit www.nccommerce.com/rd/main-street.

North Carolina Rural Center Microloan Program – Several loan options are available for new and expanding businesses. The N.C. Small Business Credit Initiative helps make capital available for business startups and expansions across the state. With more business investment comes more jobs for North Carolinians. The Microenterprise Loan Program works with individuals who have sound ideas for starting or expanding a small business but may not qualify for bank loans. <http://www.ncruralcenter.org>

North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) - <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/> For historic properties preservation, restoration, reuse and tax credit information. Contact Jennifer Cathey at SHPO at 828-296-7230 Ext. 227 or at jennifer.cathey@ncdcr.gov.

Preservation NC - Nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the **preservation** of historic sites and properties in **North Carolina**. Contact Regional Director Ted Alexander at 704-482-3531 or at talexander@presnc.org. There are opportunities to list historic properties and real estate that is for sale. Visit <https://www.presnc.org/property-listing> for more information.

Building Reuse Program, N.C. Department of Commerce – Provides funding for job creation taking place in vacant buildings. Buildings must be vacant for at least three months prior to application deadlines. Mixed-use or adaptive reuse projects that include housing may be eligible, provided the building will be occupied by at least one private company committed to creating new jobs. Priority will be given to projects that create five (5) or more new full-time jobs.

The renovation project must begin within six months of the grant award and should be completed within 18 months. Grants of up to \$10,000 per full-time job are available, with a maximum award of \$500,000, if the following criteria are met:

- Project located in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 county
- Any company type is eligible
- New jobs will meet the county weekly wage standard
- Company will provide 50% employer-paid health insurance

Grants of up to \$5,000 per full-time job are available, with a maximum award of \$250,000, if the following criteria are met:

- Project located in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 county
- Any company type is eligible
- No wage standard is required
- No employer-paid health insurance is required

No building improvements can take place until after the grant is approved and grant documents are signed. Eligible expenses dated after the grant award include, but are not limited to: materials and labor to install HVAC, electrical, plumbing, fire alarm/suppression system, roofing, flooring, carpentry, drywall, paint, etc. This is not an exhaustive list.

The following costs are specifically prohibited under the program and may not be submitted for reimbursement or the matching funds requirement: building purchase, architectural costs, engineering costs, permit fees, surveys, legal fees, machinery & equipment, telephone hardware and software, computer hardware and software, furnishings, paving, fencing, kitchen equipment, refrigeration equipment, etc. This is not an exhaustive list.

Contact Freddie Killough at 828-652-2215 or freddiek@frontier.com for more information.

Downtown Façade Removal – The City of Marion may provide assistance with the removal of false facades on buildings in Downtown Marion with a signed “Hold Harmless Agreement”. Contact City Manager Bob Boyette at 828-652-3551 or bboyette@marionnc.org for more information.

Building Inspector Consultation – The City of Marion Building Inspector is available for consultation regarding potential projects within the City of Marion. Contact Planning Director Heather Cotton at 828-652-3551 or hcotton@marionnc.org or Building Inspector Matthew Crawford at 828-652-3551 or mcrawford@marionnc.org for more information. For County inspections, contact **Jerry Silver** at **828-652-7030** or www.mcdowellgov.com.

Industrial Recruitment/Expansion/Incentives – The McDowell Economic Development Association coordinates industrial recruitment, expansions and incentives within McDowell County. Projects involving job creation and tax base expansion may be eligible for local, state and utility provider incentives. Contact McDowell Economic Development Association Executive Director Chuck Abernathy at 828-652-9391 or meda@mcdowelleda.org for more information.

The City of Marion, McDowell County, McDowell Chamber of Commerce, McDowell Economic Development Association and Marion Business Association are eager to assist with any questions concerning new or expanding businesses.

For more information, please contact:

- Marion Business Association Executive Director Freddie Killough at 828-652-2215 or [**freddiek@frontier.com**](mailto:freddiek@frontier.com)
- City Manager Bob Boyette at 652-3551 or [**bboyette@marionnc.org**](mailto:bboyette@marionnc.org)
- City Planning Director Heather Cotton at 828-652-3551 or [**hcotton@marionnc.org**](mailto:hcotton@marionnc.org)
- McDowell Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Steve Bush at 828-652-4240 or [**sbush@mcdowellchamber.com**](mailto:sbush@mcdowellchamber.com)
- McDowell Economic Development Association Executive Director Chuck Abernathy at 828-652-9391 or [**meda@mcdowelleda.org**](mailto:meda@mcdowelleda.org)
- McDowell County Manager Ashley Wooten at 828-652-7121 or [**awooten@mcdowellgov.com**](mailto:awooten@mcdowellgov.com)