



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

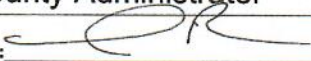
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Campbell County
Program Title: Start Small Campbell
Program Category: Community Development, Economic Development, & Land Use

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Frank Rogers
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

Start Small Campbell Grant Program

Executive Summary

To support small business development and entrepreneurship in the county, Campbell County Economic Development initiated the Start Small Campbell Grant in 2021. Licensed Campbell County businesses less than 3 years old or opening their first Campbell County location are eligible to apply for the this \$5,000 grant. Up to four grants are budgeted per fiscal year out of the county's General Fund. This grant program is available throughout the entire county including the Towns of Altavista and Brookneal.

Partners in this initiative are the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)-Lynchburg Region and the Spark Innovation Center, a coworking and business education space in Altavista. These community partners supply the educational and mentoring components of the application. The grant addresses the problem of entrepreneurs who may be subject-matter experts in their field but lack formal business management training.

Applicants must write a comprehensive business plan, provide a year of financial documentation with a projection statement for 2 additional years, attend at least two business training classes from a list of qualified classes, and complete a business plan review with an SBDC-Lynchburg Region or Spark Innovation Center mentor. A review committee of interdepartmental county employees uses a rubric to score applications then decides by consensus who, if any, will receive the grant from among applicants who meet at least the minimum required score.

Eleven businesses have received the grant and thirty-one businesses have applied since the program's inception. Business training class attendance from Campbell County residents has increased dramatically and all grant recipients remain in business in the county.

Problem

The first few years in business are often the most challenging. Initial equipment and inventory purchases, building a customer base, and establishing the brand are all unique challenges facing start up and early days businesses and accessibility of small business financing is limited. While the entrepreneurial spirit and hard work can drive success, research shows that business owners who have taken the time to craft a business plan are more likely to experience long-term success ([Harvard Business Review](#)). Many of the local entrepreneurs do not have formal business training and the time-commitment and expense of attaining one is often not feasible. Our problem is how to support new business owners in their ventures while encouraging business practices that will support success.

Engaging Partners to Solve the Problem

To solve the problem of Early Days capital availability, Economic Development proposed a general use cash grant to County Administration. Allowing the business owner to decide the best use of the working capital from the grant provided the most flexible solution that could allow for a wide variety of business types to apply. Economic Development proposed a budget line of \$20,000 per year out of the county's General Fund to support four grants per fiscal year. Each year, the program is evaluated for its effectiveness during the budget process. Grant funds are transferred to the Industrial Development Authority at award time which officially awards the recipients, usually accompanied by the District Supervisor in the county's election district where the business is located.

Economic Development created an [online application form](#) hosted on the [economic development website](#) with an FAQ Section to handle common questions, and published the [Scoring Guide](#) provided to internal reviewers for transparency on the awardee selection. A downloadable business plan template and a financial template were added to the application in 2024. At the end of each grant cycle, Economic Development forms an ad hoc committee of County employees from a variety of departments to review the applications, use the score sheet to evaluate the application, and decide upon the cycle's award recipients.

To reduce the economic development staff time commitment, the department partnered with the [Small Business Development Center—Lynchburg Region](#) to provide the educational components of the application. SBDC-Lynchburg Region had been offering a series of new business

workshops in 2021 called the [Start Up Toolbox](#) series, but participation from Campbell County business was very low. Applicants are required to attend at least two of these sessions or a similar offering at the Spark Innovation Center before applying. Economic Development added a one-on-one consultation with an SBDC advisor requirement to ensure that any application submitted would be more likely to meet the minimum score.

As the program evolved, Economic Development added a one-on-one consultation to review the applicant's business plan. SBDC-Lynchburg Region has hosted two Business Plan Development workshops specifically for this program in [Altavista](#) and [Timberlake](#) to guide owners through the first phase of developing their business plan. Additional business management and entrepreneur classes hosted by the Spark Innovation Center were folded into the qualifying classes for the grant in 2024. The manager of the Spark Innovation Center is also authorized to conduct the one-on-one business plan reviews.

The most recent innovation to the program was the addition of a "Start Small Campbell Grant Workshop," offered each grant cycle. Economic Development's Business Programs Coordinator conducts the workshop, usually accompanied by a representative from the SBDC-Lynchburg Region, and walks potential applicants through the entire application using a fictional restaurant as a model applicant. Providing a model for how a company could successfully complete the application reduces confusion or uncertainty of what is expected from an application. A question-and-answer period is included, and the workshop itself provides a soft introduction to SBDC staff and services.

Getting the information to residents through as many marketing channels as possible is necessary to garner enough interest in the program. Economic Development posts frequently to social media, write news updates and reminders on the website, add information in the department's monthly newsletter, and times grant awards to coincide with other department events such as business appreciation dinners and department-sponsored networking events. In the past cycle, Economic Development tested a targeted email campaign to everyone who received a business license in the past 3 years and were thus potentially eligible. Of the 67 emails sent, 61% were opened and 8% clicked on the link to the application. SBDC-Lynchburg Region and the Center for Entrepreneurship, located in Lynchburg and serving the region, also promote the program to their clients.

Outcomes

Outcomes from the Start Small Campbell Grant program include the following:

1. Increased participation in SBDC business training from Campbell County businesses. In 2021, 146 Campbell County residents attended SBDC training state-wide. In 2023, 173 Campbell County residents attended SBDC training statewide. In addition, 66 Campbell County residents attended 37 events in the Start Up Toolbox series. Two Start Small Campbell Grant-specific workshops have been held with 5 businesses attending the Altavista workshop and 9 attending one in the Timberlake area.
2. Eleven \$5,000 grants have been awarded to a range of businesses: dance studio, pet kennel, bagel restaurant, occupational therapist, business coach/consulting, plant nursery, custom additive manufacturing retailer, organic gardening store, licensed counseling supervision, cheesesteak restaurant, and a K-12 tutoring center. All grant awardees remain open for business and appear to be positioned for long-term success. Thirty-one businesses total have applied for the grant-all of which completed business workshops and developed business plans.
3. The occupational therapy business which received the grant reports that with the grant money she was able to purchase new therapeutic equipment that allowed her to expand her business as well as purchase billing services from another provider which frees her time for additional clients. She has become one of the program's biggest supporters and reports that she spreads the word about the grant whenever she has the opportunity.
4. The bagel restaurant has since opened a second location.
5. Increased visitors to the economic development website (CampbellVirginia.com). The Start Small Campbell Grant landing page is the 3rd most viewed page, and the application itself is the 6th most viewed page in the past 12 months.
6. Even though only a few businesses receive the grant and it's only available to businesses in their first three years, its existence and continued success increases the goodwill of the small business community, who may perceive Economic Development as something that "is not in it for the little guy." Having this small business program in the Economic Development toolbox is an asset when attracting new business to the County as well, showcasing the support for startups. Increasing positive interactions with the local government helps with other Economic Development initiatives as well.



GRANT RECIPIENTS

FY-22

1. Bust-a-Move Dance Academy
2. Prestige Kennel and Pet Services
3. The Bagel and I

FY-23

4. Speechless No More
5. Optimized Leadership and Coaching

FY-24


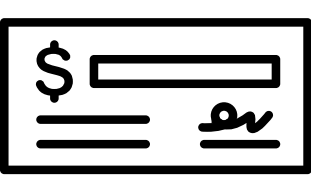
6. Huckleberry Knob Nursery
7. Broad Street Deli

FY-25

8. The Learning Edge Tutoring Center
9. Homegrown Garden Supply
10. ZLL Designs
11. Premier Supervision and Consultation



FY-22

10  3 



Bust a Move Dance Academy



Prestige Kennel and Pet Services



The Bagel and I



Speechless No More



Optimized Leadership and Coaching

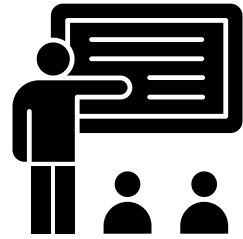

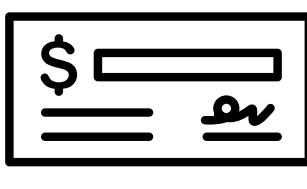
FY-23

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SSCG→



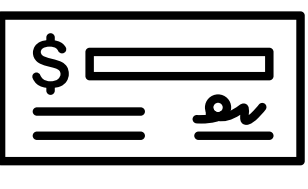
Start Small Campbell Grant

FY-24

7   2 



FY-25

2  9  4 



**Huckleberry Knob
Nursery**



Broad Street Deli



**The Learning Edge
Tutoring Center
(Rustburg)**



**Homegrown
Garden Supply
(Altavista)**



ZLL Designs LLC



**Premier Supervision
and Consulting LLC**



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

11 grants issued

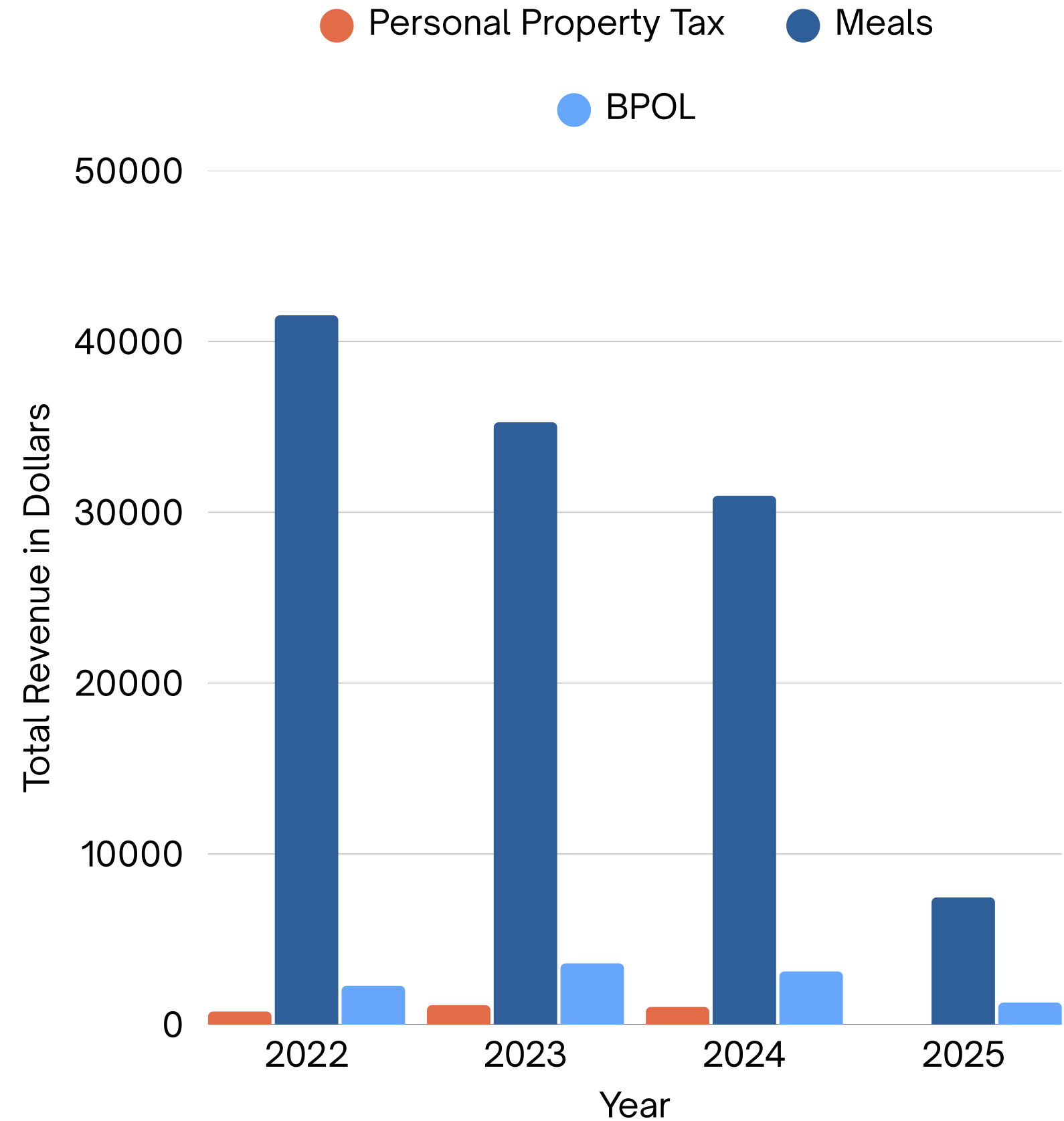
REVENUE SOURCES INCLUDE:

- BPOL
- Personal Property
- Meals Tax

YTD TOTAL REVENUE:

Total Revenue: \$128,409.57

Not Counting Meals Tax: \$13,191



START SMALL CAMPBELL GRANTS

\$5,000 Competitive Grants Awarded to a Licensed Small Business Less Than 3 Years Old or Opening Their 1st Location in Campbell County. Up to 4 Grants Awarded in 2 Grant Cycles Per Year.



Campbell County Economic Development is a department in the Campbell County, Virginia, government.

Conducts programming to support:

- »business attraction
- »business retention and expansion
- »workforce development
- »other activities to increase the quality of life for all county residents

Coordinates the county's tax revenue-funded incentive policies to:

- »persuade a business prospect to choose Campbell County
- »motivate business growth in a desired sector
- »spur employment growth



CAMPBELLVIRGINIA.COM

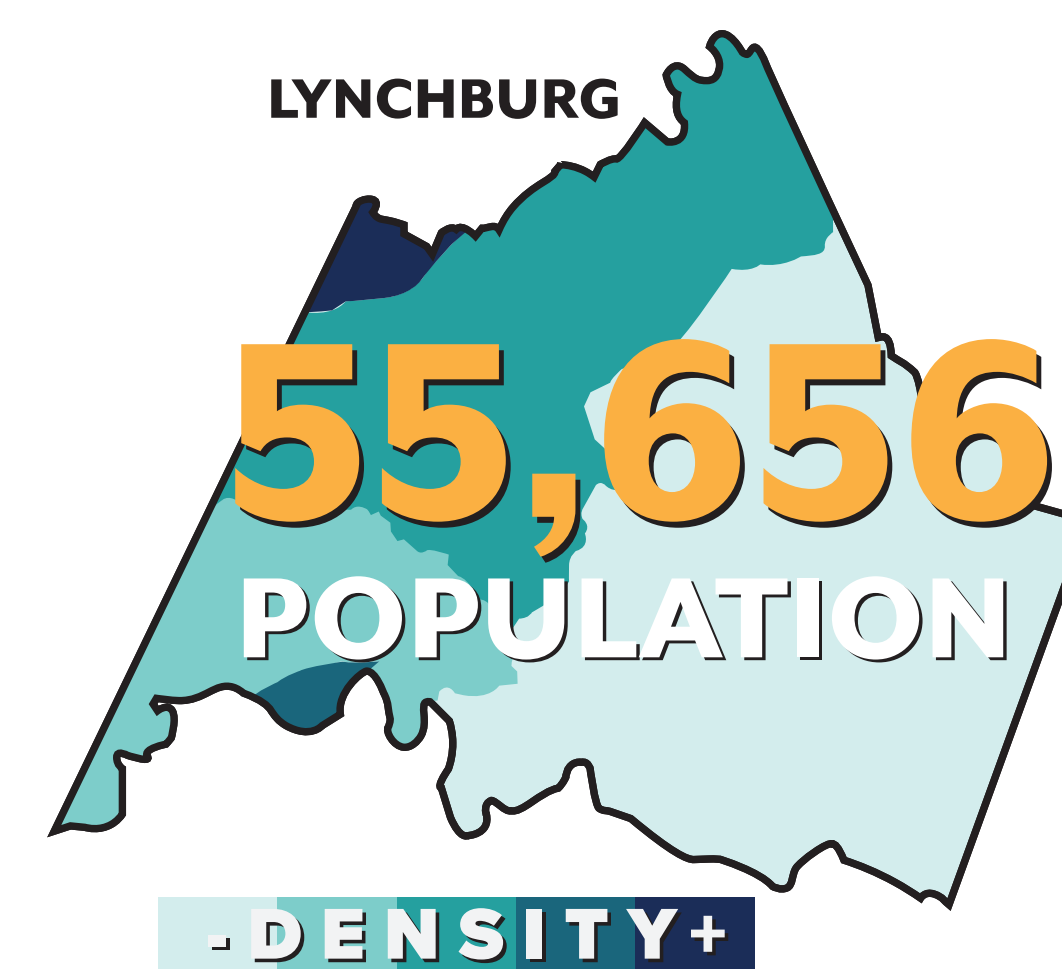


PRESENTERS

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COMMUNITY CONTEXT



OPPORTUNITIES

Desire to Attract More New Businesses to Campbell Side of Lynchburg's City Limits

Campbell County's border with Lynchburg flows seamlessly along two major corridors: Rt29/Wards Road and Rt460-Business/Timberlake Rd. Regional perceptions hold that "county locations" are too far from Lynchburg City's large customer base rather than the reality that Campbell business locations can be as close as the store next door.

Need to Incentivize Business Training to Offset Local Entrepreneurs' Resistance to Engage With Free Business Training Opportunities

With two thirds of the labor force's educational attainment below an associate's degree, formal business education is historically limited. While Economic Development staff regularly referred new business owners to SBDC-Lynchburg Region, interactions remained low.

Gap in Incentive Packages for Micro Business and Small Startups

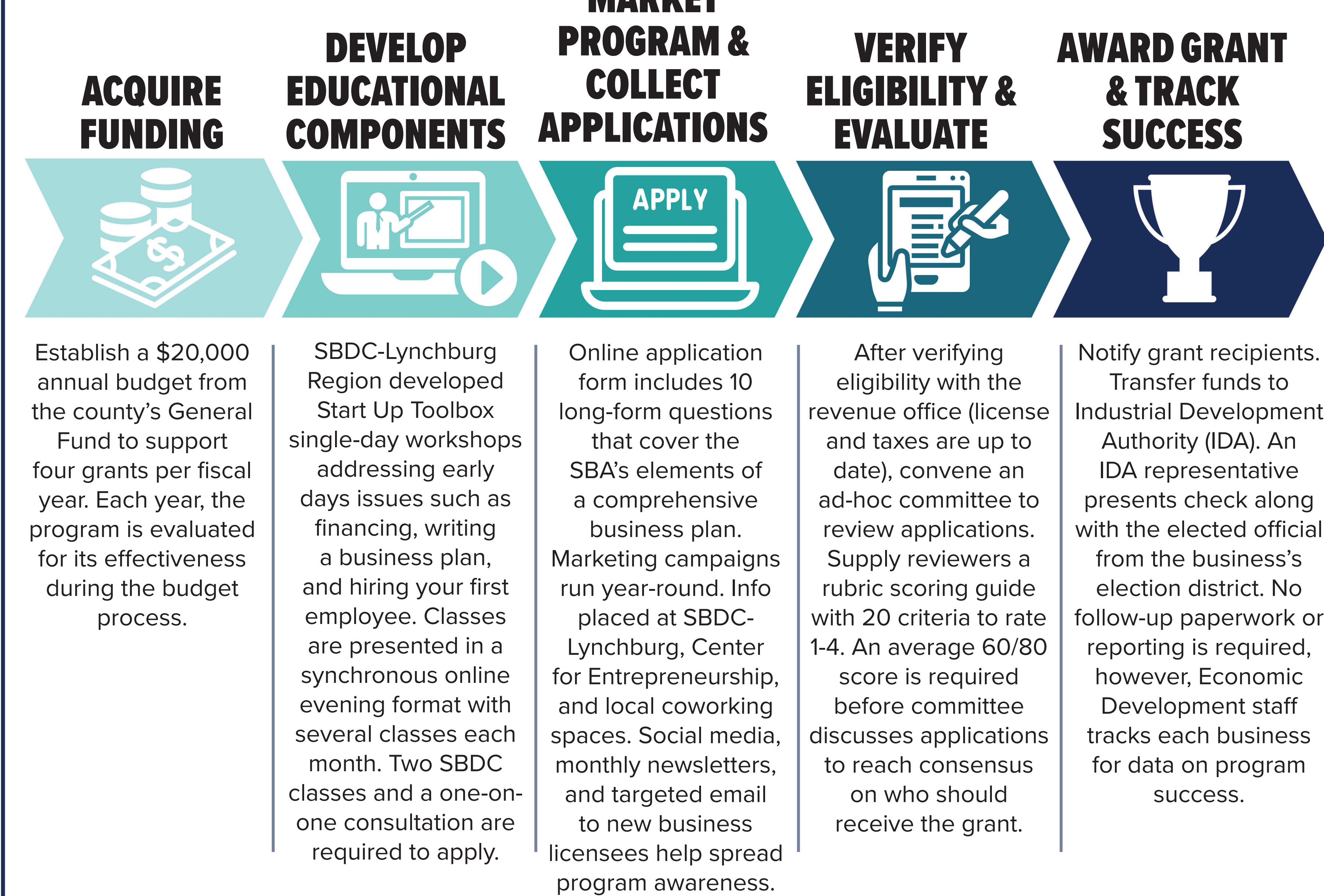
Other business incentives centered on increasing the long-term tax base and targeted business expansions and investments that increased employment and revenues. The county needed another tool for business attraction for small and microbusinesses.

Scarce Financial Resources for New Business/Startups

Initial equipment and inventory purchases, building a customer base, and establishing the brand are all challenges facing startup and early days of a business.

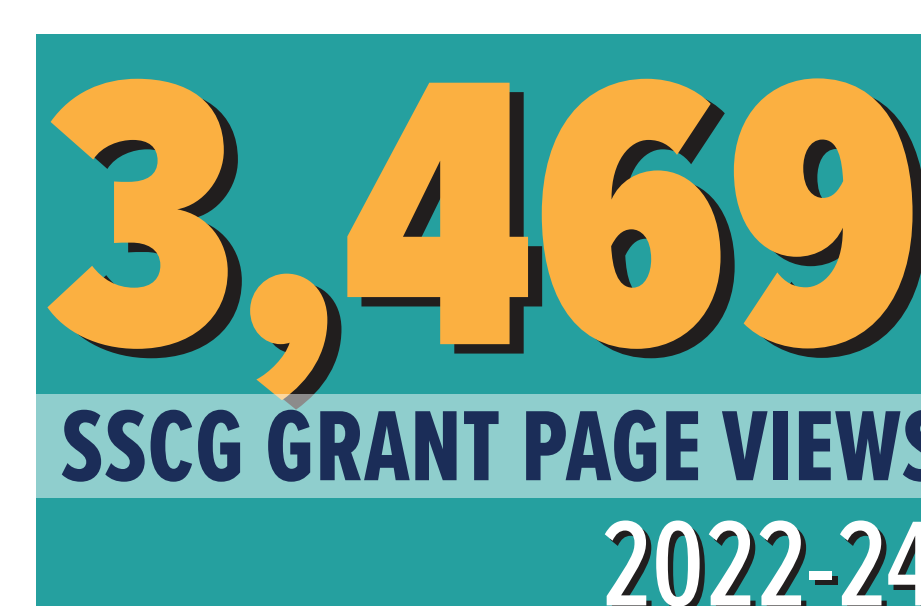
Campbell County is a largely rural county in Central Virginia consisting of >85% agriculturally zoned property with approximately 2,500 business establishments. The most densely populated areas are located along Campbell's borders, with two small towns Altavista and Brookneal, located on the southern border and suburban expansion from the City of Lynchburg to the north and northwest. In the past few decades, large employers including Lane Furniture Company in Altavista as well as Sanfacon America and Dan River Fabrics in Brookneal have ceased operations reducing the number of large employers and increasing the importance of small business success. Eighteen of the top 20 employers are designated as "small business." This grant program is available throughout the entire county, including the two towns.

STRATEGY



OUTCOMES

Six \$5,000 grants have been awarded to a variety of businesses across Campbell County.



LESSONS LEARNED

Maintain Good Communication With the Commissioner of the Revenue to Ensure Only a Compliant Business Receives Grant

While processing early applications, staff encountered some businesses operating without a proper business license and others in tax arrears. Another grant applicant had not yet submitted their semiannual tax payment. Line items were added to the application as a result.

Finding the Right Balance Requires Reflection and Willingness to Adapt

The grant application has undergone one major revision so far. Adding rigor to the application resulted in higher-quality applications but also lowered the number of total applicants per cycle.



Mentoring Helps

SSCG 2.0 added a one-on-one consultation with an SBDC advisor requirement to ensure that any application submitted would be more likely to meet the minimum score.

Success Can Inspire Similar Programs

Participation in awarding these grants inspired the county's Industrial Development Authority to sponsor a new Revolving Loan Fund (CLIMB Fund) to further increase local small business financing options.

NEXT STEPS

Expand Marketing Efforts to Increase Participation

Create a promotional video showing successful previous grant recipient businesses to include testimonials from the business owners regarding the value of the grant and having a business plan.

Increase Both Quality and Quantity of Applicants

- »Receive four applications per cycle that meet the minimum required score
- »Improve average application score by eight points (10% increase)