

Build and Bloom

A Lauderhill Economic Development and Grants Division Initiative

Backed by the National League of Cities SCEI Grant 2026-2028

What Is Build and Bloom?

- ▶ Build and Bloom is a structured business incubator designed to support entrepreneurs and community members at all stages of growth and development by providing targeted education, mentorship, and access to resources that drive measurable, sustainable growth.
- ▶ This program leverages existing partnerships and platforms while intentionally addressing gaps in education and support. Build and Bloom does not duplicate services; it serves as a guiding pathway that helps entrepreneurs and community members move from where they are to where they want to be.
- ▶ Program Pillars
 - Business education and personal skill development (strategy, finance, marketing, compliance, more)
 - Mentorship from experienced industry and business professionals
 - Access to City and community-based resources
 - Bridging gaps that limit personal growth, economic stability, workforce development, scalability, and long-term success

Bringing Build and Bloom to Lauderhill

Program Integration

- Aligns with Lauderhill's Economic Development Strategic Plan
 - Expanding career and education pathways that create lasting opportunity for residents
 - Supporting small businesses
- Complements existing City initiatives, including:
 - Connect & Elevate • SBAA
 - Pitch Competition • Micro Loan Program
 - Financial Literacy initiatives
- Designed in direct response to needs identified through entrepreneur focus groups and surveys

Use of NLC SCEI Awarded Funds

- Curriculum development and instructional materials
- Facilitators, speakers, and subject-matter experts
- Consultants, subcontracts, and program incentives
- Workshops, tools, and participant resources

In-Kind Match & City Support

- City facilities and meeting space
- Staff time, program coordination, and administrative oversight
- Existing partnerships, contracts, and collaborations
- Equipment, materials, marketing, data collection, and printing
- Assistance with performance-based participant incentives

Community Partnerships

- Local business leaders serving as mentors
- Educational and nonprofit collaborators
- Resource sharing across programs to maximize impact
- Key partners include:
 - Broward College & BCEX • Black Chamber of Commerce • Lauderhill Chamber of Commerce
 - CareerSource Broward • Broward SCORE • Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance • Broward County Public Schools • OESBD • Local business professionals

How Did We Get Here?

- National League of Cities - Southern Cities Economic Inclusion (SCEI)
- The City of Lauderdale applied to the NLC SCEI initiative and was selected for the initial implementation (pre-development) period
- Pre-Development Phase: April 2025 - December 2025
 - Awarded \$15,000 to support:
 - Data collection and needs assessment
 - Program materials and pilot activities
 - Program design and initiative development
- During this phase, Economic Development and Grants staff:
 - Participated in all required NLC meetings and city calls
 - Completed technical assistance sessions and homework assignments
 - Worked directly with NLC advisors to develop a comprehensive business plan
- The program plan, budget, and timeline were created with direct NLC feedback and guidance
- Based on successful completion of this phase:
 - Lauderdale was selected as one of the cities to move forward and receive implementation funding and was awarded \$52,500 to launch the Build and Bloom Incubator

Program Impact & Community Value

▶ Impact on the City

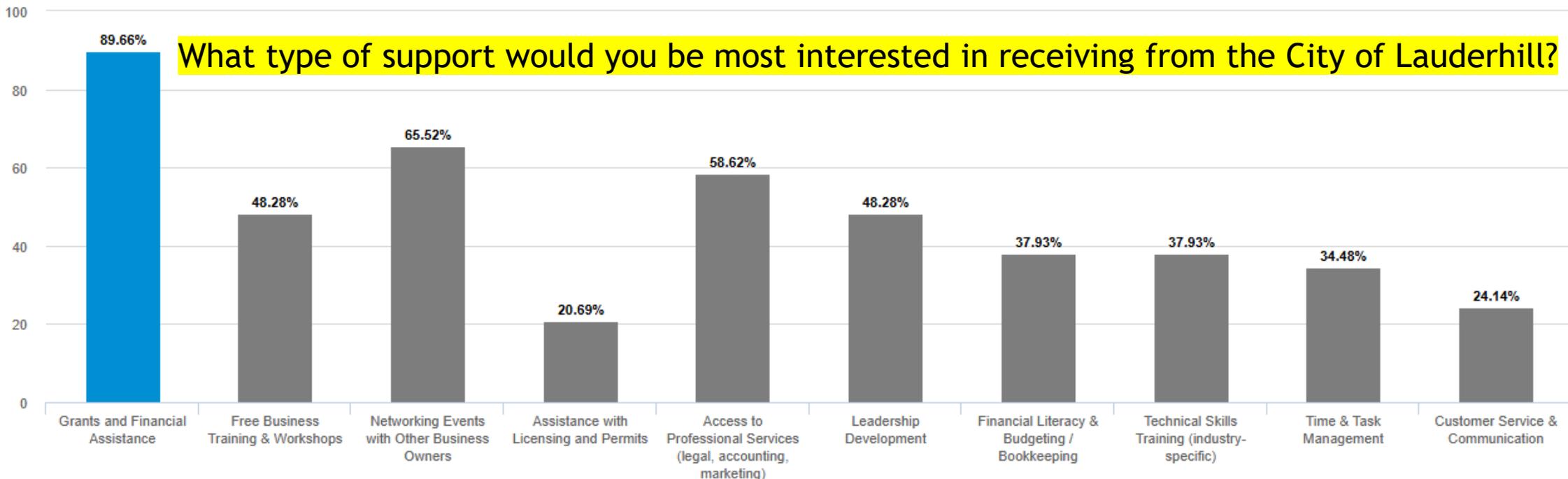
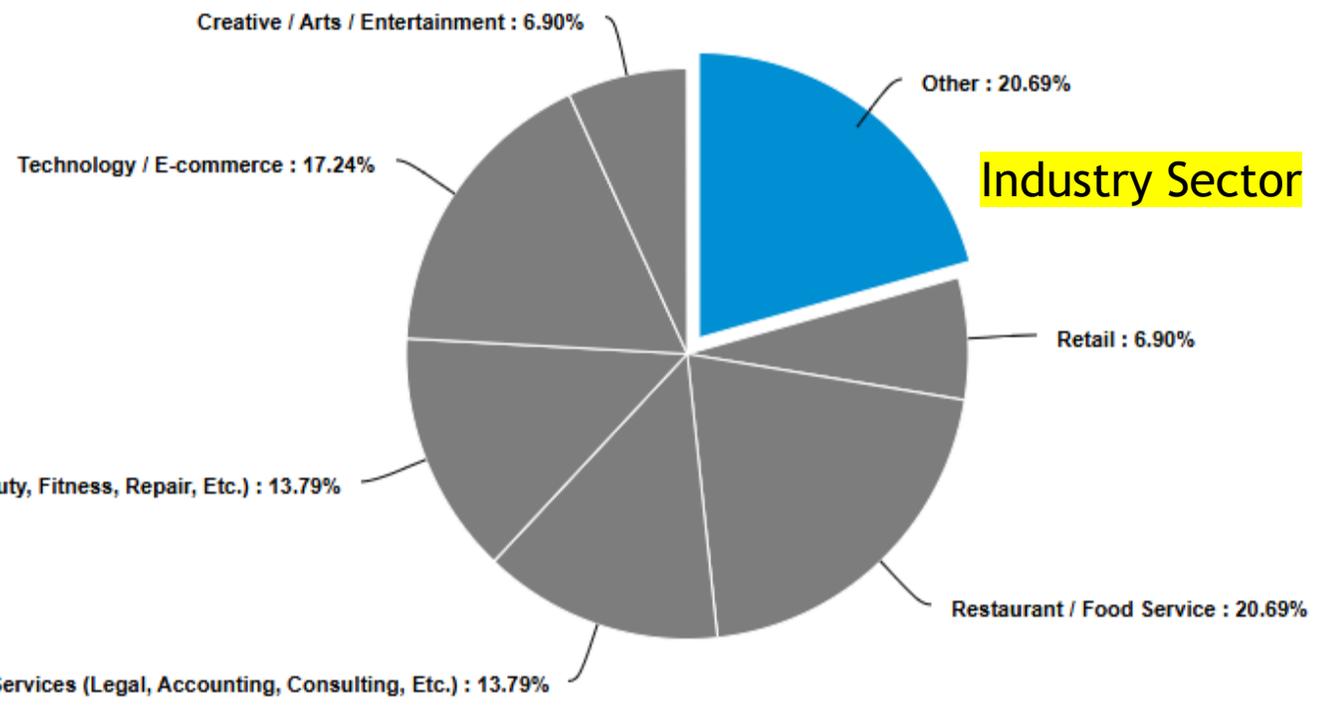
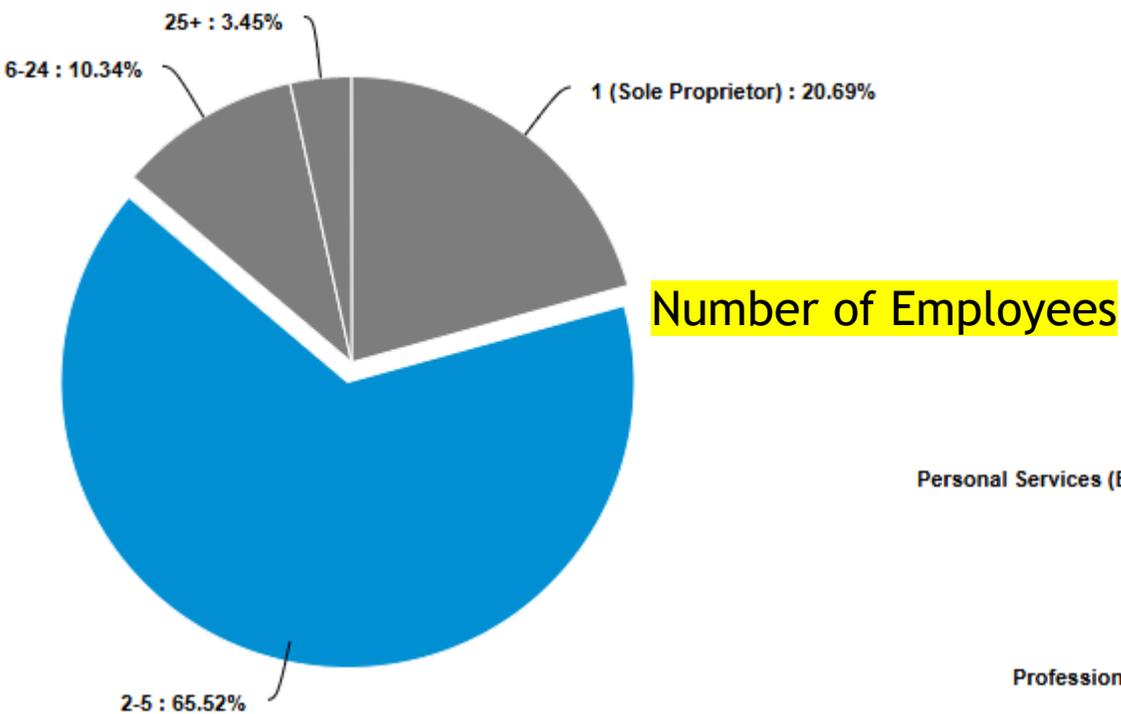
- Stronger, more resilient local businesses
- Increased business retention and long-term sustainability
- Expanded economic mobility and workforce readiness
- Creation of a pipeline for future City economic development programs and data collection
- Efficient use of grant funds through leveraged partnerships and in-kind support

▶ Impact on Participants

- Practical, hands-on skills to address real-world business challenges
- Gaining solutions to real voiced problems
- Increased confidence and clarity in planning and decision-making
- Introduced to educational outlets, courses, classes, and workshops
- Direct access to mentors and professional networks
- Clear next steps for growth, funding, and expansion

Why Build and Bloom Matters Now

- Growing demand for targeted and personalized entrepreneurial support
- Rising costs and operational barriers facing small businesses
- Opportunity to invest and improve early to prevent business failure
- Direct alignment with Lauderhill's economic development and strategic planning goals
- Solutions shaped by clearly identified community needs
 - Focus groups and surveys will continue throughout program in order to ensure the proper needs are being met. The program will adapt and mold to fit the directly expressed needs of the community.
- Lauderhill has ready, engaged, and committed applicants seeking support now



Program Overview

This is an overview of completed and upcoming economic development initiatives focused on certification access, contracting readiness, and small business growth. These programs are designed to stimulate economic growth and promote long term economic and community sustainability.

Certification Day Recap

- Economic Development and Purchasing in Partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Broward County Public Schools Office of Economic Development Opportunities and Compliance hosted Lauderdale's first Certification Day on December 4, 2025.
- Event focused on navigating the public sector certification process for:
 - Small businesses and U.S. Veteran owned businesses
 - Entrepreneurs seeking certification to contract with BCPS and MDCPS
 - Startup and established businesses at varying stages of readiness
- We had a team of eight certification professionals on site to provide the attendees with hands on, one-on-one guidance throughout the certification class. Many attendees left the event certified for both Broward and Miami Dade Public Schools. Attendees registered as a vendor with the city.
 - Two sessions to maximize accessibility:
 - Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (137 participants)
 - Afternoon Session: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (93 participants)
 - Total attendance: 230 entrepreneurs

Certification Day Photos



Upcoming Brunch and Learn Expo: Program Overview

Brunch and Learn Expo is an expo-style networking and educational event in partnership with Broward County Public Schools Office of Economic Development Opportunities & Compliance.

- Date: Wednesday, March 25
- Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Location: ICC
- Target audience (e.g., small businesses, veteran owned, and startups)

- The purpose of this event is to:
 - Educate and prepare entrepreneurs for public contracting.
 - Create a supportive environment for businesses pursuing City contracts.
 - Introduce contracting opportunities with neighboring cities, counties, and local organizations
- Provides the City an opportunity to:
 - Attract new businesses
 - Expand the approved vendor list
 - Support local job creation
- Attendees will walk away with:
 - regional contracting opportunities, Clear understanding of local, county, and regional certification requirements.
 - Resources and contacts to support certification, compliance, and business growth and more.

Upcoming Business Basics Program: Overview

- The Business Basics Program is a free, hands on hybrid course, held in partnership with the Broward County Black Chamber of Commerce.
- The program will accept approximately 15-30 participants.
- Designed to help entrepreneurs build a strong foundation for their businesses and move from idea to action with expert support.
- This program is exclusively for Lauderhill residents and business owners.
- Supports entrepreneurs looking to start or grow their business.
- The program will begin on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 and run through May 12, 2026.
- Weekly sessions held on Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- To promote this program, we are hosting two hybrid informational sessions. Our first session took place on January 6, and the upcoming session is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27.

Upcoming Government Contracting Program

- ▶ The Government contracting program is an eight week hybrid course, held in partnership with the Broward County Black Chamber of Commerce.
- ▶ The program will accept approximately 15-20 participants.
- ▶ Participants must be City of Lauderhill residents or Lauderhill based business owners.
- ▶ The program is anticipated to launch during the summer.
- ▶ Will focus on:
 - ▶ Contracting readiness
 - ▶ Navigating the local agency certification process
 - ▶ Creating a professional Proposal template
 - ▶ Public sector procurement education
 - ▶ Long term sustainability for local businesses



SisterCities

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Connect globally. Thrive locally.

What is Sister Cities International

- ▶ Global network of 400+ communities in 140+ countries
- ▶ **Focus:** Cultural, educational, economic, and technical exchanges
- ▶ **Highlights of the platform:**
 - Facilitate connections
 - Tool kits
 - Low annual cost

Key Benefits & Economic Impact

- ▶ Access to global network and international recognition to the City of Lauderhill.
- ▶ **Business & Professional Exchanges:** Trade missions, mentorships, networking
- ▶ **Community Development:** Best practices in economic growth, municipal services
- ▶ **Tourism & Cultural Exchange:** Festivals, student programs, international visibility

Commission concession

- ▶ **Staff recommends joining Sister Cities International:**
 - International recognition
 - Access to resources
 - Assistance with facilitating the framework

- ▶ **What cities are you interested in partnering with?**

Strategic Planning 2026

Quick Wins and Supplemental Initiatives for Economic Development

Lauderhill's Strategic Plan - Economic Opportunity and Sustainability

Lauderhill's Strategic Plan focuses on building a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient local economy by:

- ▶ **Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs**
- ▶ Advancing redevelopment and placemaking
- ▶ Improving housing quality and neighborhood vitality
- ▶ **Expanding career, workforce, and education pathways**
- ▶ **Creating lasting opportunity and upward mobility for residents**

Economic Development's Role:

- ▶ Acts as a connector between businesses, workforce, redevelopment, and community programs
- ▶ Leverages partnerships to deliver inclusive, measurable economic impact
- ▶ Aligns existing programs with broader City goals and long-term sustainability

Strategic Plan in Action - Quick Wins & Community Activation

Hosting pop-up markets and events featuring local food and vendor businesses

Initiative lead: Renee Thrasher

Creates immediate exposure, revenue opportunities, and community engagement

Lauderhill Comic Con (January 17)

First-ever City-hosted Comic Con
Successfully showcased local vendors, creatives, and small businesses.
Between 1,500-2,000 attendees.

Demonstrated strong demand for:

- Local marketplaces
- Family-friendly economic activity
- Creative and cultural entrepreneurship

Next Activation: Farmers Market

Partnership between Economic Development and Parks

Showcases:

- Local food and vendor businesses
- A new Lauderhill venue
- Community health
- Small business growth

Strategic Initiatives Supporting Long-Term Growth

Small Business & Restaurant Incentives Initiative lead: Sharon - LCC	Workforce & Education Pathways Initiative lead: Amani - BCC/BCPS
<p>Development of a restaurant and small business incentive package</p> <p>Goal: encourage reinvestment, retention, and growth</p> <p>Includes the creation of a “Best of Lauderhill” Business Awards Program</p> <p>Recognizes excellence and local entrepreneurship</p> <p>Planned launch in the new fiscal year</p>	<p>Expands access to entrepreneurship and employment pathways</p> <p>Partnerships with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Black Chamber of CommerceBroward County Public Schools <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Small business supportCareer readinessYouth and workforce development

Lauderhill's Strategic Plan - Cross-Department Collaboration

Economic Development acting as a Collaborative/Supportive Partner:

- Working alongside Human Resources, Communications, and other departments
- Supporting citywide initiatives that strengthen residents and workforce

Upcoming Community-Focused Initiatives:

- Annual Wellness Expo (Parks)
- Pop-up health screenings (Human Resources/Parks)
- Job fairs connecting residents to employment opportunities (All City Depts.)

Strategic Value:

- Strengthens workforce stability and readiness
- Improves quality of life for residents
- Reinforces Lauderhill's commitment to economic sustainability