



## CAAL Ignite Grant – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## A. About the Grant

### 1. What is the purpose of this grant?

The purpose of this grant is to address the intersectional challenge of economic inequality and anti-Asian hate. Submitted applications or projects must meet the goals of CAAL Ignite, which include:

- Building a stronger sense of cultural identity through history and solidarity across racial and ethnic groups
- Promoting socio-economic mobility with greater investments in Asian American leaders
- Increasing influence and decision-making power over policies that affect Asian American communities
- Changing the narrative to mitigate anti-Asian stereotypes and combat hate

### 2. What kinds of projects or activities can I include in my application?

Eligible projects or activities may include:

- **Emerging entrepreneurs and small businesses**
  - Starting, growing, or expanding a business
  - Projects aligned with CAAL's community-defined priorities
- **Nonprofits and community-based organizations**
  - Strengthening operations
  - Building organizational capacity
  - Launching new programs or services
- **Community initiatives**
  - Efforts that create lasting benefits for Minnesota's Asian American community

This list is not exhaustive. We will consider projects that align with the goals of CAAL Ignite and demonstrate a positive impact on Minnesota's Asian American community.

### 3. What funding amounts are available?

Emerging entrepreneurs are eligible to receive grants of up to \$5,000, while nonprofits and small businesses are eligible for grants of up to \$15,000. Funds must be spent within the 9-month grant period. A total of 21 grants will be awarded, including:



- 10 – Small Businesses
- 7 – Emerging Entrepreneurs
- 4 – Nonprofits

#### 4. What benefits and opportunities will CAAL Ignite grantees receive?

The CAAL Ignite Fund is more than grant funding. It is a comprehensive program designed to expand the social and professional networks of grantees. Through a series of round table training sessions, tailored specifically to priorities identified by grantees, participants will gain valuable insights and skills to help elevate their projects.

CAAL Ignite also offers opportunities to dive into policy advocacy, empowering grantees with knowledge and tools to influence decisions that affect the Asian Minnesotan community. Grantees will gain practical skills to catalyze positive change, strengthening the broader community and advancing the shared vision of a more equitable future.

## B. Eligibility

#### 5. Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

*General Criteria (for all applicants):*

- Applicants must be of Asian descent and identify as part of the Asian American community.
- Applicants must be Minnesota residents.

*Emerging Entrepreneurs must:*

- Be in the early stages of starting or developing a business.
- Have a business registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State as of December 31, 2024.
- Be majority-owned (51% or more) by a Minnesota resident.
- Generate less than \$500,000 in gross annual revenue (if applicable).
- Provide tax documentation for 2024.

*Nonprofits must:*

- Be registered as a 501(c)(3) or be fiscally sponsored.
- Be registered to do business in Minnesota as of December 31, 2024.
- Have at least two years of financial reports (2023 & 2024).



- Provide IRS 990 or 990EZ forms.
- Have an annual operating budget of less than \$500,000.
- Meet at least 2 of the following:
  - The executive director is Asian American.
  - At least 51% of board members are Asian American.
  - At least 51% of staff are Asian American.

*Small Businesses must:*

- Be owned and operated in Minnesota.
- Be majority-owned (51% or more) by a Minnesota resident.
- Be registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State as of December 31, 2024.
- Employ 1–10 FTE staff.
- Generate less than \$500,000 in gross annual revenue.
- Provide tax documentation for 2023 and 2024.

**6. Can I use the Emerging Entrepreneur Grant to start a new business?**

Yes. The Emerging Entrepreneur Grant can be used to start a new business. It supports projects or initiatives that help launch, grow, or develop a business in ways that align with CAAL Ignite's goals and create meaningful community impact.

**7. Can I apply if I have received a grant from CAAL in the past?**

- Yes, if you received a grant from the SPARK Leadership Fund or Stronger Together Fund and successfully completed your program.
- No, if you received a CAAL Ignite grant in the most recent round (2025).

**8. Can I apply if I have received other grants?**

Yes, you can receive grants from different sources for the same project if the funds are applied to different expenses. "Double dipping" (using the same budget line item for multiple grants) is not allowed.

**9. Do I need to have specific qualifications or experience to apply?**

No. Specific qualifications or extensive experience are not required. As long as you have a clear plan and the capacity to carry it out, you may apply. If you are unsure, contact us for guidance.

**10. Who is not eligible to apply for the CAAL Ignite grant?**

Employees of CAAL, Board Members, and their direct family members.



**11. Does the 1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employee need to be in a tax-verified position?**

Yes.

**12. Can I submit an out-of-state ID or a passport for verification?**

No. All applicants must have a valid Minnesota State ID or Driver's License.

**13. I am a student living in MN and do not have an MN driver's license. Do I qualify?**

No. You must have a valid Minnesota driver's license or state ID.

## C. Allowable Uses of Funds

**14. What expenses are allowed under the Emerging Entrepreneur Grant?**

Funds may be used for equipment, marketing, product development, technology, or other operational costs that enable growth.

*Prohibited uses include:* personal expenses (rent, tuition, living costs), political/lobbying activities, fundraising, real estate purchases, or unrelated costs.

**15. What expenses are allowed under the Small Business Grant?**

Funds may be used for equipment, marketing, technology, staff training, and products. development, or operational costs that strengthen or expand the business. *Prohibited uses:* same as above.

**16. What expenses are allowed under the Nonprofit Grant?**

Funds may be used for program development, staff training, technology, marketing, or operational costs tied to delivering the proposed project.

*Prohibited uses:* same as above.

## D. Application Process

**17. Can I submit more than one application?**

Only one per organization. Exception: A nonprofit serving as a fiscal sponsor may submit more than one (for itself and the sponsored organization).

**18. Are there any matching fund requirements?**

No.

**19. What is the application deadline?**

October 20, 2025, at 4:00 PM CST.

**20. How do I apply for the grant?**

Visit <https://caalmn.org/caal-ignite/>, review guidelines, prepare documents, and submit your application online.



**21. What documents or materials do I need to submit with my application?**

- *Emerging Entrepreneurs*: MN ID, Secretary of State Registration, Business Plan, 2024 Tax Filing
- *Small Businesses*: MN ID, Secretary of State Registration, 2023 & 2024 Tax Filings
- *Nonprofits*: Secretary of State Registration, IRS Exemption Letter, 2023 & 2024 990 or 990EZ

**22. What are the submission options for the CAAL Ignite grant application?**

- Online portal
- Video recording (self-produced)
- Voice recording (CAAL office support available; must schedule 72 hours in advance) \* No appointments will be accepted after 10/10/2025.

Important: Regardless of your chosen format, the online application must be completed and uploaded through the portal to track applicant, business, or nonprofit information.

**23. Will CAAL accept application submissions by email?**

No.

**24. What happens if I miss the application deadline?**

Late applications will not be accepted.

**25. Can I modify my application after submission?**

Yes, until October 20, 2025, at 4:00 PM CST.

**26. What should I do if I have technical issues with the application system?**

Contact Chonburi Lee at [chonburi@caalmn.org](mailto:chonburi@caalmn.org) or (612) 208-3238.

**27. My business or nonprofit has not yet filed its 2024 taxes. Can I use 2023 and 2022 federal tax filings for the application?**

No. You must submit filings for 2023 and 2024.

**28. Where can I find the Business Plan template for the Emerging Entrepreneur application?**

The business plan template can be found on the CAAL Ignite application portal under the *Attachment* tab in the *Business Plan Attachments* Hint box. You can also access it directly here: [CAAL Ignite Business Plan Template](#)



## E. Review & Selection

### 29. What factors are considered when reviewing grant applications?

- Alignment with CAAL Ignite Goals
- Desirability of the project
- Feasibility and viability
- Reasonableness of the timeline

### 30. What is the Application and Selection Timeline?

- Opens: September 12, 2025
- Closes: October 20, 2025 @ 4:00 PM CST
- Review: November 2025
- Awards: December 2025

### 31. Who will review the applications?

A panel of diverse community leaders and trusted partners.

### 32. How does CAAL manage conflicts of interest in the review process?

Reviewers with personal, financial, or professional ties to an applicant must recuse themselves.

## F. After Receiving the Grant

### 33. What happens if I am awarded the grant?

You will receive an official notification with terms and conditions. A grant agreement will be required, including reporting, timelines, and fund use requirements.

### 34. What are the reporting and accountability requirements?

Both interim and final reports (financial + narrative).

### 35. How will I be notified about the outcome of my application?

Via email to the primary contact listed.

### 36. What are the commitments of a CAAL Ignite grantee?

- Attend 4 in-person sessions (Kickoff, 2 Workshops, Celebration)
- Participate in quarterly networking events
- Submit interim and final reports
- Join quarterly check-ins with the grant manager



**37. What is the duration of the CAAL Ignite grant?**

9 months (January–September 2026).

**38. How will grant funds be distributed?**

- 40% after grant agreement (Jan 2026)
- 40% after interim report
- 20% after final report

**39. Are CAAL Ignite grants taxable?**

CAAL does not provide tax advice. Consult a tax professional.

**40. Will CAAL Ignite provide language or accessibility support?**

Yes. Interpretation and accessibility accommodation may be available. Contact us early to request.

**41. Will applicants receive feedback if not selected?**

Applicants may request general feedback, but detailed scoring is not provided.

## G. Disclaimer

**42. Can CAAL change or update the FAQs and grant policies?**

Yes. The Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) reserves the right to update, revise, or amend these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), grant guidelines, and related policies at any time as deemed necessary by the organization.

## H. Contact Information

**43. Who can I talk to if I have questions about the application?**

Contact Chonburi Lee at [chonburi@caalmn.org](mailto:chonburi@caalmn.org) or (612) 208-3238.