

The logo for the Niagara County Production Program. It features the text "niagara county" in a green, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "production" is written in a large, bold, blue, italicized sans-serif font. Underneath "production", the word "program" is written in a similar blue, italicized sans-serif font but smaller. To the right of the text is a green graphic of a robotic arm with a gripper, positioned as if holding the word "production".

niagara county
production
program

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Niagara County Production Program. Before you submit your application (by mailing it or dropping it off in hard copy), please ensure it contains the following required documents:

- Completed and Signed Application
- Documentation to support use of funds and amount requested (formal quotes)
- Documentation to support financing ability (bank statement, line of credit, letter from lending institution, etc.)
- Documentation from the Business Owner(s)/Board of Directors authorizing the purchase of the machinery or equipment and declaring who is authorized to execute the documents related to the project funding request
- Copy of Certificate of Incorporation, DBA Certificate, Partnership filing or signed letter of joint venture agreement
- Signed copies of tax returns for past two years (business only)

Application materials should be addressed to:

Niagara County Department of Economic Development
Attention: Production Program
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Suite One
Sanborn, New York 14132

If you have any questions, please call us at (716) 278-8750.

Thank you.



Program Overview

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our economy dramatically shifted into a period of uncertainty. Recovery has been slow and many consequences are still unfolding. In an immediate response, our federal government worked to ease the obvious financial burden, but longer-term issues remain.

Throughout the pandemic, most businesses were challenged with the ever-changing guidelines, meeting payroll and just staying open. The routine maintenance and machinery upgrades necessary to stay competitive were mostly pushed aside and now we are seeing the effects of that. Manufacturers across the county are still struggling to catch up, some businesses are shuttered and most are just getting back to where they were prior to the pandemic.

In response to this, Niagara County has created a strategic plan to improve the viability and competitiveness of our local manufacturers. The Niagara County Production Program (NCP) will collaboratively bring manufacturers, governments, and quasi-governmental entities together to research, identify, and implement strategic upgrades. Businesses will be able to receive assistance in the training and upskilling of their employees while also implementing the newest of technologies. **The NCP will provide matching grants up to \$50,000.**

An application, exhibiting growth and sustainability, through research and data will be considered for approval. Applications should detail some or all of the following components:

- Optimizing performance
- Reduce production cost
- Increases efficiencies through automation or increased production
- Supports sustainability of the company
- Expands the use of green technologies
- Enables the company to enter new markets or attract new customers
- Incorporates the upskilling of employees or hiring additional employees
- Increases the safety of employees during production

Retail and seasonal businesses do not qualify for the Niagara County Production Program.

II. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

a. Eligible Applicants

- For-profit businesses that have been in business since or prior to January 2020
- Project must be located in Niagara County
- Meet SBA size standards (fewer than 500 employees)

b. Eligible Expenses

Projects should include the purchase of machinery or equipment that could be integrated into their current manufacturing process; create an opportunity to enhance their existing process; or open the possibility of constructing an additional production opportunity. Eligibility will, in part, be based on the project delivering a sustainable outcome that lends to a more viable company. This can be shown through research and data that would support an increase in market shares and production.

c. Ineligible Expenses

Activities excluded from funding include plans, studies, routine professional services (e.g. accounting services, legal fees, consultant fees, etc.), and “in-kind” expenses incurred by employees or owners or lessees of the business or project site. Temporary, seasonal or easily removable improvements and or purchases are not eligible.

d. Program Timeline

Application submission dates: April 26th, June 28th, and September 27th

(submission dates are subject to availability of funding)

The program application will only be considered if the application is complete with all necessary documentation. Please refer to the application checklist.

Awardees will be notified within 30 days of the submission date.

No applications will be accepted after the September 27, 2024 deadline.

All projects need to be completed by October 2025. If you do not think your project can be completed by October 2025, please DO NOT apply.

III. PROGRAM REVIEW

a. Application Overview

The Niagara County Center for Economic Development will announce the opening of the program and answer any questions potential applicants may have. The application period will be on a rolling basis throughout 2024, or until funds are fully expended.

The project budget will need supporting documentation including an itemized invoice, quotes, bids or proposals for the purchase and installation of all project related equipment. The applicant must also submit proof of funds with application. **The County reserves the right to determine in its sole discretion what is an acceptable bid or proposal for projects consideration.**

The project must commence within 6 months of the executed date of the grant agreement. An extension may be granted upon written request explaining the reason(s) the project is delayed.

Assistance with application and the collection of data supported materials can be provided through Insyte Consulting and/or Buffalo Manufacturing Works.

Insyte Consulting is a non-for-profit organization that focuses on manufacturers in WNY, providing them with a customized solution to improve processes. Buffalo Manufacturing Works helps manufacturers implement technology, enhance productivity, lower costs, improve production quality and reduce time to market. Most services provided by Insyte Consulting and Buffalo Manufacturing Works are funded through the State of New York. The contact information for these organizations can be found below.

Ben Rand, CEO, Insyte Consulting
brand@insyte-consulting.com
(716) 636-3626

Liz Callahan, Senior Program Director, Buffalo Manufacturing Works
ECallaha@ewi.org
(716) 710-5500

b. Project Selection

A project review committee will evaluate all applications using their expertise in governmental assistance, business development, innovation and automation. The project review committee will ensure that all businesses qualify as an “eligible small business concern” and meet SBA size standards. Businesses must be in good standing with all federal, state and local government agencies. The County, may for any reason, which need not be disclosed, deny the project and the County’s decision is final.

c. Funding Parameters

Niagara County Production Program is funded by the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and in keeping with those guidelines, applicants must exhibit how their project has been impacted by the COVID- 19 pandemic. Recognizing that not all projects will be able to exhibit a direct impact but the overall impact of the pandemic may have caused circumstances

supporting the need for funding and that should be explained within the narrative of the application.

Ex. Pandemic related expenses needed to be prioritized; therefore, regular maintenance or advancement and efficiency of processes were postponed. This project will assist in the recovery of the business improvements/modernization that was delayed due to pandemic.

IV. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

a. Grant Agreement

An NCPP grant agreement between Niagara County and the grant recipient must be executed prior to incurring any costs or commencement of any work. Upon submission of signed grant agreement, awardee will be provided a reimbursement package, detailing program process and documents.

b. Reimbursement Package

The reimbursement package will include the following documents:

- Project Summary & Expense Report – Outlines project and lists expenses
- Certificate of Completion – Certifies that the project has been completed
- Certificate of Expense – Certifies all expenses are legitimate & associated with the project
- Warranties – All applicable warranties provided through the vendor and/or manufacturer, if there are no warranties please provide a letter stating the acknowledgement of purchase made without any warranties and/or assurances
- UCC Filing – Acknowledgment of UCC filing on grant funded equipment

c. Disbursement Process

The NCPP operates as a fully reimbursable program and payment will be made only upon satisfactory completion of the project. There will be no progress payments and no exceptions will be made. To substantiate costs, copies of paid invoices accompanied with cancelled checks (both front and back), credit card statements, or ACH statements must be provided, along with a signed and notarized Certificate of Completion, Certificate of Expense Form, and Project Summary and Expense Form. These forms will be provided to you in your reimbursement package.

d. Final Inspection

Final inspection may be conducted before satisfaction of the grant agreement has been met. The awardee and other relevant contractors must verify that the work was completed properly and is consistent with the contracted scope of work. If building permits are required, proof of final inspection from the local building inspector or code enforcement officer must be submitted showing the work has been approved.

Awardee must also agree to maintain ownership of the purchased equipment for a period of no less than 24 months from project completion. Should the awardee choose to sell the equipment sooner, funds from the NCPP will be surrendered in accordance with the repayment schedule outlined below and included in the UCC Filing Acknowledgement Form.

Months 0-12	100% repayment of grant funding
Months 13-24	50% repayment of grant funding
And Beyond	0% repayment



Niagara County Production Program Application

BACKGROUND

The Niagara County Production Program (NCP) will collaboratively bring manufacturers, governments, and quasi-governmental entities together to research, identify, and implement strategic upgrades. Businesses will be able to receive assistance in the training and upskilling of their employees while also implementing the newest of technologies. The NCP will provide matching grants up to \$50,000; matching applicant's investment dollar-for-dollar.

PROGRAM RULES AND GUIDELINES

Grant recipients must be located within Niagara County. Proof of Niagara County location must be provided.

Grant recipient's business must remain in existence and maintain ownership of the purchased equipment for a period no less than 24 months following the project completion. If this term is not met, all or part of the grant may be required to be repaid.

Grant recipients must contribute at least 50%, of the cost of the project.

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

An application, exhibiting growth and sustainability, through research and data will be considered for approval. Applications should detail some or all of the following components:

- Optimizing performance
- Increases efficiencies through automation or increased production
- Supports sustainability of the company
- Expands the use of green technologies
- Eases or reduces congestion within the supply chain
- Enhances the timeliness of production
- Incorporates the upskilling of employees
- Reduces overall cost of production
- Allows for the production of more personalized or more precise products

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- For-profit businesses that have been in business since or prior to January 2020
- Project must be located in Niagara County
- Meet SBA size standards (fewer than 500 employees)

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

Projects should include the purchase of machinery or equipment that could be integrated into their current manufacturing process; create an opportunity to enhance their existing process; or open the possibility of constructing an additional production opportunity.

Eligibility will, in part, be based on the project delivering a sustainable outcome that leads to a more viable company. This can be shown through research and data that would support an increase in market shares and/or production.

GRANT AGREEMENT

A formal agreement between the business and the County will be executed. This agreement will constitute the means by which the County enforces compliance with program requirements. The program may include regular periodic monitoring of each business.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Grant funds will be disbursed based upon documented incurred costs of the total project and only after the project is certified or completed. The type of documentation required will include acceptable proof of payment to be submitted. Acceptable proof of payment will include invoices accompanied by copies of cancelled checks (front & back), credit card statements, or ACH statements showing payment has been made. **Reimbursement requests will not be processed without these documents.**

NIAGARA COUNTY PRODUCTION PROGRAM APPLICATION

Applicant and Owner Information

Date of Application:	
Applicant Information	
Name of Business:	
Name of Principal Contact:	
Mailing Address:	
Email:	
Phone:	
EIN:	

Owner Information	
Name of Owner:	
Percent Ownership:	
Name of Owner:	
Percent of Ownership	

Business Information

Business Information	
Business Address: (Physical Location)	
SBL Number:	
Business Type:	LLC S Corp Sole Proprietorship DBA Other:
How Many Years in Business?	
Number of Employees: (including owner(s))	
Type of Machinery or Equipment to be purchased:	

COVID-19 Pandemic Impact

COVID-19 Pandemic Impact

Please describe how the project was affected/delayed/changed by the COVID-19 pandemic and explain how funding this project contributes to the economic recovery of the company.

Project Description and Job Creation

Project Description

Please provide a description of your business and the intended use of funds. (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Job Creation & Retention	
Number of Existing Jobs:	
Number of new jobs or upskilled jobs: (if applicable)	
Job Description and Titles:	

Fund Request and Source of Funds

Fund Request	
Project Costs:	
Grant Request:	
Do you have quotes/estimates for project costs	Yes No
Anticipated Completion Date of Project:	

Source of Funds				
Please complete the following chart based on the estimated project costs and identified sources of funds.				
<i>Use of Funds</i>	<i>Estimated Project Total</i>	<i>Owner Equity</i>	<i>Other Sources</i>	<i>Grant Request</i>
Equipment/Machinery				

I have read this Application, I know the contents thereof, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this Application and the contents are true, accurate and complete.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPLICATION CHECKLIST (*Documents to be included with the Application*)

	Completed and Signed Application
	Documentation to support use of funds and amount requested (formal quotes)
	Documentation to support financing ability (bank statement, line of credit, letter from lending institution, etc.)
	Documentation from the Business Owner(s)/Board of Directors authorizing the purchase of the machinery or equipment and declaring who is authorized to execute the documents related to the project funding request
	Copy of Certificate of Incorporation, DBA Certificate, Partnership filing, or signed letter of joint venture agreement
	Signed copies of tax returns for past 2 years (business only)