



EDGE Grant Competition

Fall 2026

Informational Webinar



DELAWARE DIVISION OF SMALL
BUSINESS



DELAWARE DIVISION OF SMALL
BUSINESS

Welcome

Jaimie Watts

DSB Deputy Director

Facilitated By:

Joe Zilcosky – Business Manager

Gemini Cornish – Business Manager

Jory "JJ" Moore – Director of Business Finance

About EDGE

EDGE Application Requirements

Filling Out Your Proposal Template & Rubric

What Makes a Strong Proposal?

Q&A



About EDGE

EDGE is the Delaware Division of Small Business flagship funding program. Since its inception in 2019 a total of 136 businesses have been awarded a total amount of \$10.3 million.



EDGE 2026 Awardees

EDGE Grant Competition

- Entrepreneur Track: up to \$400K total split among category winners
- STEM Track: Up to \$750K total, split among category winners
- Up to 18 potential awardees
- Scaled award amounts based on quality of finalist pitch presentation
- All finalists will receive scoping services for a comprehensive business assessment.
- All awardees will be included in the Recipient Network



EDGE 2026 Entrepreneur Judges

EDGE 2.0

Spring

Awardees 2026

Entrepreneur

3 E's Equestrian Educational Program (Laurel)

Provides accessible equestrian education and equine-assisted learning (EAL) opportunities that foster confidence, empathy, responsibilities, leadership, and connection to agriculture and nature

Huxley & Hiro (Wilmington)

An award-winning independent bookstore and café serving as a cultural hub in downtown Wilmington through books, café services, public programming, and literary events

Little Town (Milford)

Little Town is an innovative indoor early learning and play center designed for children ages 0 to 7, located in Milford's Downtown Development District. Built as a child-scale miniature town.

Rooted Properties (Lewes)

Their flagship project, The Happy Place at Sunset, is the revitalization of a mid-century fisherman's motel along the Route 24 corridor into a boutique, design-forward hospitality destination.

SOMA Skin & Sculpt (Middletown)

SOMA Skin & Sculpt bridges aesthetics and functional health with technology-supported treatments that improve strength, mobility, body composition, and overall well-being across diverse skin tones, body types, and life stages.



STEM

A Delaware-based technology company that helps businesses identify and manage financial risks and opportunities related to biodiversity and nature loss, while tracking progress toward sustainability goals.

A health technology company using AI-powered virtual reality to create immersive, personalized patient education and make complex health concepts easier to understand and remember.

A Delaware-based behavioral health and neurotechnology company expanding access to advanced mental health treatments through FDA-cleared Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) for conditions including depression and OCD.

A Delaware-based software company that helps community doctors' offices participate in clinical trials, expanding patients' access to new treatments while helping pharmaceutical companies reach more participants



Accessing the EDGE Application

1

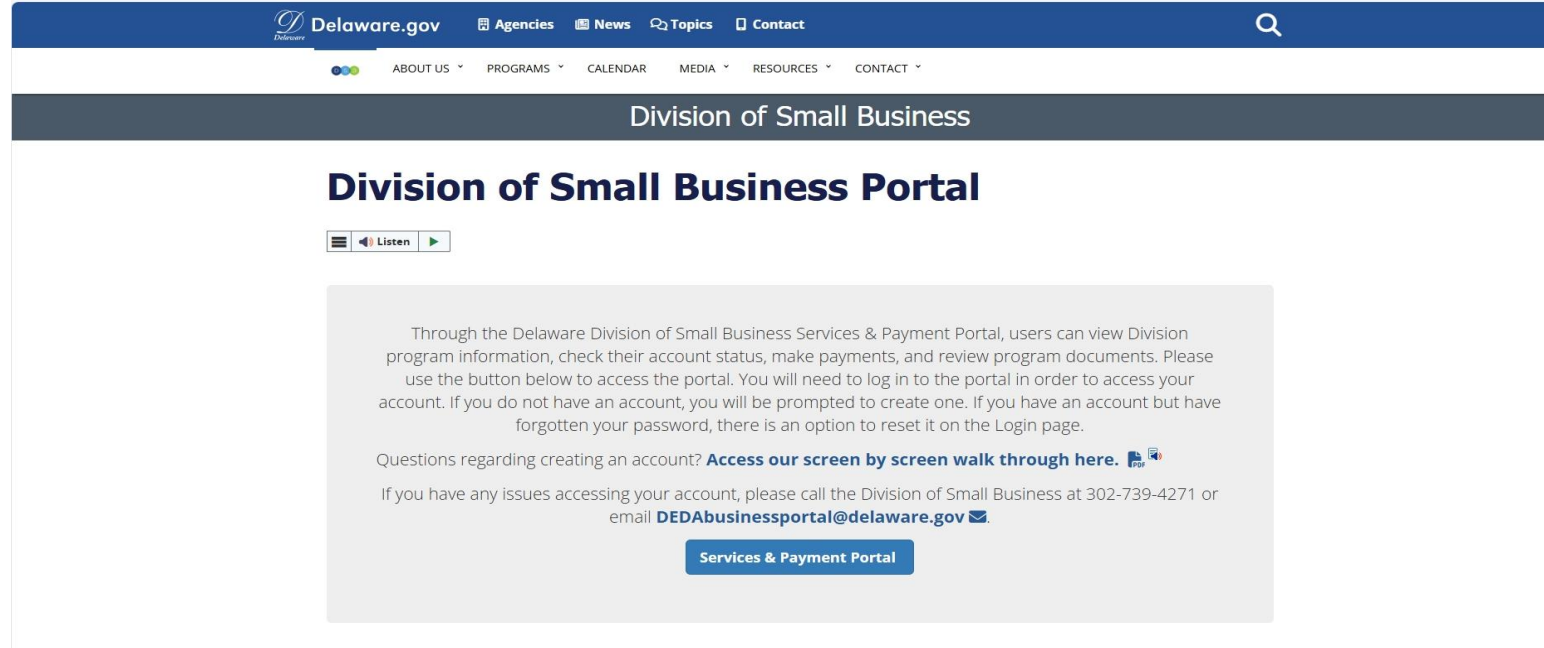
Visit the DSB Website:
<https://business.delaware.gov>

2

Go to the "About Us" Tab

3

Click on the "Division of Small Business Portal"



The screenshot shows the Delaware.gov website. The top navigation bar includes links for Agencies, News, Topics, and Contact. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for ABOUT US, PROGRAMS, CALENDAR, MEDIA, RESOURCES, and CONTACT. The main heading reads "Division of Small Business". Below this is the "Division of Small Business Portal" section, which includes a "Listen" button and a paragraph of text explaining the portal's purpose. At the bottom of this section is a button labeled "Services & Payment Portal".

Delaware.gov Agencies News Topics Contact

ABOUT US PROGRAMS CALENDAR MEDIA RESOURCES CONTACT

Division of Small Business

Division of Small Business Portal

 Listen 

Through the Delaware Division of Small Business Services & Payment Portal, users can view Division program information, check their account status, make payments, and review program documents. Please use the button below to access the portal. You will need to log in to the portal in order to access your account. If you do not have an account, you will be prompted to create one. If you have an account but have forgotten your password, there is an option to reset it on the Login page.

Questions regarding creating an account? [Access our screen by screen walk through here.](#)  

If you have any issues accessing your account, please call the Division of Small Business at 302-739-4271 or email DEDAbusinessportal@delaware.gov 

[Services & Payment Portal](#)



Accessing the EDGE Application (cont.)

EDGE Program Grants



[View Program Details](#)

The EDGE Grant competition is an innovative program aimed at helping promising early-stage Delaware companies get the funding they need to level the playing field with larger, more established competitors and grow the state's economy. The EDGE grant is designed to give businesses the boost they need to continue to grow their business within the State of Delaware. The Division of Small Business awards EDGE Grants through a competitive selection process. The Division can provide up to 18 finalists per application round. The entrepreneur category will have up to 10 finalists and the STEM category will have up to 8 finalists. In addition to the grant funding finalists and awardees will receive some additional support to help them scale their business.

Please submit along with the application:

Proposal:

- Review the scoring rubrics in the application form (STEM and Entrepreneur) to help you complete the proposal
- Must use the STEM or Entrepreneur proposal template in the application form on the website to format proposal – complete all sections!
- Font: Times New Roman, 12-point font
- Double spaced
- 5-10 Pages

Submission File: PDF format

- Financials: Income Statement and Balance sheet
- Detailed Project Budget
- A legible copy of your State of Delaware Business License issued by the Delaware Department of Finance – Division of Revenue (cannot be expired)

Documents to Upload:

- Business License (Unexpired)
- Income Statement (Current)
- Balance Sheet (Current)
- Project Budget
- Proposal

More details are [available here](#).

[Apply for Program](#)

EDGE Grant Portal

1/2/2026, 10:48:11 AM	INT# 2026-01-02-18889	In Progress	Resume
1/13/2026, 1:21:32 PM	INT# 2026-01-13-18895	Submitted	View

Submit Application

Upon hitting Submit your application and associated attachments will be sent to the Delaware Division of Small Business at business_finance@delaware.gov.

[Complete Application](#)

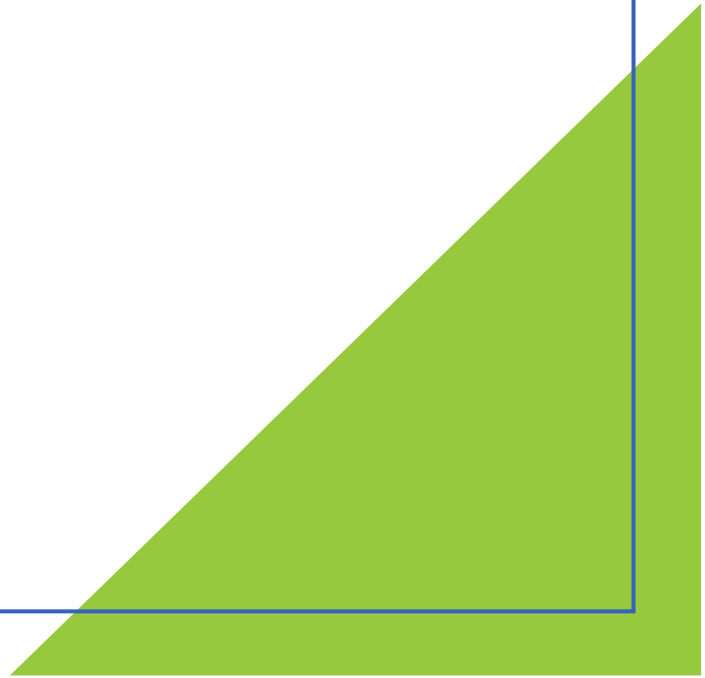
There will be two emails showing that you need to sign and that you have signed your application.

****There will be no notification that your application has been submitted.****





How to Complete Your Proposal



Formatting Your Proposal

- ☐ You must use the STEM or Entrepreneur template found on our website to format your proposal, and be sure to complete all sections!
 - ☐ Your type of business determines which template you use.
- ☐ Font: Times New Roman, 12 Point
- ☐ Double-Spaced
- ☐ Up to 5-10 pages
- ☐ Save as PDF and upload when completing application

ENTREPRENEUR PROJECT PROPOSAL

Business Name, Address, Contact Info.

1. PROJECT INTRODUCTION, COMPANY BACKGROUND, FOUNDER'S

QUALIFICATIONS

2. BUSINESS NEED

2.1. Business Need Details

2.2. Alternatives

2.3 Business Need & Budget Relevance

3. RETURN ON INVESTMENT

3.1 Return on Investment Forecast (Include 5-year financial projections)

3.2 Business Growth Potential

3.3 Risk Mitigation

4. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE GAINED

4.1 Market Analysis

4.2 Gained Competitive Advantage, Effectiveness, and Efficiency

4.3 Customer Insights and Sustained Competitive Advantage

5. COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 Significance of the Community Impact

5.2 Broader Impact

Entrepreneur Rubric

Business Need				
5	10	15	20	25
- Proposal shows little to no justification of why the grant will address a business need. - No project budget is included with proposal.	- Proposal makes some effort to describe how the grant will meet the needs of the business. - Proposal fails to adequately explain how grant will directly improve the business in order to address stated need, or fails to adequately explain the importance of the stated business need. - Budget and business need are not clearly aligned and insufficient effort is made to explain the link, or items in budget are not clearly explained.	- Proposal provides an adequate explanation of how the grant will address an important need of the business. - Business needs are clearly stated but is overly broad and/or not specific to a direct business improvement plan. - Budget and business need are not sufficiently aligned or explained.	- Proposal provides a compelling explanation of how the grant would address an important need of the business and includes some data to support this claim. This may include an estimation of market size, market growth, company projected sales growth, and competitive analysis. - Business needs are completely tied back to proposed project budget. All items in budget are explained and shown to be consistent with fulfillment of targeted business need	- Proposal provides a compelling explanation of how the grant would address a unique business need or business opportunity that cannot be easily accomplished using current resources. This includes an estimation of market size, market growth, company projected sales growth, and competitive analysis - Business need is completely tied back to proposed project budget- all items in budget are explained and shown to be consistent with fulfillment of targeted business need.



STEM PROJECT PROPOSAL

Business Name, Address, Contact Info.

1. PROJECT INTRODUCTION, COMPANY BACKGROUND, AND FOUNDER'S QUALIFICATIONS

2. BUSINESS NEED

2.1. Business Need Details

2.2. Alternatives

2.3. Business Need & Budget Relevance

3. RETURN ON INVESTMENT

3.1. Project Description & Impact

3.2. Return on Investment (Include 5-year financial projections)

3.3. Additional Fundraising

3.4. Founder's Qualifications and Experience

3.5. Strategic Alignment

4. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE GAINED

4.1. Market Analysis

4.2. Gained Competitive Advantage & Sustainability

4.3. Customer Insights and Business Opportunity

5. COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1. Significance of the Community Impact

Competitive Advantage Gained

5	10	15	20
- Proposal contains little or no data analysis of firm's marketplace and competition. - Proposal fails to adequately analyze the competitive advantage gained from the grant award.	- Proposal contains little or no analysis of the firm's marketplace. - Proposal does not consider why the solution presented is the most effective and efficient way of gaining the competitive advantage sought. - Proposal contains no market insight.	- Proposal contains some analysis of the marketplace that the new innovation may disrupt or enter into. Current capabilities of leading products in this market are explained, though not to a level that allows evaluators to feel they fully understand the landscape. - Proposal explains why, if research or innovation is successful, a new competitive advantage over incumbent firms would be created, and how it can be sustained, but does not consider threat of new entrants and/or copycats. - Proposal contains some customer or potential customer insights to allow some validation of business opportunity.	- Proposal contains a thorough analysis of the marketplace that the new innovation may disrupt or enter into. Current capabilities of leading products in this market are explained, and reasons are given why they are inadequate relative to the proposed innovation or research. - Proposal explains why, if research or innovation is successful, a new competitive advantage over incumbent firms would be created, and how it can be sustained. - Proposal contains thorough customer or potential customer insights to support its claim to have a profitable business opportunity.



4 Documents You Need to Upload

- Income Statement in pdf format
 - Balance Sheet in pdf format
 - Detailed Budget in pdf format
 - Copy of Current (non-expired) **STATE OF DELAWARE** Business License
(Temporary Licenses accepted if current) – pdf preferred, jpg accepted
-

Example of Business License

<https://onestop.delaware.gov/>

STATE OF DELAWARE	
Department of Finance Division of Revenue	
ACTIVE BUSINESS LICENSE 2025987654	
EFFECTIVE	01/01/2026-12/31/2026
ISSUED TO	ABC Daycare 123 Lane Dover, DE 19901
LOCATION	ABC Daycare 123 Lane Dover, DE 19901
TRADE, BUSINESS, OR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY	FINANCE OR SMALL LOAN AGENCY
01/01/2026 \$75.00	Is hereby licensed to practice, conduct, or engage in the occupation or business activity indicated above in accordance with the license application duly filed pursuant to Title 30, Delaware Code.
POST CONSPICUOUSLY - NOT TRANSFERABLE	



2026



Balance Sheet v. Income Statement

- The balance sheet is a snapshot of what your business owns (assets) and how those things were funded (liabilities vs equity).
 - Remember, a balance sheet shows the items at the price they were purchased for or the cost incurred to make them. If you can't put a price on it, it probably doesn't belong on the balance sheet!
 - The income statement shows the flow of revenues against expenses for a given period and shows the bottom line - profit or loss.
 - Your business may not be making a profit yet, and that's ok. Just remember to be as detailed as you can be in the financials and the narrative.
-

Balance Sheet vs Income Statement

XYZ COMPANY	
Balance Sheet	
12/31/2017	
ASSETS	
Current Assets:	
Cash	\$12,000
Accounts Receivable	35,000
Inventory	120,000
Prepaid Rent	8,000
Total Current Assets	\$175,000
Long-Term Assets	
Land	\$126,000
Buildings & Improvements	300,000
Furniture & Fixtures	50,000
General Equipment	125,000
Total Fixed Assets	\$601,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$776,000
LIABILITIES	
Current Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	\$60,000
Taxes Payable	25,000
Salaries/Wages Payable	30,000
Interest Payable	25,000
Total Current Liabilities	\$140,000
Long Term Liabilities:	
Loan 1	\$322,000
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$322,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$462,000
OWNER'S EQUITY	
Paid in Capital	\$64,000
Retained Earnings	250,000
TOTAL OWNER'S EQUITY	\$314,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES & OWNER'S EQUITY	\$776,000

Jeffries Office Services	
Income Statement	
For the month ending May 31, 2020	
Revenue:	
Sales Revenue	\$15,000
Other Revenue	500
Total Revenue	\$ 15,500
Expenses:	
Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 1,500
Salaries Expense	4,500
Rent Expense	1,000
Utility Expense	300
Professional Service Expense	175
Taxes	1,100
Total Expenses	\$ 8,575
Net Income	\$ 6,925





Submit a
Strong EDGE
Application



Clearly Define Your Project

Reviewers Should Understand:

- **What** you are requesting funding for.
- **Why** the project is needed.
- **How** the project aligns with your business goals.

*If this is not your first time applying, introductions should include what has changed since the last time you applied for EDGE.



Specific and Detailed Information

Be Specific and Detailed:

- Clearly describe the product, equipment or service being requested
- Explain why the item(s) are needed
- Explain how the project will benefit the business
- Describe how the funding will be used

Example of Specific and Detailed Information

Vague	Clearly Defined
We want to purchase new equipment for our business.	We are requesting funding to purchase a Hobart HL600 Commercial Mixer to increase production capacity by 35%, reduce production time, and meet growing customer demand
We need marketing.	We are requesting funding for a six-month digital marketing campaign, including Google Ads, social media advertising, professional photography, and website optimization to increase online sales and attract new customers
We want to renovate our building.	We are requesting funding to renovate our storefront by replacing outdated signage, improving ADA accessibility, and upgrading the customer waiting area to enhance the customer experience and attract more foot traffic.

Realistic Project Budget

Your Budget Should Clearly Explain:

- What you're purchasing
- Amount Requested from EDGE
- Business Match
- Total Project Cost (EDGE request + Matching Funds)



Example of a Strong Detailed Project Budget

Detailed Project Budget

Prepared on: February 13, 2026

Project Tasks	Assigned To	Category	EDGE Funding	Business Match	
Aluvii Booking Software		Technology Costs	\$500.00		
Aluvii Website Services		Technology Costs		\$250.00	
Baby Changing Station (x2)		Equipment Costs		\$600.00	
Flooring (Epoxy)		Infrastructure Costs	\$21,000.00		
Hardware (Monitors, CPU, Printers)		Equipment Costs		\$2,500.00	
Infrastructure / Demo. / Dumping Fees		Infrastructure Costs	\$5,000.00	\$4,000.00	
Mini-Kitchen Build Out		Infrastructure Costs	\$5,000.00		
Mini-Kitchen Equipment		Equipment Costs	\$10,000.00		
Painting		Infrastructure Costs	\$2,000.00		
Party Room Chairs (x20)		Equipment Costs		\$1,400.00	
Party Room Picnic Tables (x9)		Equipment Costs		\$3,050.00	
Playhouse Build Out (x10 Houses)		Infrastructure Costs	\$48,000.00	\$12,000.00	
Plumbing (Mini-Kitchen & Restrooms)		Infrastructure Costs	\$5,000.00		
Security Alarm Company Install		Technology Costs	\$1,000.00		
Security Cameras / Install		Technology Costs	\$3,000.00		
Social Media Marketing		Marketing Costs		\$200.00	
Toys - Per Room Setup		Equipment Costs		\$10,000.00	
Water Fountain Install		Infrastructure Costs	\$1,500.00		
Fund Totals			\$102,000.00	\$34,000.00	
Total Project Budget				\$136,000.00	

Measurable Impact and Quantifiable Data

<u>Measurable Impact</u> Explain what success looks like	<u>Quantifiable Data</u> Support your project with facts & figures
Explain the anticipated results of your project	Include measurable results when possible
How will the project strengthen your business	Support statements with numbers, percentage, and trends
Identify short and long-term outcomes	Reference credible market or industry data

ROI and Community Impact

Return on Investment (ROI):

- Job opportunities
- Projected business growth over the next 5 years (5-year projections)
- With vs Without EDGE Grant Scenario

Community Impact:

- Think about ways your business is strengthening your Community

ROI vs Community Impact



Eligible Projects

vs.

Ineligible Projects

- Building infrastructure/cosmetic enhancements
- Essential equipment
- Rent assistance
- Web site design
- Market analysis assistance
- Advertising assistance

- Payroll expenses that are not attributed to the project outlined in the application
- Salaries or payments made to company ownership
- The purchase of real estate
- Permits or government fees
- Taxes
- Improvements to residential property

3 to 1 Match (found in application)

- When applying you are required to show you have some level of capital
 - All awards require a **3:1 funding match**. For example, to receive a \$90,000 grant, a finalist must have secured \$30,000 from other sources.
 - Match should be specific to this project
 - Other grants can be used for your match
-

Additional Points on the application

MWVSDVIWDBE Status	Opportunity Zones
MBE: Minority Business Enterprise WBE: Woman Business Enterprise VOBE: Veteran Owned Business Enterprise SDVOBE: Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Enterprise IWDBE: Individuals with Disabilities Owned Business Enterprise	Must show evidence that a business is or will be located within a priority geographical area (Opportunity Zone and/or Downtown Development District).

Additional Points:

An additional five points each will be given if the business demonstrates its M/W/V/SDV/IWDBE Status **OR** is located within an Opportunity Zone or Downtown Development District.

An additional five points will be given if a business is a Governor's Industry of Interest.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION !



Office of Supplier Diversity

- W/M/V/SDV/IWDBE Certification
- On the application, you self-identify that you are in a certain W/M/V/IBE category. (women/minority/etc.)
- Assistance with state procurement opportunities

OSD Director – Shavonne H. White

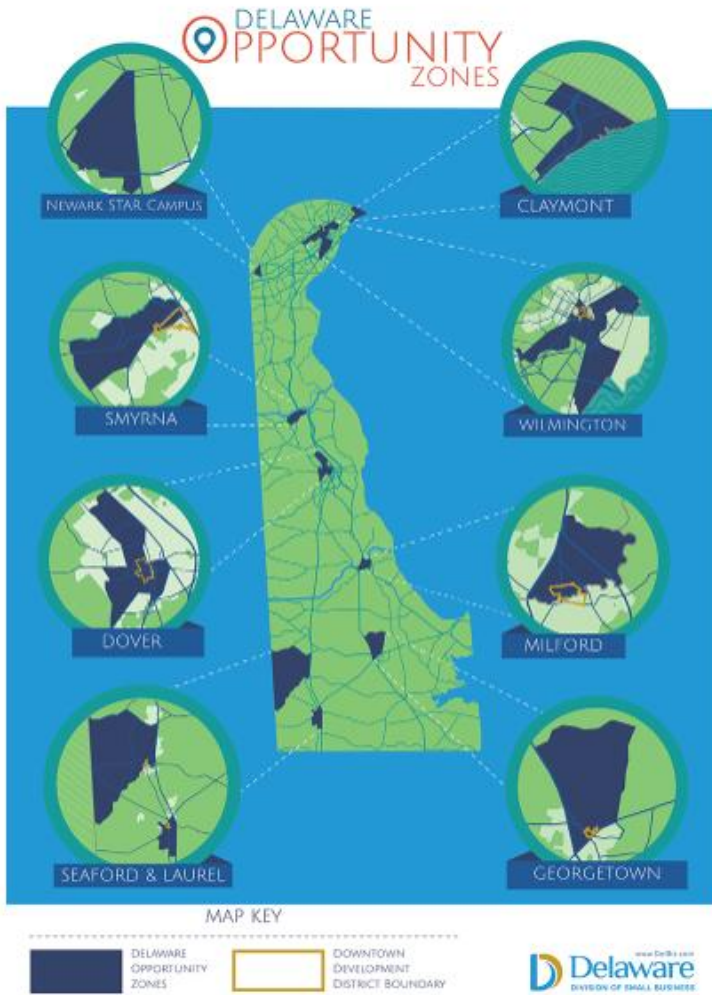
Email

osd@delaware.gov

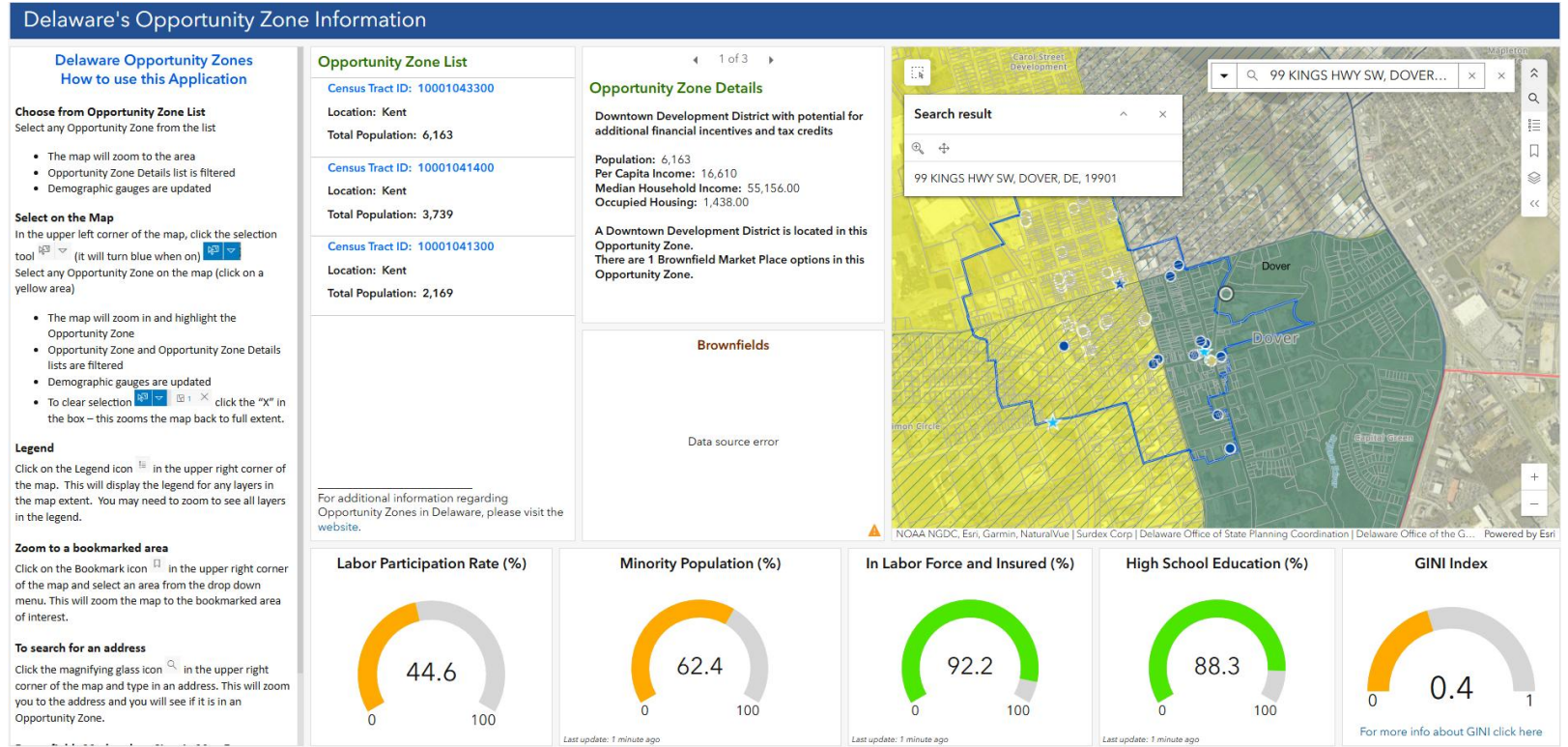
Website

<https://business.delaware.gov/osd/>





Opportunity Zone and Downtown Development District



Where can I learn more?

<https://business.delaware.gov/opportunity-zones/about/>



Governor's Industries of Interest

- **Fintech**
- **Bio Pharmaceutical Manufacturing**
- **Agriculture**
- **Tourism**
- **Blue Tech**
- **Recreation**
- **Entertainment**



Reference: Governor's Industries of Interest:

Blue Tech

Blue tech is framed as technology used to understand, explore, and manage the marine environment, with tools such as autonomous surface vessels, underwater robotics, geospatial mapping, sensor networks. Promotes sustainable practices and increases coastal community revenues.

- Aquaculture technology, marine renewable energy (tidal and wave energy), oceanographic research, etc.

Tourism

- Accommodations, Transportation (bus, car rental etc.), Attractions, Restaurants,

Recreation

Recreational facilities and services that can improve community health and wellness while generating revenue.

- Fitness centers, gyms, outdoor adventure services (hiking, kayaking, biking), etc.

Entertainment

- Theatrical productions, media, film, music, producers, performing arts, art exhibits, and other creative endeavors that are central to Delaware's vibrant arts community.

Fintech

This sector aims to increase efficiency, accessibility, and convenience in financial transactions and services.

- Payment processing, peer-to-peer lending, robo-advisors and block chain technology, etc.

Bio Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

Develops manufacturing of pharmaceuticals can lead to job creation in high-skill sectors, increased exports and improved public health, reducing long term healthcare costs.

- Vaccine production, biotechnology firms, generic drug manufacturing, etc.

Agriculture

- Organic farming, precision agriculture, agribusiness supply chains, etc.



EDGE Fall 2026 Timeline

Applications Open:
Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 12:00pm

Application Deadline:
Friday, September 11, 2026, 4:00pm
Late submission will **not be accepted.**

Applications will have to successfully get through four rounds of internal scoring *to be consider a finalist.*

Finalist notification: October 19, 2026
EDGE Event: November 10, 2026

New: Includes pitch day for both categories and award ceremony



After Award

- The Sr. Compliance Specialist will setup a meeting with you post award.
- Confirm **compliance** before we disburse the funds
- Sign grant agreements
- Reporting requirements afterward
 - 5-year commitment to remain in state
- EDGE Grants are considered taxable income. Consult an accountant if you have questions about your specific situation.



Resources and Information

Resource Tool



Use Size Up Delaware for market sizing and information on competition

<https://delaware.sizeup.com/>



Let Us Be Your Guide



GEMINI CORNISH
BUSINESS MANAGER

Gemini.Cornish@delaware.gov



JOE ZILCOSKY
BUSINESS MANAGER

Joe.Zilcosky@delaware.gov

Business Manager Based on Industry:

- Joe Zilcosky:
 - Industries: STEM, Fintech, Life Science, Bio Science, Film & Production, Retail and Hospitality

Gemini Cornish:

- Industries: Professional Services, Service Based, Agriculture, Aquaculture, Restaurant, and Consulting

Type any
questions into
the Q&A

The recording and
the slides for this
presentation will
be posted at
de.gov/edge by
noon tomorrow.



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@delawaresmallbusiness





Thank You

