CAPITAL CATALYST PROGRAM

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SEED FINANCING STIMULATES LOCAL BUSINESS CREATION

Building an innovation economy with a solid foundation and the ability to scale requires deploying capital close to where companies are being formed and grown. That's the premise behind the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC's) Capital Catalyst Program—designed to seed and scale locally managed investment funds that back high-growth startups across the state.

How it works

By partnering with experienced organizations and regional leaders, WEDC is catalyzing new sources of early-stage capital—and expanding access to investment opportunities in emerging companies. WEDC provides grants ranging from $250,000 to $2 million to approved organizations or communities that manage a seed fund to provide capital to high-growth-potential startups and emerging growth companies or support R&D-to-commercialization efforts. These locally managed funds may provide loans and/or investments in startups and early-stage and innovative small businesses that operate in their service area.

Partner requirements

Recipients of Capital Catalyst funds must demonstrate organizational capability and the availability of entrepreneurial support to achieve program goals. Recipients must provide private matching funds at a ratio of at least 1:1 with the amount of grant funding requested.

Program requirements

Since FY26, the program's funding primarily comes from the U.S. Department of Treasury's State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI); given this, all applicants and projects must meet all of the applicable SSBCI requirements, including but not limited to additional reporting, private financing, repayment terms, and business eligibility.

APPLYING FOR CAPITAL CATALYST FUNDS

For more information about the Capital Catalyst Program, please contact:

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