

Design Catalyst - Providence Grant Program

Are you a design professional or creative entrepreneur based in Providence, Rhode Island who is ready to build a stronger business behind your creative work? If you're looking to strengthen your business practices, increase your sustainability, and take your practice to the next level, the Design Catalyst Program may be right for you.

The Design Catalyst Program combines business education, individualized mentorship, peer learning, and grant funding to give creative professionals and small design-based businesses the practical tools, knowledge, and resources they need to build stronger, more sustainable businesses.

2027 DESIGN CATALYST PROVIDENCE GRANT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS :

Eligibility - Open to Providence-based design entrepreneurs from low-to-moderate income (LMI) households. *2025 tax documents will be required to verify eligibility.*

Business Support - Accepted participants will gain access to business education, professional development workshops, cohort based peer learning, and mentorship from experienced industry professionals.

Growth Funding - Accepted participants will have access to grant funding, made possible through the generous support of the City of Providence, to help advance their businesses and support continued growth. Funding may be used for eligible business expenses identified as part of the program. **Please note that funds are provided on a reimbursement basis, meaning participants must pay eligible expenses upfront and submit documentation for reimbursement.**

PROGRAM SCHEDULE :

Eligibility is contingent upon the applicant's ability to attend all program dates. Classes take place Tuesdays, 1-5pm at the DESIGNxRI office in Providence, RI.

Please view the [full schedule of classes here](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Providence Residency - Business owners must maintain a primary residence in Providence, RI. *Residency verification will be required.*

Providence Business Location - Participating businesses must have a business mailing address in Providence, RI. *Business address verification will be required.*

LMI Income - All participants / business owners must meet the program's low-to-moderate income (LMI) threshold. *2025 federal tax documents will be required to verify income eligibility.*

Established Business - Participants must operate an established creative or design micro-enterprise with fewer than five employees including the owner(s) and current interns.

Program Commitment - Participants must commit to the full six month program; including income verification, attendance at all classes, meeting with their mentor, submission of progress reports, active engagement with their cohort, and participation in the final showcase.

NOTE *We recommend you work in a separate document and copy and paste your responses into this application form. A PDF of the application can be found on our website [here](#).*

For any additional questions please email: info@designxri.com

*** Indicates required question**

1. First Name *

2. Last Name *

3. Pronouns

4. Phone Number *

5. Email *

6. Provide your primary Home Address (street address, town, state, zip) *

Eligibility**7. Please provide the mailing address for your business. ***

Please provide the address based on where you have your business address listed (where you receive your business mail). If you have a web based business, use the address listed for any business mailings, credit cards, banks statement, etc...

8. What is your household size? *

Your household size is determined by adding you + spouse (if applicable) + dependents (if applicable).

9. Number of adults (18+) in household? *

10. Number of dependent children (less than 18 years old) *

11. What is your Adjusted Gross annual household Income (AGI)? *

Please reference line 11 on your 2025 federal income tax return (Form 1040) to determine household income.

Please list your income, household size.

Ex: \$48,700, 2 people

12. How many owners does your business have? *

Include yourself and any co-owners.

13. If you have any co-owners please list their names and full primary addresses below. *

Do not include yourself, as your information is provided above. If you do not have any co-owners, please enter "N/A." All co-owners must submit the required tax documentation and meet the program's Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) eligibility requirements.

Example :

1. Jan Smith, 555 Mulberry Street, Providence RI 02908

2. Ryo Jon, 85 Marcy Street, Providence RI 02908

14. If you have any co-owners please list in the same order as above their household income and household size. *

Please write N/A if no co-owners.

Example:

1. Jay Smith, \$28,500, 1

2. Ryo Jon, \$42,000, 2

15. **Please list the names and roles of any additional members of your work team that are ^{*} not co-owners.**

Include paid team members only. Please write N/A if no members.

Business Profile

16. **Business Name ^{*}**

17. **Business Website ^{*}**

18. **Business Social Media Account ^{*}**

19. What formation is your business? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Sole proprietor
- ☐ LLC
- ☐ S Corporation (S-Corp)
- ☐ C Corporation (C-Corp)
- ☐ Partnership
- ☐ Nonprofit
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I'm not sure

20. Is your business address the same as your primary home address? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes - I run my business out of my residential address
- ☐ No - my business run out of a location different then my residential address

21. How many years of experience in your industry do you have? *

22. Design Field / Discipline *

(Check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Apparel Design
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Furniture Design
- ☐ Graphic Design
- ☐ Industrial/Product Design
- ☐ Interior Design
- ☐ Jewelry
- ☐ Landscape Architecture
- ☐ Maker
- ☐ Strategic Design
- ☐ Web / UX Design
- ☐ Other: _____

23. What best describes your experience level? **Check all that apply.**Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Emerging Designer
- ☐ Advanced Designer
- ☐ Owner / Principal
- ☐ Creative

24. **Are you currently solely employed by your business? Do you have supplemental income? Are you employed by another business? Full time, part time?** *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Solely employed by the business I am applying with
- ☐ Mostly employed by the business I am applying with and have supplemental income elsewhere
- ☐ Part time employed by another business
- ☐ Full time employed by another business

25. **Please describe your business.** *

What do you make, create, provide, or sell? What need or problem does your business address? What is your business's purpose, and who do you serve? How does design shape your work, products, services, or approach?

26. **Tell us about yourself as a business owner.** *

What is your background and experience? What led you to start your business, and what motivates you to do this work? What vision or purpose guides you as an entrepreneur?

27. Describe your customers and audience. *

Who are your current or intended customers? What do you know about the people, communities, or organizations you serve? How do they find you, and what needs, challenges, or interests bring them to your business?

28. What are your current business assets, income, and expenses? Upload your response [here](#). *

Be sure to indicate the timeframe your income and expenses reference: monthly, yearly, January-June 2025, etc.

[See an example here.](#)

[You may copy or download a template to use here.](#)

Mark only one oval.

☐ I have uploaded my response to Dropbox

29. What are the next steps you need to take to grow your business? Upload your response [here](#). *

Identify three key milestones you want to achieve over the next 3-6months. For each milestone, describe the actions you will take and the resources, skills, relationships, or other support you will need to make it happen. List your milestones in the order you expect to achieve them.

[See example here.](#)

[You may copy or download a template to use here.](#)

Mark only one oval.

☐ I have uploaded my response to Dropbox

30. **What is the biggest barrier standing between your business and its next stage of growth?** *

What is currently holding your business back? This might be related to funding, customers, marketing, capacity, skills, systems, time, space, relationships, or something else. What would need to change or become available for you to move forward?

31. **What do you hope to learn through the Business Development classes?** *

What aspects of running and growing your creative business would you most like to better understand or develop? Consider areas such as pricing, financial management, marketing, sales, business strategy, customer development, operations, or other topics that would help you move your business forward.

32. **What are you looking for in a mentor?** *

During the program, you will be paired with a mentor who can offer guidance, perspective, and support as you grow your business. What areas of expertise, experience, skills, or connections would be most valuable to you? What would you hope to gain from a mentor relationship?

Business Finances & Growth Readiness

These questions are intended to help us understand your business's current financial position, where you are in your growth journey, and what financial knowledge, tools, or support would be most helpful to you during the program.

33. Do you have a SAM number for your business? If so, please provide it below. *

To receive grant funding, you MUST have a SAM number, but not having one at time of application will not affect your application. We strongly recommend starting the SAM application process now if you are interested in Catalyst.

Please write N/A if you do not have a SAM number.

34. What's your EIN Number? *

If you're a sole proprietor, using your Social Security number is the same as an EIN. You may write in N/A, or "I use my social security number" to answer the following question.

35. Do you have a business bank account? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ I have a dedicated bank account for all my business transactions.
- ☐ I use a dedicated personal banking account for my business transactions.
- ☐ My business and personal finances are blended, and I have not yet separated them out.
- ☐ Other:

36. **Do you have a business credit card that you use exclusively for your business expenses?** *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ I have a dedicated business credit card that I use for my business.
- ☐ I have a personal credit card that I have dedicated to use specifically for business needs.
- ☐ My expenses are blended, I use my personal credit card for business expenses.
- ☐ Other:

37. **If you do not have a business bank account or business credit card, please explain how you track your business specific expenses and income.** *

Final Questions

38. **Have you participated in any DESIGNxRI programs before?** *

If so, please tell us which programs or activities your participated in.

39. Are you able to commit to participating fully in the Design Catalyst Program? *

Participation includes attending all scheduled classes and workshops, meeting with your mentor, engaging with your cohort, completing program assignments and check-ins, and participating in the final showcase. Please review the [program schedule](#) before applying to confirm that you can commit to the full program.

Check all that apply.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other: _____

40. Is there anything else you would like us to know? *

Please use this space to share anything about your experience, goals, learning needs, or circumstances that would help us better understand you and how we can support you during the program. You may also use this space to share any questions, concerns, or financial considerations you would like the program team to know about.

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