

Huron Daily Tribune

Six Huron County businesses receive \$37K through EM-SBN small business grants

By **Jhyrah DeLapp**,

Staff Writer

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Six Huron County businesses received a combined \$37,141 through the 2026 EM-SBN Small Business Grant program after 75 local applications competed for funding.

Jhyrah DeLapp/Huron Daily Tribune

The Eastern Michigan Small Business Network has announced the recipients of its 2026 Small Business Grant, with six Huron County businesses receiving a combined \$37,141 in funding during this round.

More than 400 small businesses across Region 6 — which includes Shiawassee, Lapeer, Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac and St. Clair counties — applied for 2026 grant funding. That total included 75 applications from Huron County businesses.

“In Huron County we saw an outstanding response to our call for applications for the EM-SBN grants,” said Huron County Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Samantha Schnettler. “We received seventy-five applications for support from businesses across the county, requesting over \$920,000, with the average request at just under \$15,000. The anonymous awarding process scored applicants based on several criteria including economic and community impact, the track record of the business, and the growth potential exhibited in the application.”

The EM-SBN received a Small Business Support Hub grant award from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to help launch and grow small businesses in Shiawassee, Lapeer,

Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac and St. Clair counties. The program uses a portion of the state's American Rescue Plan funding.

Through the initiative, EM-SBN expands Michigan Small Business Development Center services, including coaching, mentoring and access to capital. It also provides intensive counseling and assistance for up to 40 small business clients each year through the region's Entrepreneurial Cohort Program.

Huron County grant recipients

The following Huron County businesses were awarded funding through the 2026 Small Business Grant program:

- Lake Huron Financial, Bad Axe — \$500
- Airtech Heating of Huron County LLC, Kinde — \$7,552.94
- Mary Kay Hebert Day Care, Caseville — \$13,834.93
- Port Austin's Outback Art and Wellness Studio, Port Austin — \$5,800
- Steadfast Tool & Machine Inc., Caseville — \$6,463.13
- You're Worth It Counseling Services LLC, Port Austin — \$2,990

Schnettler said the scoring committee prioritized applicants and projects that scored highly on the evaluation rubric while also demonstrating their projects could be completed quickly, as all awarded projects must be finished and submitted for reimbursement by Feb. 28.

“The quality of the applications this year was incredible, and many businesses in Huron County have very exciting growth plans in their future,” Schnettler said. “We’re thankful for the opportunity to support a few of these companies today and are looking forward to the growth and expansion they will experience as a result of this funding. We are also grateful to the St. Clair EDA, the Eastern Michigan Small Business Network, and the MEDC for making this program and this funding possible. We think this strong application round demonstrates to our funding partners just how critical the need is for programming like this.”

The 2026 Small Business Grant program is being administered by the Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County. The EDA is working closely with participating Region 6 partners and

key collaborators, including the Michigan Small Business Development Center, to promote and administer the grant program.

Businesses that meet the U.S. Small Business Administration's definition of a small business were eligible to apply, with the exception of nonprofit organizations. Eligible expenses include new equipment or furnishings, inventory, software purchases or upgrades, specialized consulting services and training.

For more information about the Eastern Michigan Small Business Network or the grant program, prospective applicants may contact the Economic Development Alliance at 810-982-9511 and ask for Kanchan Wankhede or Stacy Elliott.

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REPORTER

Jhyrah DeLapp joined the Huron Daily Tribune as a reporter in 2024.