



2026 WILDFIRE RECOVERY GRANT

ABOUT: The purpose of United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's 2026 Wildfire Recovery Grant is to provide financial support to small business owners near the July 2026 Lightning Incident evacuation zones that can demonstrate a financial loss as a direct result of the wildfires. This funding is meant as a stop-gap until larger funding sources become available.

Applications for this round of grant funds are due by 11:59 PM August 10, 2026. Approved applicants will receive grants ranging from **\$2,500 to \$10,000** by August 17, 2026. This funding will be restricted to business related expenses including payroll assistance; rent, mortgage, and/or utility costs; payments to suppliers; and equipment necessary for business operation. Additional funding may become available at a later date.

The information requested in this application will be used to verify the need is related to wildfire impacts. Each application will be carefully reviewed by a small United Way of Northeastern Minnesota committee; all requests will remain confidential. Financial support cannot be processed without the application fully executed.

ELIGIBILITY: To qualify for this funding, businesses must:

- Be located in the following communities in UWNEMN's service territory: Babbitt, Buyck, Cook, Crane Lake, Ely, Embarrass, Nett Lake, Orr, Soudan, Tower, Winton, or a township between any of the aforementioned communities.
 - Funds are limited, and availability will vary based on location.
 - Funds have been raised through donations, some of which are designated for specific communities.
- Have suffered business loss due to the July 2026 Lightning Incident.
- Be in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State.
- Utilize available insurance.
- Intend to re-open.

and provide the following:

- Current driver's license (front and back).
- Most recent year's tax return.
 - 2025 Federal Business Returns or appropriate business tax schedule based on your entity type. If 2025 tax return is not available, 2024 is acceptable.
 - For new businesses that do not yet have a tax return, please call 218-215-2425.
- If business space is leased, a landlord letter is required stating business was current on rent prior to July 1, 2026, or documentation showing rent was current prior to July 1, 2026.
- Form 941: Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return for Q2 2026 (if applicable)
- A signed W-9 form

Please note that completing this paperwork does not guarantee funding.

Questions? Contact UWNEMN Volunteer & Engagement Coordinator Emily Unhjem at emily@unitedwaynemn.org or 218-215-2425.



2026 WILDFIRE RECOVERY GRANT APPLICATION

Business Name: _____

Legally Registered Business Name *(if different from above):* _____

State ID Tax Number: _____

Business Address: _____

Mailing Address *(if different from above):* _____

Business General Phone: _____ **Business General Email:** _____

Website *(if applicable):* _____

Business Owner/CEO Information (Person completing this application)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____

Number of years in business: _____

Is your business registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State? *(circle one)* **Yes** **No**

Is your business currently in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State? *(circle one)* **Yes** **No**

Ownership of your business:

☐ Sole Proprietorship ☐ Corporation ☐ LLC ☐ Partnership ☐ Non-profit

☐ Other: _____

Industry Classification:

☐ Entertainment, Recreation ☐ Healthcare and Social Assistance ☐ Professional Services
☐ Hospitality/Food Service ☐ Finance/Insurance ☐ Other :
☐ Retail and Trade Arts ☐ Construction/Landscaping

This page must be completed in full before submitting.

About Your Business

Please provide a brief description and history of your business.

Employment Information

Current Operating Status:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Open for business or operating online | ☐ Closed but operating online or remotely |
| ☐ Open for business but with reduced hours | ☐ Completely closed |
| ☐ Currently open but previously closed. | |

What was your total employment prior to July wildfires? _____

Were you forced to make any employment changes as a result of the wildfires? *(circle one)* **Yes** **No**

If yes, please describe:

What number of employees (if any) are unlikely to return to work in 2026 as result of wildfire-related disruptions at your business? _____

Please describe any other impacts your business has experienced as a result of the wildfires:

Financial Information

Were you forced to close as a result of the wildfires? *(circle one)* **Yes** **No**

What were your annual gross receipts or sales from last year? _____

What are your projected gross receipts or sales for the next three months? _____

How much revenue per day would you estimate you have lost due to these wildfires? _____

What percentage of your annual revenue does this represent?

Have you filed a business interruption insurance claim? *(circle one)* **Yes** **No**

What was your financial condition prior to July 1, 2026? Please include any known challenges unrelated to the wildfires.

Please note any operational disruptions prior to July 1, 2026 (e.g., supply chain issues, equipment failure, etc.)

Please briefly describe your plans to resume normal operations after these wildfires are extinguished, noting any financial barriers or challenges unrelated to the wildfires.

If you have applied for any other funding, please provide details (where did you apply/for how much/was your request approved or denied?):

Use of Funds

Please provide information on the intended use of grant funds.

Funds may be used for expenses beginning July 1, 2026, and up to Dec. 31, 2026.

Please note: Approved applicants for this round of funding will receive grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 by August 17, 2026. Additional funding may be available at a later date.

Eligible Expense	Intended Amount
Lease or Mortgage Payments	
Payroll (Wages excluding Federal and State withholding)	
Utilities	
Insurance	
Payments to Suppliers	
Equipment	
Other Business Expenses (Please list below.)	

☐ Check this box if you have provided documentation for each of the following:

- Current driver's license (front and back).
- Most recent tax return (or in case of a new business, an approved alternative).
- If business space is leased, a landlord letter is required stating business was current on rent prior to July 1, 2026 or provide a statement showing rent was current prior to July 1, 2026.
- Form 941: Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return for Q2 2026 (if applicable).
- W-9 with signature.

This page must be completed in full before submitting.

Acknowledgments

1. The Applicant shall hold UWNEMN, its officers, consultants, attorneys, and agents harmless from any and all claims arising from or in connection with UWNEMN's Wildfire Recovery Grant or its Application, including but not limited to, any legal or actual violations of any State or Federal laws.
2. The Application recognizes and agrees that UWNEMN retains absolute authority and discretion to decide whether or not to accept or deny any particular Grant Application, and that all expenditures, obligations, costs, fees, or liabilities incurred by the Applicant in connection with the Application are incurred by the Applicant at its sole risk and expense.
3. The Applicant acknowledges that they have read UWNEMN's Wildfire Recovery Grant eligibility requirements and understands that if the application is approved for funding, grant funds awarded must only be used to pay eligible expenses.
4. The Applicant acknowledges that they understand data submitted in relation to this application may become government data and is subject to federal and state data laws. Some of the data may be considered private or nonpublic prior to the award of financial assistance, while some limited data may be considered private or nonpublic even following the award. UWNEMN will not publicize business plans, customer lists, income tax returns, design/market/feasibility studies, income and expense reports, or any other data classified as private or nonpublic under Minn. Stat. § 13.591. Application data submitted by businesses not selected for grant funding will only be released upon request and as required by Minn. Sta. Chapter 13 or other applicable state/federal law. Application or evaluation data may also be shared with any entity that has a legal right to the data under Minnesota or federal law, including under court order. You can refuse to supply any or all of the requested information, which you are not legally required to provide.

Certification

The undersigned, a duly authorized representative of the Applicant, hereby certifies the foregoing information is true, correct, and complete as of the date hereof: and agrees that:

- All proceeds from this grant will be used for eligible business expenses of UWNEMN's Wildfire Recovery Grant;
- Receipt to prove funding was used for eligible expenses only will be made available to UWNEMN upon request;
- Failure to provide receipts will result in forfeit/return of funding.

Name/Title of Authorized Business Representative

Signature of Authorized Business Representative

Date

Internal Use Only:

Date Received: _____ Date Contacted: _____ Spoke with: _____

Date Sent to Review Committee: _____ Approved: Yes No On Hold

On Hold or Denial Reason: _____

Approver: _____ Date Funds Sent to Applicant: _____