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Town of Bethlehem Awards Microenterprise Grants to Six Local Businesses

Delmar, NY – The Town of Bethlehem has awarded Microenterprise Grants to six local small businesses as part of its continued investment in economic development, entrepreneurship, and job creation.

This round of grants marks the continuation of Bethlehem’s successful Microenterprise Grant Program, which was awarded \$200,000 in 2025 to support emerging and expanding businesses within the Town of Bethlehem. The grants are funded through the New York State Office of Homes and Community Renewal and are designed to support businesses owned by low-to-moderate income individuals and/or businesses that create job opportunities for low-to-moderate income families.

Following a competitive review process conducted by the Microenterprise Grant Application Review Committee, the following six businesses were approved by the Town Board on February 25, 2026:

- **Amelia’s Garden (Delmar)** – \$25,500

A long-established sewing, quilting, and fabric shop, Amelia’s Garden will use the grant to purchase and install a long-arm quilting machine, expanding services and offering a capability not currently available locally.

*“Receiving the Microenterprise Grant is an exciting milestone for Amelia’s Garden. This investment in a longarm quilting machine allows the shop to offer professional finishing services and better support customers from their first stitch to their finished quilt. – **Tara Kordich**, owner*

- **Clay Art Studios (Delmar)** – \$10,000

A startup offering clay classes and workshops for all ages and abilities, Clay Art Studios will purchase and install a kiln to enhance class offerings and improve production quality.

- **Cora Muse (Delmar)** – \$35,000

A new women’s boutique opening in the Four Corners area, Cora Muse will use grant funds to outfit its storefront with inventory, equipment, and furnishings, bringing curated fashion and community-centered retail to the district.

"I am incredibly grateful to the Town of Bethlehem for believing in my vision for Cora Muse. This support allows me to bring a thoughtfully curated women's boutique to Delmar and create a space centered around confidence, community, and accessible style."– **Olivia Corazzini**, owner

- **Corning Hill Gardens (Glenmont)** – \$30,000
A small-scale organic farm, Corning Hill Gardens will purchase a walk-behind tractor and deer fencing to expand seasonal production and increase offerings at the Delmar Farmers Market.
- **Upstate Accounting and Tax (Delmar)** – \$19,500
This bookkeeping and tax preparation firm will modernize computer systems and equipment, enabling business growth and the addition of a full-time bookkeeper.
- **Wellness on Delaware (Delmar)** – \$20,000
An integrative wellness and primary care practice, Wellness on Delaware will expand services through the purchase of specialized equipment and updated furnishings. The expansion will support the creation of one new full-time job.

Town Supervisor **David VanLuven** praised the businesses and the program's broader impact:

"Small businesses are the backbone of Bethlehem's economy. These grants help local entrepreneurs invest in equipment, expand services, create jobs, and strengthen our commercial districts. We are proud to support businesses that contribute to the vitality and character of our community."

The Town marketed the program beginning in September 2025 through its website, social media, newsletters, and partnership with the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce. Two public information sessions were held, drawing 33 interested businesses. Grant recipients must complete an approved entrepreneurial training course prior to reimbursement, in partnership with the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region.

Additional funding remains available in this round specifically for startup businesses. The Town anticipates opening another application period soon for eligible startup enterprises with five or fewer employees that have been operating for six months or less.

Delmar business owner **Lance Raffé** (Wildbird Junction) offered this insight:

"As a 2017 recipient of a Microenterprise Grant from the Town of Bethlehem, I can attest to the positive financial impact this program had on my start-up business. As a current member of the Grant Committee, I can assure future applicants that I and the other committee members with our wide range of business experience and knowledge, will work very hard to get the available funds into the hands of the Town's new and growing businesses while offering advice and mentoring throughout the application process."

For more information about the Town of Bethlehem Microenterprise Grant Program, visit www.townofbethlehem.org/709/Microenterprise-Grant-Program.