



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

**LTC No: 25-267**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission  
**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*  
**DATE:** December 17, 2025  
**SUBJECT: National League of Cities Advancing Economic Mobility Rapid Grant Program**

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The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to highlight the successful implementation and impact of the National League of Cities' (NLC) Advancing Economic Mobility Rapid Grant Program. The City of Fort Lauderdale was one (1) of only twelve (12) municipalities nationwide selected to receive \$20,000 in support of strategies that expand economic opportunity. The NLC program is supported with funding from the Gates Foundation and runs through December 31, 2025. The City Commission approved a motion to accept the grant on June 17, 2025, via Commission Agenda Memo (CAM) #25-0643.

Administered by the Economic Development Division within the Community Services Department, grant funding was strategically allocated to maximize impact. Half of the grant funds (\$10,000) supported Startup FTL's Ideation and Grow cohorts, providing entrepreneurs with training and mentorship that culminated in a pitch competition on December 12, 2025. Startup FTL is the City's ten (10)-week program that is geared towards emerging entrepreneurs and dedicated to kickstarting, nurturing, and sustaining their business journey. The remaining \$10,000 was awarded directly to local small businesses through flexible microgrants ranging from \$350 to \$850. Through the microgrant program, the City awarded nineteen (19) microgrants totaling \$10,000 to Fort Lauderdale entrepreneurs representing a wide range of industries, business stages, and community contributions.

Microgrant awards provide essential financial support for business stabilization, operational needs, and early-stage growth, helping reduce barriers to obtaining traditional financing. The Microgrant opportunity was promoted via the City's website, print and social media. To be eligible for an award, applicants were required to submit a detailed digital application to the Economic Development Division. This application required information on their business, income eligibility, and a breakdown of reimbursable expenses, all supported by accompanying documentation. The Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) subsequently reviewed and ranked all applications during a Special Meeting on October 22, 2025.

This initiative advances the City's commitment to inclusive economic mobility, fosters deeper trust with local entrepreneurs, and demonstrates the value of targeted financial tools that create measurable community benefits.

If you have any questions, please contact Porshia Garcia, Community Services Department Director, at [pgarcia@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:pgarcia@fortlauderdale.gov).

c: Shari McCartney, City Attorney  
David R. Soloman, City Clerk  
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