



PEDCO Small Business Startup Support (SBSS) Policy Overview

Vision

Our vision is to create a future where all citizens of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska attain self-sufficiency, are supported to achieve economic growth, and are assisted with the skills to reach their personal and professional goals.

Mission and Purpose

The mission of the PEDCO is to empower Ponca Tribe of Nebraska (PTN) citizens by providing them with the necessary skills, training, and support services for employment and financial sufficiency. PEDCO sets out to accomplish this by the following:

- Develop more fully the academic, occupational, and literacy skills of Ponca Tribe members
- Make such individuals more competitive in the workforce and equip them with entrepreneurial skills necessary for successful self-employment
- Promote the economic and social development of the PTN in accordance with the goals and values of our community
- Provide services in a culturally appropriate manner, consistent with the principles of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 *et seq.*)

PEDCO is committed to providing high-quality services to Ponca Tribal members, including small business startup support, career exploration & guidance, continued support for educational attainment, and opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations. Our ultimate goal is to help tribe members secure a good job along a career pathway or enroll in postsecondary education. PEDCO collaborates with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-Indian and Native American (WIOA-INA) program as well as the Ponca Department of Education to ensure a breadth of workforce and career training options are addressed.

Program Description, Eligibility, and Registration

The PEDCO Small Business Startup Support (SBSS) program offers one-time financial assistance to Ponca Tribe of Nebraska members aged 18 and older to support startup costs directly related to launching a business. To be eligible to receive SBSS services, members must complete a registration form found at www.pedco-ne.org. This form captures demographic information, educational attainment, work experience, interests, and service needs, ensuring participants are served appropriately. Participants must also complete the Indianpreneurship small business curriculum and submit a copy of their

completed business plan, along with proof of Indianpreneurship course completion, to info@pedco-ne.org. For more information, or to sign up for this course, please visit <https://www.thenicc.edu/career-services/TCSBA-Indianpreneurship.php>.

Other appropriate documentation may be required for members seeking support for industry certifications, job training, or continuing career education.

Required Documentation

For all members seeking SBSS services, the following items must be verified and documented to apply:

- First and last name
- Age/date of birth
- Home address
- Business address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Tribal affiliation
- Tribal enrollment number
- Highest level of education achieved
- Employment status
- Job or career interests
- Product or service needed

Small Business Startup Support (SBSS) Services Policy

Regardless of a Ponca Tribe of Nebraska member's location, the PEDCO SBSS program offers one-time payment to a single vendor for approved small business startup costs, operating costs of a business that has been in continuous operation for fewer than three years, corporate licensing fees, industry certifications, testing, books, tuition, continuing education units (CEUs), and other approved costs related to career advancement.

This policy is founded on the following criteria:

- All support services depend on the availability of PEDCO funds.
- The PEDCO SBSS program shall operate as the payer of last resort—in other words, if a member cannot obtain services through another tribal program, they may request one-time assistance of up to \$500 through PEDCO to pay for goods or services from a single vendor.
- Funds may only be provided to Ponca Tribe of Nebraska members who are unable to obtain the services through partner programs that provide such services.
- Eligibility for SBSS funds is contingent upon completion of the request form found at www.pedco-ne.org/SBSS, as well as proof of completion of the Indianpreneurship course and submission of their completed business plan. Members can register for and complete the Indianpreneurship program through the Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) at <https://www.thenicc.edu/career-services/TCSBA-Indianpreneurship.php> or any other Indianpreneurship-certified program.

- Once a copy of the Indianpreneurship certificate of completion and business plan have been received by PEDCO, a single vendor will be issued up to \$500 to support small business applications, licenses, permits, forms, renewal fees, or other approved uses as determined by PEDCO's CEO and Director.
- Members seeking support for industry certifications, CEUs, testing, course materials, and other approved costs should reach out to PEDCO at info@pedco-ne.org to discuss additional documentation requirements.

Participants must complete a request form before they can receive SBSS services.

Support Services Chart

Total Supportive Service Limit: \$500	Payment
Small business development application fees, forms, permits, or licenses; OR tools, certifications, training, or continuing education necessary to operate the business successfully	One payment of <i>up to</i> \$500 to a single vendor per member. Payments will not be made to multiple vendors. No payment will be made to an individual, including the individual requesting support. Payments will ONLY be made to the vendor or the provider of service. Note: members may only request this cost reimbursement once every 365 days from the last date of payment received.

The overall amount of support depends on the availability of PEDCO funds and **cannot exceed \$500 per participant per 365 days.**

SBSS and Payment Process

1. **Pre-Approval:** Ponca Tribe of Nebraska members must submit a request form for support services to PEDCO. If a member's pre-approval request is denied, PEDCO will send the tribal member a denial letter stating why the request is denied.
2. **Completion:** Upon Indianpreneurship course completion, tribal members must submit their completed business plan and a certificate of completion signed by an appropriate Indianpreneurship representative to the PEDCO Director.
3. **Payment:** Approved expenses will be paid directly to the vendor. The member will facilitate contact between PEDCO and the vendor. If the amount exceeds \$500, the participant will be responsible for the remaining balance.

Records Retention

All records and documents will be maintained for PEDCO SBSS program participants and made available for monitoring and review for program auditing purposes. PEDCO agrees to retain these records, subject to audit, for three years following completion of services.

Payment of Annual Fees

PEDCO will not permit any annual renewal fees or membership fees to be placed on file or automatic

renewal fees to be charged to PEDCO's accounts. All online payments must be made using an authorized PEDCO computer and processed in accordance with financial oversight procedures and best practices.

No Advance Member Payments

If a member chooses to pay an annual fee or renewal fee in advance using personal funds, PEDCO will not provide reimbursement for such payments, regardless of demonstrated need.

Member Accountability

PEDCO relies on honesty and integrity in the use of its programs. In prior cases, issues have occurred where members canceled payments after PEDCO had already covered costs. Any unethical or illegal action—including, but not limited to, false representation, misuse of funds, or deliberate cancellation of payments already made by PEDCO—will result in immediate termination of the member's eligibility to receive assistance through PEDCO programs.

Oversight and Review

PEDCO reserves the right to review payment history and member eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Members requesting assistance who are deemed ineligible will receive the reason. This policy may be updated as needed to strengthen safeguards, ensure fairness, and maintain responsible stewardship of program resources.

To receive SBSS services, members must sign a waiver to allow media use of their image and likeness on PEDCO's website, social media accounts, and other promotional materials insofar as they may assist PEDCO with fulfilling its mission to the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. Additionally, the member must provide a written or video-recorded testimonial on how the funds have helped them professionally, as well as a follow-up one year after receiving assistance. Members may also be required to submit pictures that will help PEDCO tell the story of its work. PEDCO will work with members to determine exact documentation requirements and how to submit them.