SBDC BAHAMAS
TURNING VISION INTO VENTURE.

Back To Da' Islands
—INITIATIVE—

FAMILY ISLANDS
Standalone Grant Programme

2026

- Get to Know Da Islands Survey
- Island Access Training Course
- One-on-one Advisory and Technical Support
- Standalone Grant Funding Opportunities

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Initiative Overview

Okay Family Islands, get ready—because you asked for it, and now it's here!

Introducing the Back to Da' Islands Initiative, the first initiative of its kind created specifically for Family Island entrepreneurs. Built with your realities in mind. Designed to help your businesses transition from existing to thriving.

At SBDC Bahamas (SBDC), we understand your needs because we experience them with you. We have Senior Business Advisors stationed across many of your islands. We have endured the constant power outages, water shortages and unreliable internet service that make running a business more difficult than it should be. Yet we have also witnessed your resilience, your creativity and your determination to rise above these challenges and build sustainable businesses, not just for yourselves, but for your families and your communities.

Beginning with some of the country's most underserved Family Islands, SBDC Bahamas is launching the **Get To Know Da Islands Survey** on July 27, 2026. The survey is designed for existing business owners to capture the realities of establishing, operating and growing a business on their respective islands. The information collected will support evidence-based policymaking, strengthen advocacy efforts and inform targeted economic development initiatives that address the unique needs of Family Island entrepreneurs.

The first cohort of the Back To Da Islands Initiative includes businesses located in the Berry Islands, Bimini, San Salvador, Ragged Island, Rum Cay, Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay.

Both existing and startup businesses in the first cohort may submit their standalone grant application between July 27, 2026 and September 10, 2026 to access funding up to $15,000. Each application must include:

- A valid Bahamian passport
- Proof of address
- A 2026 Business License
- An Executive Summary
- Vendor Invoices
- Wire Instructions

All grant applications will be evaluated based on the programme's eligibility criteria and strength of the supporting documents. For approved applicants, grant proceeds will be disbursed directly to vendors with a business bank account in accordance with the approved use of funds.

To be eligible for the standalone grant, applicants in the first cohort are required to complete the **Island Access Training Course** from August 18, 2026 to September 10, 2026 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The course will equip entrepreneurs with insights in tourism opportunities, financial management, digital banking, marketing strategies, export readiness, artificial intelligence and business continuity planning to strengthen the expansion, competitiveness and resilience of businesses throughout the Family Islands.

Targeting the Challenges

We understand that each Family Island is unique in how they do business and the different challenges they face. For Example:

Exuma: *Preparing Local Businesses for Tourism-Led Expansion*

Exuma businesses operate within a rapidly growing tourism market but continue to face high operating costs, and gaps in compliance and financial systems. Small and seasonal markets increase vulnerability to revenue fluctuations and restrict long-term planning.

With the expansion of Exuma's international airport, demand for transportation, accommodations, food services, retail, and excursions is expected to increase significantly.

Cat Island: *Building Readiness for Infrastructure-Driven Growth*

Cat Island entrepreneurs face geographic isolation, limited access to banking and advisory services, and high participation costs in centralized programmes. Small markets and gaps in business readiness further limit access to funding.

The development of Cat Island's new state-of-the-art airport is expected to stimulate tourism, investment, and commercial activity.

Long Island: *Strengthening Business Communication and Investment Readiness*

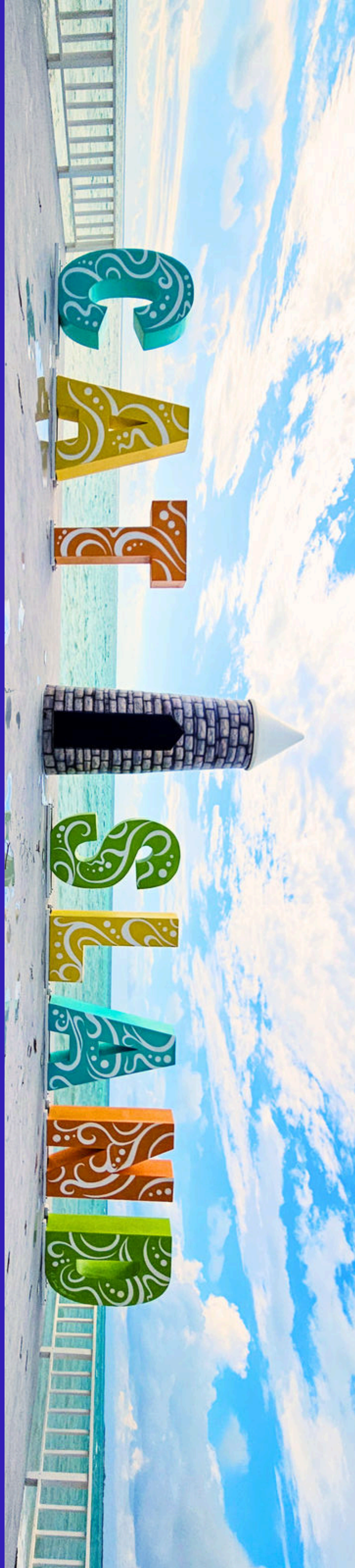
Long Island entrepreneurs are widely recognized for their commitment, resilience, and work ethic. However, many lack formal training in business communication, financial presentation, and investor engagement, limiting their ability to effectively present proposals to funding committees.

Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay (MICAL): *Expanding Markets Through Digital Access*

Entrepreneurs in the southern Family Islands face extreme geographic isolation, high shipping costs, limited supplier networks, and restricted access to advisory services. Small local markets and logistical challenges constrain revenue growth.

This is your moment!

This is your opportunity!



Overview cont'd

Grand Bahama: Expanding Market Access Through Digital Platforms

Grand Bahama businesses continue to face limited local market demand despite strong ideas and operational capacity. Small and fluctuating customer bases restrict revenue growth and discourage long-term investment.

Abaco: Reducing Debt Dependence and Restoring Financial Confidence

Many Abaco entrepreneurs remain burdened by pre-disaster loans secured by assets that were damaged or destroyed without adequate insurance. As a result, businesses are often overleveraged and reluctant to take on additional debt, even when growth opportunities exist.

Eleuthera: Overcoming Collateral Barriers and Preparing for Infrastructure Growth

In Eleuthera, informal and commonage property arrange-ments limit access to acceptable collateral, restricting eligibility for traditional financing even among profitable businesses.

Andros: Improving Accessibility and Reducing Geographic Barriers

Andros entrepreneurs face significant challenges related to geographic distance and limited access to centralized commer-cial areas. Many businesses operate far from major population centres, increasing transportation costs and limiting customer access.

San Salvador: Seasonal Dependence and Limited Economic Diversification

San Salvador's economy depends heavily on the seasonal operations of Club Med, limiting consistent year-round opportunities for local businesses. This reliance creates economic vulnerability and fluctuating income for entrepreneurs. Diversifying the island's business landscape is essential to building sustainable enterprises that can operate independently of seasonal tourism cycles.

Overview cont'd

Bimini- Concentrated Growth and Unequal Opportunity

In Bimini, commercial activity is concentrated in the north near the cruise port, leaving southern communities with fewer economic opportunities. Limited visitor traffic in South Bimini restricts business growth and income potential, highlighting the need for more balanced development across the island.

Berry Islands: High Costs and Structural Constraints

Entrepreneurs in the Berry Islands face high shipping expenses, inconsistent transportation, limited skilled labor, and strong dependence on seasonal tourism. Combined with a small customer base, unreliable infrastructure, and restricted access to banking and financing, these barriers raise operating costs and slow business growth. Targeted support is needed to improve sustainability and reduce pressure on small enterprises.

Island Access Training Course

Practical training. Real tools. Immediate impact.

Training Curriculum

The Island Access Training Course comprises eight sessions designed to equip startup and existing business owners with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to start, grow and sustain successful businesses. The curriculum progresses from identifying emerging economic opportunities to strengthening financial management, marketing, technology adoption, and business resilience, ensuring participants are better prepared to capitalize on new investments and contribute to the long-term development of their islands.

Session 1: Tourism Trends and Emerging Market Opportunities

This session will help entrepreneurs understand how major infrastructural developments, airport expansions, and new or increased direct flights from the United States and Canada are creating economic opportunities across various settlements on their island. Participants will learn how to align their products and services with visitor demand, ensuring their business is positioned to benefit from increased arrivals. The session will also explain how entrepreneurs can partner with the Ministry of Tourism to promote their business through airport terminal displays, roadside signage and the Ministry's website, increasing visibility and attracting both domestic and international visitors.

Session 2: Effective Pricing and Cost Management

Many businesses struggle not because of low sales, but because of poor pricing strategies. This session will teach entrepreneurs how to calculate the true cost of their products, services and experiences, including materials, labor, shipping and overhead. Participants will learn how to set prices that ensure profitability while remaining competitive in the local market.

Session 3: Financial Record Keeping and Analysis

Strong financial management is the foundation of a sustainable business. This session will provide practical tools to help entrepreneurs track sales and expenses, monitor cash flow and understand whether their business is operating profitably. Participants will implement simple financial tracking systems that improve accountability, support better decision-making and strengthen readiness for immediate grant opportunities and future guaranteed loans.

Island Access
Training Cont'd

Session 4: Alternative Banking and Digital Payment Solutions

This session will equip business owners with the knowledge and practical skills to use the Sand Dollar as an effective tool to facilitate customer and supplier payments, reduce reliance on cash transactions and improve cash flow management. Participants will explore best practices for using digital wallets, maintaining electronic payment records and integrating the Sand Dollar into their daily business operations.

Session 5: Branding and Marketing Using Canva

A strong brand improves visibility and customer trust. In this session, entrepreneurs will learn how to use Canva to create professional marketing materials such as social media posts, special offer flyers, price lists and product labels. Participants will leave the session with ready-to-use marketing content that strengthens their brand identity and improves customer engagement.

Session 6: Tingsea Digital Marketplace and Export Opportunities

This session will help entrepreneurs expand beyond their local island markets by leveraging the Tingsea Digital Marketplace and other online sales platforms. Participants will learn how to set up digital storefronts, list their products, services and experiences, as well as prepare their business to reach customers throughout The Bahamas and globally.

Session 7: Artificial Intelligence Tools for Business Productivity

This session will introduce entrepreneurs to simple artificial intelligence tools that can help automate routine business tasks such as writing marketing content, responding to customer inquiries and developing their standard operating procedures. Participants will learn how to use these tools to save time, reduce administrative burden and improve overall productivity.

Session 8: Island Resiliency and Business Continuity Planning

Family Island businesses face unique risks, including hurricanes, supply chain disruptions and utility interruptions. This session will help entrepreneurs develop practical strategies to protect their business during disruptions. Participants will learn how to safeguard financial records, identify backup suppliers, maintain customer communication and prepare recovery plans to ensure business continuity.

One-On-One Support

Advisory Sessions. Application Guidance. Business Advocacy.

Recognizing that every business has unique opportunities and challenges, SBDC Bahamas will provide one-on-one advisory support to all Family Island entrepreneurs participating in the Back To Da Island Initiative. Each participating island will be assigned a dedicated Senior Business Advisor who will serve as the entrepreneur's primary point of contact throughout the initiative.

During these personalized sessions, Senior Business Advisors will assist entrepreneurs with completing their standalone grant application, compiling the required supporting documentation, clarifying concepts covered during the Island Access Training Course, recommending practical strategies to strengthen business operations, facilitating engagement with other support agencies such as the Business Licence Office and the National Insurance Board to resolve critical business matters as well as explaining the full scope of business support services available to them through SBDC. The objective is to ensure that entrepreneurs receive practical, hands-on guidance that extends beyond training and supports the long-term growth and sustainability of their businesses.

While Senior Business Advisors will provide guidance throughout the initiative and may recommend grant applications for approval based on programme engagement and eligibility, all applications will be formally adjudicated in accordance with the programme's assessment criteria. Following the adjudication process, SBDC will issue formal grant decision letters advising business owners of the outcome of their application within two weeks of the application deadline.

Cohort 1 Support Schedule

One-on-one advisory support for startup and existing business owners on the Berry Islands, Bimini, San Salvador, Ragged Island, Rum Cay, Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay will be available from August 18, 2026 to September 10, 2026, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Advisory sessions must be booked at least 48 hours in advance and may be scheduled for either 30 or 60 minutes.

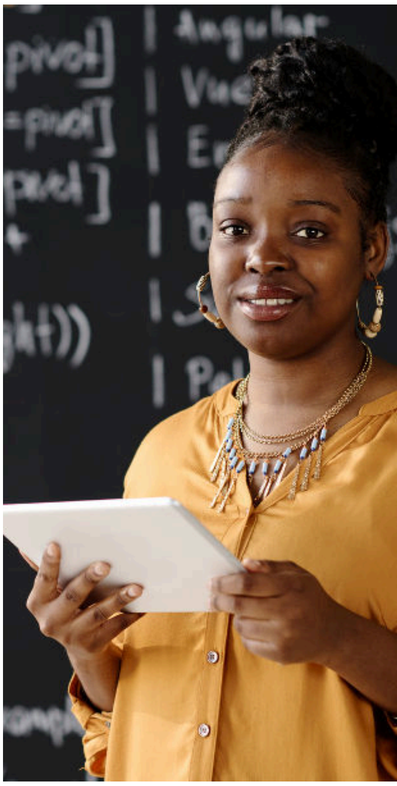
To maximize the impact of the initiative, SBDC will conduct in-person advisory sessions on up to three islands with the highest number of Island Access Training Course participants and standalone grant applications. Where the assigned Senior Business Advisor is not already domiciled on the island, the Advisor will travel for a limited time to provide one-on-one support and will be accompanied by a second SBDC representative who will work alongside the Advisor to provide additional technical guidance and business support. All other advisory sessions will be delivered virtually via Zoho Meeting.

Cohort 2 Support Schedule

The second cohort of the Back To Da Island Initiative will focus on Andros, Eleuthera, Cat Island and Long Island. Existing business owners must complete the Get To Know Da Islands Survey, while both startup and existing business owners will be invited to submit a standalone grant application during a four-week application period, participate in the Island Access Training Course and receive one-on-one advisory support from their assigned Senior Business Advisor. To be considered for grant funding of up to $15,000, applicants must successfully complete the

Targeted Support Cont'd

training course and submit a complete grant application with all required supporting documentation. The launch date for the second cohort will be announced at a later date.



Cohort 3 Support Schedule

The third cohort will focus on Grand Bahama, Abaco and Exuma. Existing business owners must complete the Get To Know Da Islands Survey, while both startup and existing business owners will be invited to submit a standalone grant application during a four-week application period, participate in the Island Access Training Course and receive one-on-one advisory support from their assigned Senior Business Advisor. To be considered for grant funding of up to $15,000, applicants must successfully complete the training course and submit a complete grant application with all required supporting documentation. The launch date for this cohort will be announced at a later date.

Grant Funding Budget Allocation

While participation in the Get To Know Da Islands Survey, Island Access Training Course and one-on-one advisory support is open to an unlimited number of Family Island entrepreneurs, available grant funding is limited. Subject to programme eligibility and available funding, we aim to award up to $1,500,000 in standalone grants to up to 100 businesses across the three cohorts as follows:

- **Cohort 1**: Up to 20 businesses will be awarded a collective maximum of $300,000 in grant funding.
- **Cohort 2**: Up to 40 businesses will be awarded a collective maximum of $600,000 in grant funding.
- **Cohort 3**: Up to 40 businesses will be awarded a collective maximum of $600,000 in grant funding.

Adjudication Criteria

Standalone Grant

To ensure a fair, transparent and competitive assessment process, all standalone grant applications will undergo an adjudication process based on the established eligibility and evaluation criteria. Senior Business Advisors may provide guidance to applicants throughout the initiative; however, they will not participate in the adjudication or decision-making process. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within two weeks of the application deadline.

During the adjudication process, each application will be reviewed to confirm that it is complete. A complete application must include:

- A completed online form
- A valid Bahamian passport
- Proof of address (voter's card or utility bill no older than 3 months)
- A valid 2026 Business License
- An Executive Summary
- Vendor invoices
- Vendor wire instructions (business bank account only)

In addition to submitting their application with all required supporting documents, applicants must also satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- **Business Location**: The business must hold a valid 2026 Business License authorizing it to operate on one of the Family Islands included in the cohort being assessed. Where an applicant has submitted a business license application but has not yet received a copy of the approved license, adjudicators may accept written confirmation from the Business License Office verifying that the application is currently under review or being processed.
- **Business Classification**: The business must qualify as a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise with current or projected annual revenue not exceeding $5,000,000 and a current or projected workforce of 50 employees or fewer.
- **Bahamian Ownership**: Sole proprietors must be Bahamian citizens. Incorporated companies must be at least 51% Bahamian-owned, as verified by a current Register of Shareholders. Where the applicant is an incorporated company, adjudicators will require a current Register of Shareholders and passports of all majority shareholders to confirm the business is at least 51% Bahamian-owned.
- **Training Participation**: All applicants, whether startup or existing business owners, must attend at least six of the eight live Island Access Training Course sessions. As the course is designed to facilitate real-time engagement with instructors, recordings will not ordinarily be provided. Recordings will be made available only in exceptional circumstances where a participating island experiences widespread internet connectivity issues that prevent entrepreneurs from attending the live session.
- **Survey Participation**: Existing business owners must complete the Get To Know Da Islands Survey, which is intended to gather insights from entrepreneurs with firsthand experience operating a business on their island. Startup business owners are exempt from this requirement.
- **Loan Status**: Applicants must not have any delinquent loans previously obtained through SBDC Bahamas at the time of adjudication.
- **Previous Grant Recipients**: Entrepreneurs who previously received SBDC grant funding may reapply; however, preference will be given to first-time grant recipients to broaden access to funding across The Bahamas.

Adjudication Criteria
Standalone Grant Cont'd

Executive Summary Requirements

All applicants must submit an Executive Summary addressing the following 10 components. Each component will be scored out of 10 points, for a maximum total score of 100 points.

- **Value Proposition**: Explain the products or services offered and what makes the business unique or valuable to customers.
- **Target Customers**: Identify the primary customers whose needs or wants the business's products or services are designed to satisfy.
- **Distribution Channels**: Explain the channels the business uses to ensure its products or services are readily available and accessible to its target customers.
- **Marketing Strategy**: Explain how the business attracts, retains and communicates with current and/or potential customers.
- **Competitor Analysis**: Identify the business's direct and indirect competitors as well as explain how the business differentiates itself.
- **Strategic Partnerships**: Describe the key partnerships or collaborations that currently support or have the potential to support the long-term success of the business.
- **Community Impact**: Describe the business's current or anticipated positive impact on the local community through job creation, economic activity or other meaningful contributions.
- **Business Continuity**: Describe how the business will prepare for and recover from disruptions such as hurricanes, supply chain interruptions or other unforeseen events.
- **Use of Funds**: Clearly explain how the requested grant funding will be spent and how it will support the growth or sustainability of the business.
- **Financial Projections**: Summarize the expected sales, expenses and profitability of the business over the next three years, demonstrating that the business is financially viable.

Application Steps

1. Complete Get to Know Da' Islands Survey
(Existing businesses only)

2. Complete Online Grant Application Form
(Existing and startup businesses)

3. Complete Island Access Training Course
(Existing and startup businesses)

4. Meet with Assigned Business Advisor
(Existing and startup businesses)

Standalone Grant

Approved Use of Funds

The Bahamas has not experienced this level of simultaneous island development in modern history. The purpose of the standalone grant programme dedicated to the Family Islands, is to help residents launch new businesses or expand existing ones to meet the demands of rapidly growing local economies. With increased infrastructure investment, rising visitor arrivals and population growth across multiple islands, entrepreneurs are uniquely positioned to supply products and services that will support and benefit from this expansion.

To help seize these opportunities, eligible businesses may apply for grant funding of up to $15,000 for the following approved uses:

- Land acquisition directly related to business operations
- Building construction or facility renovation
- Leasehold improvements and interior buildout
- Storefront signage and exterior branding
- Security systems, including cameras and alarm systems
- Production equipment and raw materials
- Office equipment, including computers, printers, and scanners
- Utility and connectivity equipment (eg. generator and starlink)
- Solar batteries, charging stations, inverters, and related equipment
- Company furniture and fixtures
- Business incorporation or renewal fees
- Digital payment systems and point-of-sale technology
- Financial accounting software and bookkeeping services
- Insurance coverage, including property, liability, and vehicle insurance
- Website development and e-commerce integration
- Marketing campaigns, including digital and traditional advertising
- Branding materials, including logo design, product labels, and price lists
- Initial storefront inventory and replenishment stock
- Packaging materials to support retail and export readiness
- Company vehicle and wrapping for business promotion
- Industry-specific training, certifications, and licensing