



### Chamber to Award **three** \$2,000 Small Business Saturday Grants in November, Competition Centers around Hashtag Contest

On November 1st the GVCC, in partnership with Columbia Credit Union, will kick off a social media hashtag competition for **three** \$2,000 Small Business Saturday Grant. Competition for the “best post” starts on November 1st and ends on Small Business Saturday which is November 24<sup>th</sup> this year. Every GVCC Member with 15 full time employees or less can enroll in our small business Saturday grant program at no additional cost (good standing membership required). The hashtag contest is designed to give every participating member a marketing push - regardless if they earn the grant via best post or not.

The hashtag contest is the perfect opportunity to ask your past clients to share about your business on social media. Think of the hashtag contest as a marketing framework that you can utilize to push fourth quarter marketing efforts. If you’re a retail business it can help you launch the “shop local” holiday shopping season; if you’re a service business, you can reach out to vendors, clients, and employees to share about your services using the hashtag. If you’re a restaurant, you can take advantage of all the free collateral you’ll receive like: counter cards, buttons, and flyers to get the word out about the hashtag contest. One of the best uses of the hashtag contest to-date is a direct email to past clients asking them to share about their experiences with your business on social media. ***This brings forth valuable testimonials on facebook, twitter, and Instagram that positively promote your business - and they simultaneously enter you into win the \$2,000 Small Business Saturday Grant.***

**2015 Small Business Saturday Grant recipient: Nexus Chiropractic**  
*Won via a testimonial post from patient*

**2016 Small Business Saturday Grant recipient: Maddogs Gourmet Hot Dogs**  
*Won via a community partner post by Innovative Services NW*

**2017 Small Business Saturday Grant Recipient: Sweet Spot Skirts & Funky Fresh Juice Co.**  
*Won via customer testimonial and spouse of owner testimonial*

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## Ideas to gain social media entries to win the Grant

*Encourage hashtag posts for the chance to earn one of three \$2,000 Small Business Saturday Grants*



- 1. Work with fellow Chamber members and share stories of collaboration and/or admiration**
  - Last year Stephanie Lynn of Sweet Spots Skirts used the list of members in this program and posted about each one she's interacted with at events, chamber functions, etc. She filled the tagboard with posts and used her social media power to promote local businesses – a fantastic idea!
- 2. Distribute the GVCC's free collateral like counter cards and buttons and give them out with sales recipients to customers. This will start a dialogue about vying for the grant**
  - This is how our 2016 Small Business Saturday grant recipient won last year! They made our hashtag contest counter cards available at the register. The Innovative Services NW rep took one after a meeting and sat in his car and reflected on his positive relationship of placing two workers with special needs at Maddogs Gourmet Hot Dogs and he posted from the heart.
- 3. Run a social media contest of your own to coincide with the hashtag contest**
  - Randomly award \$5 gift cards to people making posts on your behalf with the GVCC's hashtag
  - You might be thinking this is ideal for coffee shops, but it's perfect for services businesses as well. For example: a dental clinic could give each patient a counter card about the contest and explain that they're giving away a one fabulous prize to a random patient that posts on their behalf. It could even be a prize of an existing service, like teeth whitening or a \$200 airline gift card.
- 4. Send a direct email to past customers/clients asking them to share about your past interactions/successes. Clearly asking them to make the post public and include the hashtag.**
  - From years past, this has been the most effective way to gain multiple posts about your business on social media.
- 5. Post yourself!**
  - Don't forget about the power of your own social media followers! Explain to people that you're vying for the grant and clearly tell the story of how they can help you win the \$2,000 Small Business Saturday Grant.

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