



# 2026 Business Awards Program

The Meszaros Charitable Fund *New Business Award* recognizes entrepreneurial endeavors that demonstrate exceptional potential for growth and community impact. This award aims to provide support to entrepreneurs who are not only creating jobs within the community, but also contributing to the local economy with unique business models.

For 2026, the top award is \$10,000. Due to IRS regulations award recipients will receive a 1099 showing the award amount as taxable income.

## Purpose of the Program

**Encourages Entrepreneurship:** As a core purpose, the Meszaros Charitable Fund promotes and supports entrepreneurial endeavors of local and regional small business owners in the name of the late Gary “Moe” Meszaros, an entrepreneur who was never afraid to take a “leap of faith.” The New Business Award recognizes the commitment made when embarking on an entrepreneurial journey.

**Builds a Supportive Professional Network:** In addition to a monetary award, Business Award recipients will receive a network of professional resources, many of which may aid in accelerating the growth of the business.

**Promotes Growth:** The Meszaros Charitable Fund supports local businesses that are actively engaged in the community, promoting growth both economically and socially. The Business Award Program supports business models that stimulate economy – in profitability, in creating jobs, and in making a positive impact in the community.

**Inspires Others:** Much like Moe’s entrepreneurial legacy, success stories inspire budding entrepreneurs and highlight the large impact that small businesses can make on economic growth.

## Basic Requirements - New Business Award

- Must have an EIN number.
- Must be your primary source of income for at least one year, but no more than three.
- Must have a physical location; not resale through another business. The business may be run out of your home. No direct sales or franchises.
- Business must be located in Mercer, Lawrence, Trumbull or Mahoning County to be eligible to apply.
- Must be a for-profit business.
- Should have a business plan going out five years.
- Must attend the Meszaros FUNd Feast event.
- Previous recipients are not eligible.

If you meet these requirements, please complete the application and return it by **May 15, 2026**. Review of applications will begin after the application deadline and recipients notified after May 29. Finalists will be invited to an in-person interview with a select panel of judges July 14. Top recipients will represent their business during the annual FUNd Feast event on August 13. Awards will be presented at this time.

Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_



# 2026 New Business Award Questionnaire

## 2026 Important Dates

**May 15**—Applications Due (either by email or postmarked)

**May 29**—Finalists Notified

**July 14**—In Person Judging Presentations

**August 13**—Meszaros FUNd Feast. Award recipients must attend and have a display set up by 3 pm and be available to meet and greet attendees until 8 pm.

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet(s) of paper:

1. Provide a brief explanation of your business.
2. What inspired you to create your business?
3. How many employees do you have, including yourself?
4. How can your business positively impact the community?
5. How did you raise the initial investment to open your business?
6. Provide a rough outline of your business plan.
7. What social media platforms do you currently use to promote your business? Please provide the links.
8. Provide any additional information that you believe the committee should know about you and your business.

### Return to:

Meszaros Charitable Fund, PO Box 1135, Hermitage PA 16148

or

info@moesfund.org

**Questions:** info@moesfund.org