

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

# Community First® Accelerate Grants for Small Business (Accelerate Grants)



## Overview

From promoting entrepreneurship and resilience to supporting the local supply chain, small businesses play an essential role in their community. Accelerate Grants help small businesses in Illinois and Wisconsin grow and develop, creating economic opportunity in the communities FHLBank Chicago members proudly serve. In 2024, FHLBank Chicago will award grants up to \$30,000 per small business. Participating FHLBank Chicago members can submit up to two applications in partnership with up to two small businesses in the 2024 funding round.

## Timeline

| Important Dates          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Application Round Opens  | June 3, 2024       |
| Application Round Closes | September 30, 2024 |
| Awards Announcement      | Rolling Awards     |

Expenses Must be Incurred June 3, 2024 - December 31, 2025

## Eligible Applicants

Eligible small businesses applicants must:

- Be a for-profit entity
- Be headquartered in either Illinois or Wisconsin
- Have been established under its current ownership for at least 12 months prior to application date
- Have an annual gross revenue of \$1 million or less
- Have had a business relationship with the member for at least 12 months prior to application date
- Be in a business sector that directly contributes to community-building.

Residential projects, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities are not eligible to apply for grant funding. Additionally, small

businesses that received awards in past years may not apply for another grant unless they have deployed all previously awarded funds, received disbursement, and completed all post-award impact reporting or the first impact report due if a 2023 grant recipient.

## Eligible Uses of Funds\*

Grants are intended to strengthen a Recipient's financial position, operational efficiency, and/or human capital. Recipients may use Accelerate Grants for the following purposes:

- Purchase or improvement of property
- Machinery, tools, or equipment
- Inventory, materials, or supplies
- Workforce development or training
- Technology

\*Ineligible uses of grant funding include, but are not limited to: Salaries, wages, stipends, and/or benefits for new or existing interns and/or staff; litigation costs/expenses

## Application Process

FHLBank Chicago members identify small businesses that are making a difference in their community. Through the eBanking platform, members will access, complete, and submit the application. The application and grant agreement will be sent to an authorized member contact and small business contact to be executed via DocuSign. A member's credit rating may impact their ability to be awarded a grant. Please contact your Sales Director if you have any concerns.



**FHLBank**  
Chicago

## Evaluation Criteria

FHLBank Chicago will evaluate applications based on the eligibility requirements outlined above and the program priorities outlined below. **All six eligibility requirements and one program priority are mandatory for the small business to receive a grant.**

### Threshold Requirements

- The application is completed thoroughly, and is electronically signed by both the small business applicant and FHLBank Chicago member applicant
- FHLBank Chicago member submits the application in partnership with and on behalf of the small business
- Small business applicants propose eligible uses of funds
- FHLBank Chicago member provides a narrative that speaks to why they selected that small business

### Program Priorities

- **Low- to Moderate-Income:** Small business is located in a census tract below 100% Area Median Income.
- **Diverse Ownership:** Small business is more than 50% owned, controlled, and operated by one or more individuals meeting the following criteria: Minority, woman, disabled, veteran, service-disabled veteran, and/or LGBTQ+.
- **Member Involvement:** The member applicant is providing a matching grant of at least 10% of grant application amount.
- **Completion of a Small Business Course:** Small business owner has participated in a qualifying small business course in the last five years.
- **Community Involvement:** Small business employs a minimum of 50% local residents residing within 10 miles of business location.
- **Physical Presence:** Small business operates storefront location or plans to use funds to establish storefront.
- **Living Wage:** Small business provides a livable minimum wage of at least \$20 per hour to all full-time employees.
- **Use of Funds:** Small business uses funds to increase net worth.

## Grant Agreement

When application is submitted, FHLBank Chicago will distribute a Grant Agreement to FHLBank Chicago member and small businesses via DocuSign. The grant recipient, FHLBank Chicago member, and FHLBank Chicago must all execute the Grant Agreement to make it effective.

## Disbursement

Grant funds will be disbursed upfront and in full to the FHLBank Chicago member through their Daily Investment Deposit (DID) account. Grant recipients receive funds from the FHLBank Chicago member. Members will be responsible for disbursing funds in accordance with the Grant Agreement and internal procedures and will certify that funds were used in accordance with approved uses.

## Impact Reporting

Grant recipients are required to submit impact reports. Reporting requirements include, at a minimum, a narrative describing progress and outcomes in addition to expense reporting detailing uses of funds. Reporting forms will be provided to all grant recipients.

## Questions

An application webinar will be available at [fhlbc.com/accelerate-grants](https://fhlbc.com/accelerate-grants) and a post-award webinar will be posted for members receiving awards. For questions and technical assistance, please contact Community Investment at [ci@fhlbc.com](mailto:ci@fhlbc.com).

## Marketing

By completing an application, the Member and small business permit the Bank to include the name and/or logo of the Member and small business in any publicity released by the Bank related to the program.



**FHLBank**  
Chicago



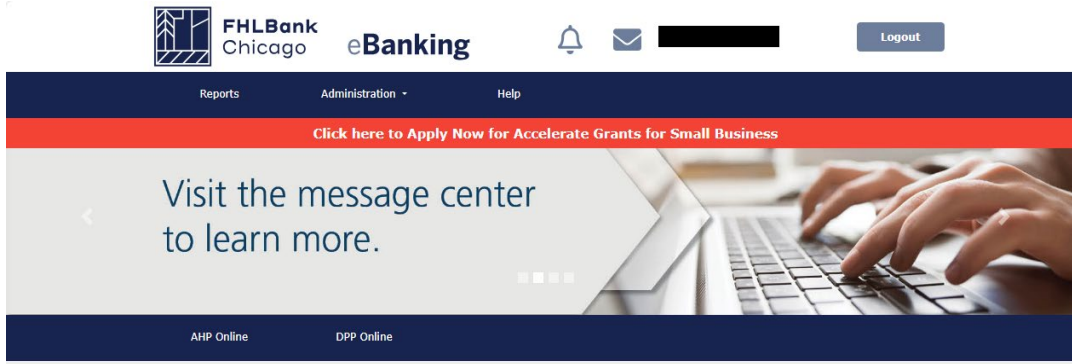
FHLBank  
Chicago

# Community First® Accelerate Grants for Small Business (Accelerate Grants) Application Instructions for Members

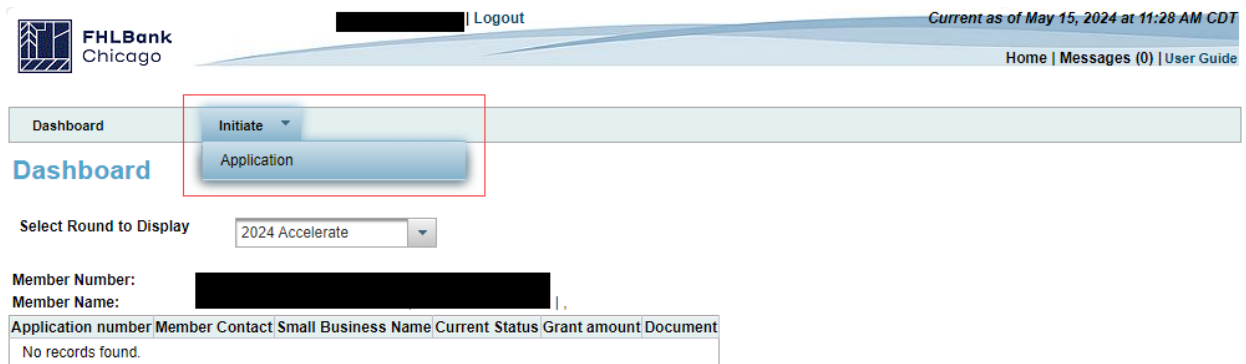
- Before beginning application, please collect the following documentation from the small business to verify eligibility/priorities:
  - Articles of Incorporation
  - Most recent tax return
  - MBE/WBE documentation, if applicable (Minority/Women Business Enterprise)
  - Payroll information
  - Small Business Intake Form – Found on our [website](#)
- To complete and submit the application, sign into FHLBank Chicago's eBanking platform.
  - Fill in all required information from the Small Business Intake Form.
  - Select a member contact with authorization to Execute Legal Agreements (ELA) from the drop down.
  - The agreement will automatically be sent through DocuSign to the authorized signer and small business contact after the application is complete and submitted in the eBanking platform.
- Ensure the small business meets all eligibility requirements listed on page 1 of this document before beginning the application process. The member is responsible for verifying eligibility and maintaining documentation.
  - Documentation used does **NOT** need to be provided to FHLBank Chicago.
  - **It is mandatory a small business meets all 6 eligibility requirements and at least 1 program priority to receive the grant.**
  - A member's credit rating may impact their ability to be awarded a grant. Please contact your Sales Director if you have any concerns.

## Accessing the Application Instructions:

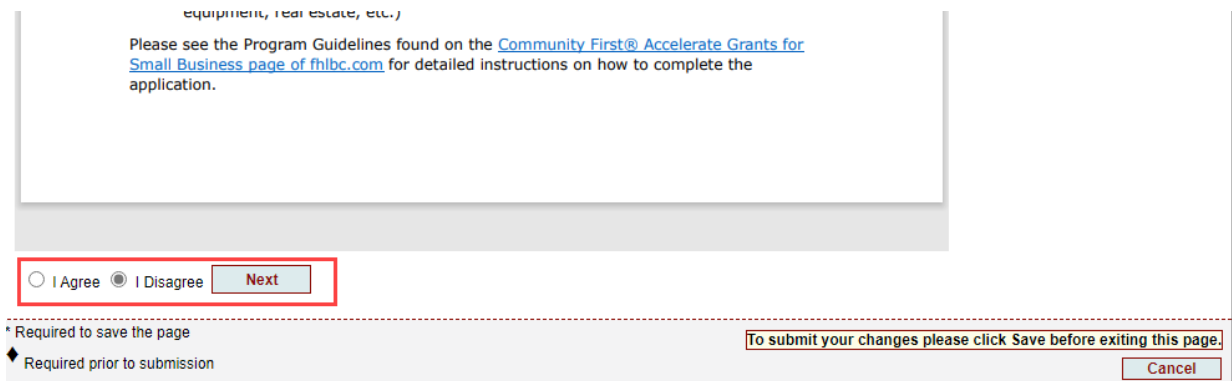
- Log onto the eBanking platform. Navigate to the Home screen and click on the red banner.



- Select "Application" from the "Initiate" drop-down.



- Review instructions and verify the small business applicant is eligible for the grant program. Once verified, select "I Agree" and "Next" to continue.



**Section by Section Instructions:** Items with \* are provided by the small business via the Small Business Intake Form

- **FHLBank Chicago Member Institution Information**
  - Information will be automatically populated by the system.
- **\*Small Business Applicant Information**
  - **Business Name:** Full name of business, may also add a DBA
  - **Business Address line 1:** Address of business headquarters
  - **Business Address line 2:** Suite, unit number, etc of small business if applicable
  - **Zip Code:** 5-digit Zip Code of small business headquarters
  - **Zip+4:** Additional 4-digit Zip Code of small business headquarters, Zip+4 may be found on the [USPS website](#), **select Lookup after entering**
  - **City, County, State, Congressional District, Census Tract, CBSA:** Information will automatically populated by the system after selecting Lookup
  - **Owner Name(s):** Name(s) of all business owners, Owner Name 1 will be considered the small business primary contact
  - **Contact Email/Phone:** Information of main contact – only 1 collected, should correspond with Owner Name 1 above
- **Grant Amount:**
  - Choose \$30,000 if completing one application for one small business, choose \$15,000 if completing two applications for two different small businesses. No other grant amounts are available.
- **Eligibility Requirements: (All 6 requirements mandatory to receive grant)**
  - **For-profit entity:** Verify with Articles of Incorporation
  - **Headquartered in IL or WI:** Verify with Articles of Incorporation
  - **Established under current ownership for at least 12 months prior to application date:** Verify with Articles of Incorporation and/or most recent tax return
  - **Annual gross revenue of \$1 million or less in 2023:** Verify with prior year tax returns or P&L statement if prior year tax return is unavailable
  - **Business relationship with the member for at least 12 months prior to application date:** Verify with member records/internal system
  - **Small business directly contributes to community-building:** Small business must fit into one sector listed. Choose applicable sector. See examples below.
    - **Housing/Real Estate** – real estate agents, property management companies

- **Construction Trades** – plumbers, electricians, carpenters
  - **Healthcare** – doctor’s office, home healthcare services, dentists, elder care programs
  - **Education/Day Care** – tutoring, early childhood education, computer training
  - **Community Services** – personal care services, carwashes, laundromat, pet care
  - **Food Services** – caterers, restaurants, coffee shops
  - **Agriculture** – nurseries, farms, orchards
  - **Arts/Entertainment/Recreation** – theatre companies, fitness centers, sports facilities
  - Retail Trade – grocery stores, convenience stores, hardware stores, pharmacies
- **Program Priorities (At least 1 priority mandatory to receive grant). Select all that apply in the application module.**
    - **Census tract below 100% Area Median Income:** Check FFIEC website: [FRB Census Geocoder \(ffiec.gov\)](https://ffiec.gov)
      - Use 2023 as the Year
      - The below example qualifies as Tract Median Family Income % (90.66) is less than 100%

FFIEC Year: 2023 Address: 5604 W Eastwood Ave, Chicago, IL, 60630, USA

| Matched Address |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Address         | 5604 W Eastwood Ave, Chicago, Illinois, 60630 |
| MSA/MD Code     | 16984   |
| State Code      | 17  |
| County Code     | 031   |
| Tract Code      | 1504.01                                       |
| MSA/MD Name     | CHICAGO-NAPERVILLE-EVANSTON, IL               |
| State Name      | ILLINOIS                                      |
| County Name     | COOK COUNTY                                   |

User Select Tract

Census Demographic Data

Address: 5604 W Eastwood Ave, Chicago, Illinois, 60630  
MSA-State-County-Tract: 16984-17-031-1504.01

| Census  | Income       | Population | Housing |
|---|--------------|------------|---------|
| Tract Income Level  | Middle       |            |         |
| Underserved or Distressed Tract                             | No           |            |         |
| 2023 FFIEC Estimated MSA/MD/non-MSA/MD Median Family Income | \$109,800    |            |         |
| 2023 Estimated Tract Median Family Income                   | \$99,545     |            |         |
| 2020 Tract Median Family Income                             | \$83,974     |            |         |
| <b>Tract Median Family Income %</b>                         | <b>90.66</b> |            |         |
| Tract Population  | 4681         |            |         |
| Tract Minority %  | 42.43        |            |         |
| Tract Minority Population                                   | 1986         |            |         |
| Owner-Occupied Units  | 990          |            |         |
| 1- to 4- Family Units                                       | 1503         |            |         |

- **\*More than 50% owned, controlled, and operated by one or more individual meeting the following criteria: Woman, Disabled, Veteran, LGBTQ+, Service-Disabled Veteran:** If Yes is chosen, check one or multiple boxes of applicable categories that pop-up.
  - Member can collect MBE/WBE certificates, review articles of incorporation and/or tax returns, and can accept a self-certification for LGBTQ+ identity

- **\*More than 50% owned, controlled, and operated by one or more individual identifying as a racial/ethnic minority:** If Yes is chosen, select one or multiple boxes of applicable categories that pop-up. This can be through owner self-certification.
- **\*Member applicant providing matching grant of at least 10% of grant application amount:** Verify that any member contribution is at minimum 10% (minimum \$1,500 or \$3,000 depending on grant amount chosen) of the grant request.
  - **Member contribution amount:** Log the dollar amount that will be provided to the small business from the member (not including the grant funds from FHLBank Chicago)
- **\*Participated in a qualifying small business course in the last five years:** Verify that a small business course has been completed since June 3, 2019.
  - Members may use their discretion. Examples include a class at a local college, a small business administration course, and an on-line course that results in a certificate.
- **\*Employs a minimum of 50% local residents:** Verify small business employs a minimum of 50% local residents residing within 10 miles of business location. This can be through payroll information or owner self-certification.
- **\*Operates storefront location or plans to use funds to establish storefront:** Verify through inspection that small business operates storefront location or plans to use funds to establish storefront.
- **\*Provides a livable minimum wage:** Small business provides a livable minimum wage of at least \$20 per hour to all full-time employees. Verified through payroll information.
- **\*Uses funds to increase net worth:** Small business uses funds to increase net worth by purchasing capital items.
  - Examples include equipment, real estate, etc.
  - Funds used as a downpayment on a building would increase net worth, however, funds used for rent would not.
- **\*Location of Small Business Headquarters:** Choose Rural or Urban
  - Rural area is defined as either (a) a unit of general local government with a population of 25,000 or less; (b) an unincorporated area outside a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA); or (c) an unincorporated area outside a MSA that qualifies for housing assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture.
- **\*Use of Grant Funds:** Choose category that small business plans on using grant funds for. Please choose all that apply. See examples below.
  - **Purchase or improvement of property:** Downpayment for storefront, commercial buildings, upgrading to handicap accessible, exterior building improvements and renovations

- **Machinery, Tools, Equipment:** Trucks, work vehicles, industrial restaurant equipment, tree trimming tools
  - **Inventory, Materials, Supplies:** Office supplies, flowers for flower shop, hair or nail products for salon, building materials for contractor
  - **Workforce Development or Training:** Food safety training, conferences related to industry. (NOTE: Salaries are **NOT** eligible use of grant funds)
  - **Technology:** Computers, software, electronic POS system
- **\*Year the business was founded:** Year the business was originally established, even if under different ownership.
  - **Length of relationship with member institution:** Years and months the small business has had an established relationship with you, the member. Months field should be 11 or less. Anything 12 or over should be included in Years field. Months is a required field, 0 is an option.
  - **\*Current # of employees:** Combined total of full-time and part-time employees currently employed by small business
  - **\*Number of jobs to be created due to grant:** Number of jobs the small business is anticipating adding due to receiving grant funds, zero is acceptable
  - **\*Business description:** Two to five sentences describing the industry the business is in and what they do.
  - **\*How will funds be used and what impact will that have on the business:** Three to five sentences at a minimum detailing how grant funds will be used and what impact the small business anticipates the funds providing.
  - **Why small business was chosen and their impact on the community:** Three to five sentences at a minimum detailing why the member chose to apply on behalf of the small business and what impact the small business has on the community.



- **When application is complete, please select Save at the bottom of the page.**

information

*When all application information has been provided, you will see a green check mark on the Application Home Page. To submit the application, you MUST select an ELA (a contact verified to Execute Legal Agreements through eBanking) via the drop-down menu on the Application Home page and select "SUBMIT".*

\* Required to save the page To submit your changes please click Save before exiting this page.

◆ Required prior to submission

If application is not complete, information may still be saved if Business Name, Zip Code, Zip+4, Owner Name 1, Contact Email, Contact Phone, and Grant Amount fields have been completed. You may come back to the application at a later date to complete. When re-entering the system, you will land on the Dashboard. Please click on the Application Number listed that you would like to access. You may then click on the Accelerate Grant Application Info.

**FHLBank Chicago** | Logout Current as of May 15, 2024

Home | Messa

---

Dashboard Initiate ▾

### Dashboard

Select Round to Display:  ▾

Member Number:

Member Name:

| Application number                                 | Member Contact                                    | Small Business Name                               | Current Status                                 | Grant amount  | Document |
|--|---|---|--|---|----------|
| <input type="text" value="Search"/><br><b>1106</b> | <input type="text" value="Search"/><br>██████████ | <input type="text" value="Search"/><br>██████████ | <input type="text" value="Search"/><br>Pending | <input type="text" value="Search"/><br>\$ 15,000.00 |          |

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries <  >

Application ▾ Dashboard

## Application Home

Member Institution [REDACTED]  
Business Name [REDACTED]  
Grant Requested \$ 15,000.00  
Application Status Pending  
Round Name 2024 Accelerate

Instruction Page

| Description                       | Status |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Accelerate Grant Application Info | ✓      |

**Application Status**

*If no ELA is listed, please contact Community Investment at ci@fhbc.com. The ELA and small business primary contact will receive an email via DocuSign to execute the grant agreement and application. Once each party has signed, it may take up to 1 hour for the correct status to be reflected in the system.*

ELA Member Contact: ?

- ✗ Not Visited
- ✓ In Progress
- ✓ Complete
- 👤 Modified by Community Investment Group staff
- ? Pending Clarification
- ? Clarification Addressed
- 🛑 Data corrected by CID staff outside of terminal status

- **Once all application information is entered you may click on the Application dropdown at the top of the page and select Application Home.** The Status will show a green check mark when all required information is entered. Select an ELA Member Contact (a member contact authorized through eBanking to execute legal agreements) from the dropdown who you want to sign the grant agreement on behalf of your institution. Then select Submit.

The screenshot shows the 'Application' dropdown menu with 'Application Home' selected. Below it, an 'Information' box displays the message: 'Your changes have been saved to the system.' with a green checkmark icon.

## Application Home


Member Institution [REDACTED]  
 Business Name [REDACTED]  
 Grant Requested \$ 15,000.00  
 Application Status Pending  
 Round Name 2024 Accelerate

 Instruction Page

| Description                       | Status |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Accelerate Grant Application Info | ✓      |

**Application Status**






*If no ELA is listed, please contact Community Investment at ci@fhlbc.com. The ELA and small business primary contact will receive an email via DocuSign to execute the grant agreement and application. Once each party has signed, it may take up to 1 hour for the correct status to be reflected in the system.*

ELA Member Contact: \* 

The submitter, with full authority on behalf of the member, hereby certify that:  
 All information provided within the application is true and accurate; all necessary steps were taken to ensure its accuracy; including

1. Exercise of a due diligence program.
2. The applicant meets the requirements of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago's Community First® Accelerate Grants for Small Business.
3. The applicant is a customer of the member, and the member is unaware of any unresolved acts of fraud, nor any criminal, civil, or administrative proceedings involving the applicant or the actions of its employees while acting in their professional capacity.

By submitting this application, the Member permits the Bank to include the name and/or logo of the Member, Recipient, and/or any third party engaged by the Member or the Recipient in any Publicity released by the Bank related to the program.

-  Not Visited
-  In Progress
-  Complete
-  Modified by Community Investment Group staff
-  Pending Clarification
-  Clarification Addressed

- **Once the application has been submitted, the completed application and the grant agreement will be emailed to the selected ELA contact and small business owner to be fully executed via DocuSign.** The representative completing the application should notify the ELA and small business owner they will receive the documents via DocuSign. Once the agreement is fully executed, an additional DocuSign email receipt will be sent to the ELA and small business signer.
- **FHLBank Chicago will review applications and clarify outstanding questions.** Upon approval, grant funds will be disbursed to members' DID Accounts beginning in mid-July. Applications submitted after mid-July will be funded on a rolling basis.

- **Questions:** Please contact your FHLBank Chicago Sales Director or email the Community Investment department at ci@fhlbc.com with any follow-up questions.

## Troubleshooting:

- **Yellow Check Mark:** If you believe you have completed your application, but the status is showing a yellow checkmark (In Progress), review your application for incomplete information. The system will show a yellow checkmark when required fields are not completed, however, the system will not alert you to which fields are incomplete.

## Accelerate Grant Application Info

**Information**

- Your changes have been saved to the system. ✓

FHLBank Chicago | Logout | Current as of May 15, 2024 at 11:49 AM CDT

Home | Messages (0) | User Guide

Application Id: 1106  
Member Contact: [Redacted]

Application | Dashboard

### Application Home

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Member Institution | [Redacted]      |
| Business Name      | [Redacted]      |
| Grant Requested    | \$ 15,000.00    |
| Application Status | Pending         |
| Round Name         | 2024 Accelerate |

[Instruction Page](#)

| Description                       | Status |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Accelerate Grant Application Info | ✓      |

**Application Status**

*If no ELA is listed, please contact Community Investment at ci@fhlbc.com. The ELA and small business primary contact will receive an email via DocuSign to execute the grant agreement and application. Once each party has signed, it may take up to 1 hour for the correct status to be reflected in the system.*

ELA Member Contact: ?

- ✗ Not Visited
- ✓ In Progress
- ✓ Complete
- 👤 Modified by Community Investment Group staff
- ? Pending Clarification
- ? Clarification Addressed
- ⚠ Data corrected by CID staff outside of terminal status

- **Missing ELA:** If the ELA Member Contact field does not contain any names, the member does any employees available to sign the grant agreement. A new ELA contact needs to be set up in eBanking. If you need help, contact Member Product Support at 855.345.2244, Option 0.

ELA Member Contact: \* 

The submitter, with full authority  on behalf of the member, here  
All information provided within the application is accurate and all necessary steps were taken