

Storefront Revitalization Grant FAQ

Program Goal: Helping businesses repair, rebuild, and pivot toward opportunities that will sustain operations through the coming months and years.

It is DRA's intention to be as inclusive as possible with this program. In addition to reading the following FAQs, we encourage you to re-read the program overview found [HERE](#).

1. How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

This grant is meant to be open and accessible to as many businesses as possible, within the goal stated previously. As described [here](#), there are some specific qualifications; however, some qualifications are more flexible than others. Here are some notes to help you as you complete your application.

If you are still unsure about your eligibility after reading all of the FAQ and program details, we encourage you to reach out directly with questions. We are here to help you think through your proposal and application. We will take the entirety of your application into consideration during the grant review process. Proposals that show a clear vision and path to revitalization of the downtown area will have the greatest chance of being granted.

Your business must be a storefront or consumer-facing business with a physical location in Downtown Raleigh. A business is eligible to apply if it is inside the downtown element boundary OR inside any of the district boundaries as depicted in this [map](#). Retailers, restaurants, and personal services not located on the ground floor are still eligible to apply. If you are unsure if your business is within the eligible grant boundary, email us for determination (roxannelundy@downtownraleigh.org).

What if my business opened on or after May 30, 2020?

New businesses that opened on or after May 30, 2020 are eligible to apply. However, businesses open prior to May 30, 2020 will be given priority with relation to this grant round.

What if my business is closed due to state and/or federal mandates?

If your business is closed due to state and/or federal mandates, you are eligible to apply. However, proposals contingent on restrictions being lifted may affect the review committee's scoring priority of your application.

The business must currently have 50 employees or fewer

The intention of this requirement is to focus support on small and independent businesses. If you believe your situation meets this intent, you are encouraged to apply and make a case for consideration.

2. What is the process for reviewing and scoring the applications?

Efficiency, independence, and expedited fund dispersal to businesses are the top priorities of DRA with relation to this grant. DRA will conduct several rounds of application review, with both DRA staff and an independent committee, to ensure grants are awarded to proposals that are within the spirit of the grant.

DRA also reserves the right to look at total funds requested vs. funds available and make determinations regarding award amounts. See FAQ Question 3.

3. How is the total award calculated?

Awards will be granted based on (1) the proposed budget submitted in the application, and (2) the availability of funds.

The entire pool of funds set aside for this program is \$125,000. Maximum awarded grant amounts are \$5,000 for “pivot” requests, and \$2,500 for repair requests per application. A single proposal may include both types of requests, but repair requests may not exceed \$2,500 and the overall total request may not exceed \$5,000.

In order to be as inclusive as possible, total amount granted will be capped at \$10,000 for owners who have multiple businesses. For owners with partial or full ownerships of several businesses in the downtown area, you are welcome to submit more applications but are required to fully disclose your ownership of other businesses on each application, along with your top priorities for funding because no more than two will be awarded.

Grant awards amounts will be determined by a number of considerations including:

- If there are aspects of your application request that are deemed ineligible, but other aspects that are eligible, your award offer may be for less than requested.
- Funding requests to partially cover the cost of a project that exceed the maximum award amounts are allowed and encouraged.
- The overall funds available is limited. DRA reserves the right to make partial offers to some or all applicants in order to best achieve the goal of the program.

Note that this is a reimbursement grant. Businesses are expected to cover the cost of these items up front. Once DRA receives documentation of all receipts and clear dated documentation of work, funds will be disbursed based on original grant award amounts.

Once businesses are notified of grant award amounts, it will be up to the individual awardees to accept or decline the offer of a grant. It will also be the awardees' responsibility to comply with the requirements for receiving reimbursement. Businesses will not be reimbursed for expenses that were not included in your proposal OR on things that were deemed ineligible during the review process.

4. Can I request support for....?

If a compelling case is made for how the funds requested will achieve the goal of this grant program, it will be considered. Creativity is encouraged and reviewers will be looking for a direct connection between the grant funding and your ability to increase commerce for your business while helping to revitalize downtown and a clear indication of vision and pivot strategy.

General Guidelines: We are open to considering any reasonable request that achieves the goals of this program. Reviewers will be judging applications based on potential impact, so please provide enough detail in your application to provide a clear picture of your pivot needs and vision.

Personnel/Contractor Services: While these expenses are not excluded, they must be well-justified and documented. General payroll expenses do not qualify, nor do any payments (directly or indirectly) to the business owner(s) or employees. For example, a business is allowed to request funding to pay a professional to install an online commerce module in your POS system, but a business is not allowed to pay their employees for their time learning the system. As with all requests, itemized receipts (with details of services delivered, dates delivered, etc.) and clear documentation will be required for reimbursement of such costs.

Advertising & Marketing: While grants that request funding for advertising and marketing are discouraged as their impact is difficult to measure, if a business can make a clear case for a measurable impact on your sales and on the vitality of downtown, it will be considered.

Software and Hardware: For many businesses infrastructure upgrades may be a great pivot strategy. If you choose to request support for enhanced software (to allow online selling, for example), reviewers will be looking for a clear connection to the goals and a measurable impact. You may request coverage for monthly software upgrade subscriptions for the period between May 30 and the closing date of December 31.

Costs that exceed the grant: Partial funding requests are encouraged. Reporting and receipts will be required, per the program guidelines.

Repairs & support for non-retail businesses: If you believe your organization or business can make a compelling and clear case for inclusion in this grant cycle, we encourage you to apply.

Parklets & other items requiring permits: We encourage you to review the DRA blog on outdoor dining options [here](#). DRA staff are available to help with permitting for PUPS (private use of public space) on sidewalks and in parking spaces. Inquiries may be directed as follows if you have specific questions prior to submitting your application.

- Will Gaskins, DRA Director of Economic Development & Planning, is your resource for parklet and extended dining permitting questions.
- Email: WillGaskins@downtownraleigh.org
- Phone: (919) 821-6988

5. How does other funding I've received impact my proposal?

Assuming your business complies with the other guidelines above, your other sources of funding do not disqualify you from this program nor should discourage you from applying.

Still have questions?

We hope that it's clear that our intent is to give every reasonable chance possible for you to submit an application. If you are still unclear, we encourage you to START by re-reading the guidelines [\[link to cover page on DRA site\]](#). We also encourage you to reach out directly with any questions.

Contact:

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