

Vibrancy Grant

Upgrade Your Street Level Business Downtown

We'd love to help make your street level business in Downtown Norfolk more vibrant. Upgrade your storefront, improve signage, add outdoor seating, activate your sidewalk or rooftop, house a new business collaboration, and more...

Through the Vibrant Spaces Committee, The Downtown Norfolk Council is awarding matching grants to the ideas that create the most new vibrancy downtown, so give us your best, most exciting ideas to help define the neighborhood and activate your space. If selected, we'll cover up to 50% of your project costs, up to \$10,000 per business.

Program Objectives

The Downtown Norfolk Council seeks, through the Vibrancy Grant Program, to:

1. Improve the public and pedestrian environment of downtown Norfolk
2. Improve the external appearance and lighting of storefronts in order to attract more customers and enhance the attractiveness of downtown Norfolk
3. Embrace unique spaces and businesses to create one-of-a-kind experiences, products and services
4. Encourage and support economic development

Eligibility

The Vibrancy Grant Program is available to property owners or tenants with qualified businesses within the Downtown Improvement District. Governmental entities are not eligible. Eligible projects must result in a visible improvement to the property and add vibrancy to the street. This program is not designed to fund general maintenance.

The following types of improvements are eligible for funding on commercial and mixed use buildings within the described boundaries:

1. Installation of new, pedestrian level commercial façades appropriate to the architectural style, age and character of individual buildings
2. Enhancements that activate the sidewalk such as outdoor dining areas, merchandise displays or planters
3. Open storefronts and active rooftops that encourage interaction between the street and business
4. Exceptional signage that identifies the business and adds to the character of downtown
5. Architectural lighting including: lighting which enhances the building's façade and enhances the pedestrian environment, lighting of window display areas and lighting of architectural details
6. New canopies or awnings that contribute to a well-designed and inviting storefront

Eligible Recipients

1. Ground floor tenants aligned with the goals of the Vibrant Spaces Committee and within boundaries of the Downtown Improvement District. Requires written authorization from property owner(s).
2. Owners of buildings with ground floor space within defined boundaries of the Downtown Improvement District. If unoccupied, improvements to the ground floor space must significantly enhance the exterior and improve marketability.

3. Eligible property owners or tenants that offer services to the public (not office use).
4. If a tenant, recipient must have a minimum lease length of three years.

Ineligible Recipients

1. Residential buildings that do not have ground floor retail
2. Projects for which building permits have already been issued or projects already under construction
3. Projects for general upkeep and maintenance of a building's exterior
4. Buildings solely dedicated to office use
5. Building owners or applicants who owe taxes to the City of Norfolk
6. Previous Vibrancy Grant selectees within the same fiscal year, July 1 – June 30

Available Funding

A matching grant of 50% of project cost for each storefront up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Application Process

Application can be picked up at the Downtown Norfolk Council offices, 223 East City Hall Avenue, Suite 212, Norfolk, VA 23510 or downloaded from vibrantspaces.com.

Application Requirements

1. A short narrative of the proposed work/project and a summary form with basic information about the applicant.
2. An 8x10" photograph of the existing condition.
3. Perspective rendering, architectural elevation or annotated photograph illustrating proposed changes. The photo/drawing should include specifications on all materials, paint colors, lighting fixtures, etc.
4. An estimate of costs associated with the project including but not limited to, design fees, permits, construction and fabrication costs. The cost estimate should be provided by an architect or contractor (in the case of signs and awnings, the manufacturer /installer).
5. Tax receipts or certification that both the applicant and property owner are not in arrears on any taxes owing to the City of Norfolk.
6. If a tenant, a letter from the property owner authorizing the tenant to apply and undertake the work if selected for funding.

Applications are reviewed by the selection panel within 3 weeks of submittal.

Submit applications to:

Downtown Norfolk Council
Attn: Vibrancy Grant
208 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor
Norfolk, VA 23510
rmccall@downtownnorfolk.org
757-623-1757

Selection Process:

1. Applications are reviewed by the DNC staff as they are submitted for completeness, cost review and appropriateness.
2. After the initial screening, the application is presented to an approved selection panel. Note: The selection panel is a body approved by the Board of Directors of the Downtown Norfolk Council. The panel

will include at least one design professional, representatives of selected public agencies, a member of a partner agency and representation from a Downtown Improvement District Representative from the Downtown Norfolk Council Board of Directors.

3. The selection panel will evaluate the application and determine whether to approve, deny or return for modification.
4. A decision on applications will occur within 30 days of the application submittal. All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision. The selection panel's decision is binding, therefore no appeals will be heard.
5. Because funding is limited, not every application that conforms to these guidelines can be funded.
6. Applications are limited to one submittal per business per fiscal year, July 1 to June 30. Applications for the same property in following years must continue to enhance the building.

Pre-Construction Requirements:

Next steps for applicants selected for funding:

The applicant will sign an agreement with the DNC which will outline the grant amount, payout schedule and requirements, schedule for project completion, any insurance requirements and other terms.

The applicant will be required to obtain all of the required approvals and permits, including but not limited to:

- Architectural Review Board approval
- City Planning Commission approval (if applicable)
- Building permits
- Approval for encroachment (if applicable)

Construction and Payment

Once the grant amount is set, it will not be increased to pay for change orders or other unanticipated costs. A single payment will be made when the project has been completed, inspected and approved by the DNC staff and consultants. Final payment will be contingent on completion of the work in a satisfactory manner as documented in the construction drawings and specifications. The DNC must approve in writing any substantive changes to the original construction plans or specifications. Improvements funded by a Vibrancy Grant must be completed within one year of the agreement date.

For more information, please contact:

Rachel McCall
Special Projects Manager
Downtown Norfolk Council
rmccall@downtownnorfolk.org
757-623-1757

Downtown Norfolk Business Improvement District



The Downtown Norfolk Council is committed to effectively serving its members, the Downtown Improvement District Ratepayers, the City and the region. The organization is recognized as a leader, an advocate and a resource in assuring that Downtown is a safe, clean, attractive and vital place.

Downtown Norfolk Vibrancy Grant Program
APPLICATION



APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:	Company:
Phone:	Email:

PROJECT INFORMATION

Address of Project:			
Type of Business:		Upper floor use:	
Is applicant the owner of the property in consideration?	Y	N	
How will the non-grant portion of the project be financed?	Cash	Loan	
	Name of Lender:		

PROPERTY OWNER

Name:		Years owned:
Address:		Phone:
City	State	Zip
Type of Ownership:		

Application Requirements:

To be submitted with application

- 1 A short narrative of the proposed work/project and a summary form with basic information about the applicant.
- 2 An 8x10" photograph of the existing condition.
- 3 Perspective rendering, architectural elevation or annotated photograph illustrating proposed changes. The photo/drawing must include specifications on all materials, paint colors, lighting fixtures, etc.
- 4 A line item estimate of costs associated with the project including but not limited to, design fees, permits, construction and fabrication costs. The cost estimate should be provided by an architect or contractor (in the case of signs and awnings, the manufacturer /installer).
- 5 Tax receipts or certification that the applicant and property owner is not in arrears on any taxes owing to the City of Norfolk.
- 6 If a tenant, a letter from the property owner authorizing the tenant to apply and undertake the work if selected for funding.

I have read and fully understand the Downtown Norfolk Vibrancy Grant Program guidelines, and attest that all information contained in this application and its attachments is accurate and truthful.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

<p>Submit to: Rachel McCall 208 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor Norfolk, VA 23510 rmccall@downtownnorfolk.org 757-623-1757</p>

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Application Date:	Approved Y/N
Approval Date:	Amount:
Tax ID #	