



DOWNTOWN ATHENS, GEORGIA

ATHENS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BUSINESS REACH GRANT PROGRAM

1. About the Grant Program

The Athens Downtown Development Authority (ADDA) Business Reach Grant Program is intended to incentivize economic development by encouraging investment in interior renovations, improvements, and build outs for existing or new businesses. The program will offer a 50% matching grant up to \$10,000 for reimbursement. Improvements must contribute to the overall value of downtown business and investments.

The Business Reach Grant Program is funded by the ADDA and administered by the Reach Grant Committee (RGC). The RGC will determine the amount of matching funds based on the proposal, grant funds available, and the number of requests under consideration.

2. Eligibility to Apply

Any business currently located in the ADDA boundary or any business that intends to open in the ADDA boundary is eligible to apply. For information regarding district boundaries, contact Rachel Swartz at 706-353-1421, or Rachel@downtownathensga.com.

3. Guidelines for Business Reach Grant

- Because Athens is a Georgia Main Street Community, we have access to wonderful and inexpensive local design services that can be included in your Reach Grant proposal. Please contact Rachel Swartz at 706-353-1421, or Rachel@downtownathensga.com, for more information on design services.
- Eligible projects are limited to interior improvements which are permanently affixed to the building, which are not specific to the use, and which do not restrict the future use of the building.

- Priority will be given to professional services businesses and businesses that enhance or complement the District's existing retail mix and/or help strengthen the economic impact of the ADDA district. Examples of businesses that complement the existing retail mix are children's products, art shops/galleries, florist, book store, etc.
- Priority will be given to businesses with projected tangible benefits to the ADDA district and/or Athens-Clarke County.
- Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Interior improvements that result in a new business.
 - Build out of existing space that results in additional consumers attracted to downtown or an increase percentage of sales or receipts.
 - Build out of existing space that adds or sustains employees.
 - Life safety and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility code requirements.
 - Interior renovation that contributes to sustainability, such as improving a building's energy efficiency.
- Ineligible work includes but is not limited to:
 - Signs
 - Day-to-day operational costs
 - Marketing
 - Exterior improvements of any kind
 - Personal property/equipment
 - General maintenance
 - Cosmetic improvements
- Eligible projects must be in accordance with all government rules, regulations, and laws, including but not limited to the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government's ordinances and building codes.
- Participants assume full responsibility for all aspects of the project, any relationships with contractors and suppliers, and securing all necessary municipal approvals.
- Applicants agree to maintain the approved improvements in good condition for a period of at least three (3) years, making repairs as necessary, or risk repayment of grant funds to the ADDA. This is at the ADDA's discretion, and will not be enforceable if the property changes owners.

4. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The attached application form is to be submitted to: ADDA, c/o Rachel Swartz, 250 W. Broad St., Suite 108, Athens, GA, 30601. Applicants interested in the program should also

consult with the Athens Clarke County Planning Department to obtain appropriate permits. For assistance and more information, please contact Rachel Swartz at 706-353-1421, or Rachel@downtownathensga.com.

Applications will be reviewed by the RGC within four weeks of receipt and in the order received. Only complete applications will be reviewed. A complete application includes the attached form and all supporting materials as specified in the instructions. Incomplete application packets will be returned to the sender within two weeks if all materials are not submitted.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW

The Business Reach Grant Committee (RGC), which is a subcommittee authorized by the ADDA, shall:

- a. Review each application packet for completeness;
- b. Make a determination regarding eligibility;
- c. Classify the project as either a minor or major improvement to set the timeline for completion; and
- d. Provide a grant recommendation to the ADDA or deny the project.

Each application packet will be judged on the following standards for review:

- a. Priority will be given to professional services businesses and businesses that best complement the District's retail mix and/or help strengthen the economic impact of the ADDA district. Examples of businesses that complement the downtown Athens retail mix are children's products, art shops/galleries, florist, book store, etc.
- b. Priority will be given to businesses with projected tangible benefits to the ADDA district and/or Athens-Clarke County.
- c. Quality of the work proposed.
- d. Level of match participation of the applicant.
- e. Range of projects completed and proposed as part of the Business Reach Grant Program.
- f. Any other relevant factors deemed by the RGC to be applicable.

The public is welcome to attend the meetings of the RGC which will be held in the ADDA office building as needed. The applicant may be required to attend the meeting in which his or her application is considered. The majority of the committee present will recommend approval of, deny, or table each complete application. Recommendations for Business Reach Grants will then be given to the ADDA for approval at their next Board Meeting.

Not later than two weeks after the ADDA meeting date, the applicant will receive a confirmation letter indicating the grant award decision, or in some cases, a request for additional information. The ADDA reserves the right to table, deny, or request modifications in any or all application packets, in whole or in part, and to negotiate

changes in the proposed project. In the case of denial by the ADDA, the applicant can address the issues identified by the committee and re-apply for a grant.

6. GRANT AWARDS

Approved projects will be reimbursed at **up to fifty percent (50%)** of the approved project's total cost. The award will not exceed the Business Reach Grant Program maximum grant of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

Please note: If work is started on the applicant's project before the decision to make a grant award, the RGC reserves the right to determine that only the remaining work will be eligible for a matching grant.

The RGC reserves the right to recommend funds as it deems best to achieve its purposes and at its sole discretion. For example, the RGC can grant funds in amounts as it deems appropriate to encourage the projects it deems most beneficial. Many factors are considered, such as the RGC budget, number of applicants, financial considerations, applicant match, mixture of proposed projects, and the extent to which projects fulfill the goals and standards for eligible projects as set forth above.

7. PROJECT COMPLETION

Improvements must be started within ninety (90) days of receiving the confirmation letter and completed within twelve (12) months of said receipt, or re-application will be required. To qualify for reimbursement, all work must be complete and in conformance with the approved plans.

8. REIMBURSEMENT

After project completion, the applicant is reimbursed with awarded grant funds upon:

- a. Satisfactory completion of the project with conformance to approved plans;
- b. Receipt of a reimbursement request plus all receipts and proof of payment;
- c. Compliance with all applicable municipal rules, laws, ordinances, and regulations;
- d. Reaffirmation of applicant's commitment to maintain project improvements for a period of at least 3 years.

All reimbursement requests are to be submitted to ADDA, c/o Rachel Swartz, 250 W. Broad Street. Suite 108, Athens, GA 30601. The RGC reserves the right to increase or decrease a grant award in accordance with receipt of actual expenditures.

Athens Downtown Development Authority
Business Reach Grant Program
Application Form

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant full name Business name

Application date: _____

Mailing address

Contact Telephone E-mail

2. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Athens street address

- Owner-occupied, OR
- Leased from owner (if so, complete information below)

Owner's name

- Property owner signature [at 6. AUTHORIZATION], OR
- Property owner consent letter [attached]

Owner's mailing address

Contact Telephone E-mail

3. INTERIOR VIEW

Attach photographs (color), showing the current condition of the building interior, specifically, areas to be renovated.

Please contact the ACC Planning Department before beginning your project to secure the proper permits.

4. PROJECT SCOPE

Project Dates:

Proposed beginning date* _____ Anticipated completion date _____

*Project start date, or the date for start of work to be included in the grant award.

Details of proposed work with projected costs:

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| <u>Item 1</u> | <u>Est. Cost</u> |
| <u>Item 2</u> | <u>Est. Cost</u> |
| <u>Item 3</u> | <u>Est. Cost</u> |
| <u>Item 4</u> | <u>Est. Cost</u> |
| <u>Item 5</u> | <u>Est. Cost</u> |

5. PROJECT BUDGET AND QUOTE

Total project cost: \$ _____

Grant amount requested: \$ _____

Applicant match* intended: \$ _____

**Projects matched by more than 50% will receive preferential review status.*

PLEASE NOTE: All quotes **MUST** be an itemized estimate. Please have two quotes for items over \$2,500.00.

6. AUTHORIZATION

I, _____ do hereby make application to the Athens Downtown Development Authority for a Business Reach Grant for the above project. I verify that the information in this application and its attachments is valid and correct. I verify that I have reviewed and understand the rules and regulations set forth in the Athens Downtown Development Business Reach Grant Program Guidelines, and I agree to be bound by the same.

I understand any changes in the approved project must be re-approved or I could forfeit funding for the above project(s). I agree to maintain the improvements in place and in good order for at least 3 years, making repairs as necessary, or risk repayment of the grant funds to the ADDA.

I understand that the receipt by the RGC of my application does not obligate the RGC in any way, indicate any funds are available, or that my application will be approved. I understand that furnishing false or misleading information can lead to denial of my application and/or bar me from receipt of any funds.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Owner (or consent letter)

Date

7. APPROVAL TRACKING

Date application submitted: _____

Submitted to RGC: _____

Approved by ADDA: _____

Reimbursement request submitted: _____

CHECKLIST

- Fully complete and signed application
- Property owner signature or consent letter (if leased)*
- Photographs of existing interior condition
- Complete and itemized project description with plans drawn approximately to scale. (Note: A detailed sketch of the interior with improvements made is recommended.)
- Color samples if painting is planned
- Budget estimate and quotes*
- Plans Review Application Form from the ACC Planning Department

*These items may be submitted separately; however, these items **MUST** be submitted within two weeks of turning in the application. Applications without all of the checklist items after two weeks will be considered incomplete and will be returned.