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2021 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

2.0 Grant: Guidelines

SCOPE/PURPOSE

Business Improvement Grant 2.0 is a one-third/two-thirds reimbursable matching grant designed to encourage and assist with business improvement in Atchison County, Missouri. The purpose of this grant is to improve aesthetics, safety and/or function of existing businesses, with an end goal of sustaining and growing local businesses.

The grant amount will equal up to 33% of the cost of eligible improvements, up to a maximum of \$2,500. For example, if a total project cost is \$6,000, ACDC's reimbursed grant is \$2,000 and the business will provide \$4,000 of their own funds. If a total project cost is \$7,500 or more, ACDC's grant is \$2,500 and the business will be responsible for \$5,000. [In-kind donations (labor, etc.) do not count toward the applicant's match.]

ACDC could award up to \$10,000 in 2.0 grants for the 2020 grant cycle, depending upon number of applications and project selection. Once the grant cycle is closed, remaining applications will be discarded.

GUIDELINES

Applications will be accepted via mail ONLY beginning February 1, 2021. Applications will be date-stamped by postmark upon receipt and will be considered in the order they were received. The committee will consider applications on a monthly basis until all grant funds have been awarded.

Only new projects are eligible. Expenses incurred prior to approval of a project are not eligible for reimbursement. Projects must be completed by October 31, 2021, or the funding may be withdrawn and returned to the grant pool. Grant recipients will receive funds upon completion of the project and the submittal of all required documentation.

The application should indicate what vendors will be used. If a local vendor cannot be used, a justification is necessary. Explanations might include that a particular vendor does not exist in Atchison County, local vendors could not provide service/products in a timely manner, local vendor charges 25% or more than an external vendor, etc. If, after a grant is awarded, the project begins and a local vendor is unable to complete the project, ACDC must be notified in writing (via email or mail) of the change, the reasoning for the change, and the proposed solution.

At the discretion of the grant committee and/or ACDC staff, exceptions to any of the guidelines may be approved due to special conditions or situations.

ELIGIBILITY

Businesses that have a valid tax ID number, are current with their taxes, and possesses a current business license (if applicable) can apply. A business that received Business Improvement Grant funds in 2019 or 2020 is **not eligible to apply** in 2021. Nonprofits and governmental entities are not eligible. (These entities may utilize our Nonprofit Project Support Request form, which is available upon request.)

Businesses can apply once per location per calendar year. Multiple businesses that share a single location may apply together if a project is mutually beneficial. For example, two businesses would be eligible for a maximum of \$5,000 toward a \$15,000+ project.

PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Below are examples of approved expenses related to business growth and the preservation/beautification of businesses (two of the primary goals of this grant program), but the application committee will consider anything that is a business improvement.

- GROW BUSINESS
 - ◇ This project should result in new/improved services or additional employees.
 - Additional equipment for new hires or products
 - New business-specific equipment
 - Technology upgrades
 - ◇ This grant project should result in additional traffic/business.
 - Signs (new, repair, replacement); vehicle signage/decals
 - Exterior building and sign lighting, display area lighting
 - Shelving/display upgrades
 - Marketing: plan development, website creation
- PRESERVE/BEAUTIFY BUSINESSES
 - ◇ This project will assist in building preservation.
 - Stairs, railing, walls, floors, roofs, foundations
 - Utility upgrades (water, gas, electric, HVAC)
 - Refinishing of exterior, including painting
 - ◇ This project will improve the look of the storefront, facade or property.
 - Awnings (installation of new, repair, replacement, removal)
 - Repair or replacement of window systems, entryway, sidewalks
 - Landscaping and beautification efforts

INELIGIBLE Expenses Include:

- Operating costs (including mortgage/rent/lease payments, taxes, wages, salaries, utilities, etc.)
- Inventory

POLICIES

COMMITTEE

The grant committee will be comprised of five individuals: two members of the ACDC Board of Directors and one representative (city council, mayor, etc.) of each of the three primary communities (Fairfax, Rock Port, and Tarkio). Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

If there is a conflict of interest with one of the committee members, an alternate ACDC board member or the ACDC Executive Director will be the 5th vote. ACDC board members and city representatives who are a part of the grant committee will not be Atchison County business owners, and will therefore be unable to apply for the grant. If an ACDC board member is affiliated with an application, they will not participate in the ACDC board approval conversation and will abstain from the vote.

APPLICATION/APPROVAL/REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

1. Applicant obtains application packet, which will include the grant guidelines and application.
2. Applicant reads all guidelines, conditions, and forms prior to submission.
3. Applicant mails application packet to **ACDC, c/o Business Improvement Grant Committee, P.O. Box 243, Rock Port, MO 64482**. Applications must be postmarked on/after February 1, 2021, in order to be considered. Applications will only be considered if received via mail. Application packet will include:
 - Expense estimate paperwork (bid/vendor statement/cost estimates)
 - Other documentation as requested
4. ACDC notifies the applicant via email that their application was received.
5. ACDC contacts Atchison County and the respective City to confirm that the business entity is in possession of valid business/merchant licensure and is current on all taxes.
6. The Grant Committee reviews applications on a monthly basis, beginning on or around February 28, 2021, as long as funds remain. This committee approves the project for funding, rejects the proposal, or rejects the current proposal and makes suggestions for changes. Feedback and suggested changes will be provided in writing and the applicant will be able to re-submit their application within 21 days.
7. Applicants will be notified via letter of their application status 3-5 business days after the committee reviews the application. In this letter, grant recipients will be notified of amount of their award.
8. Grant recipients may commence work on their approved project as soon as they receive approval.
9. Grant recipients may submit copies of reimbursable receipts to ACDC as soon as the project is completed. Once ACDC receives proof of payment and photographic proof of completion, ACDC will reimburse the grant recipient for amount allotted to them.
10. Failure to submit receipts by October 31, 2021, may result in grant disqualification