

# 2024 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM Guidelines

## SCOPE/PURPOSE

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This is a reimbursed matching grant program designed to encourage and assist with business improvement or expansion in Atchison County, Missouri. Grant projects will improve aesthetics, safety and/or function of existing businesses. Two grants are available through this program.

- **BASIC:** The grant amount will equal up to 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, up to a maximum of \$1,000. For example, if a total project cost is \$1,200, ACDC's reimbursed grant is \$600 and the business will provide \$600 of their own funds. If a total project cost is \$2,200, ACDC's grant is \$1,000 and the business will be responsible for \$1,200.
- **2.0:** The grant amount will equal up to one-third 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 \$15,000 in grants for the 2024 grant cycle, depending upon number of applications and project selection. Once the grant cycle is closed, remaining applications will be discarded.

## GUIDELINES

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Applications will be accepted via mail ONLY after January 15, 2024. Applications will be date-stamped according to the postmark on the envelope and will be considered in the order they were received.

Only new projects are eligible. Expenses incurred prior to approval of a project are not eligible for reimbursement. Projects must be completed by November 15, 2024, or the funding may be withdrawn and returned to the grant pool.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, once the project begins, 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 ACDC, exceptions to any of the guidelines may be approved due to special conditions or situations.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

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Businesses that have a valid tax ID number, are current with their taxes, and possess a current business license (if applicable) can apply. A business that received Business Improvement Grant funds in 2022 or 2023 is **not eligible to apply** in 2024. Nonprofits and governmental entities are not eligible.

Businesses can apply once every three years. Multiple businesses that share a single location may apply together if a project is mutually beneficial. For example, two businesses could jointly apply for the Basic grant and would be eligible for a maximum reimbursement of \$2,000 toward a \$4,000+ 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.
    - Signage; vehicle signage/decals; exterior building and sign lighting
    - 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 windows, entryway, sidewalks, lighting
    - Landscaping and beautification efforts

**INELIGIBLE Expenses Include:**

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

## **POLICIES**

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### **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. If any committee member is affiliated with an application, they will not participate in the committee approval conversation and will abstain from the vote.

## **APPLICATION/APPROVAL/REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

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1. Applicant obtains an application packet, which will include the guidelines and application.
2. Applicant reads all guidelines and conditions, then completes and signs the application.
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 January 15, 2024, in order to be considered. Applications will only be considered if received via mail.

**Application packet will include:**

- Completed and signed application**
  - Expense estimate paperwork (bid/vendor statement/cost estimates)**
  - Proof of being current on taxes and licensure (paid tax receipts from the previous year and copies of applicable merchants/business licenses)**
  - Other documentation as requested
4. ACDC notifies the applicant via email that their application was received.
  5. The Grant Committee reviews applications as they are received as long as funds remain.
  6. Applicants will be notified via letter of their application status 3-5 business days after the committee reviews the application. This letter will specify the amount of their grant.
  7. Grant recipients may commence work on their approved project as soon as their project is approved by the committee.
  8. 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 either 1/2 or 1/3 of the final project cost (up to the maximum allotted to them), depending on which grant was awarded.
  9. Failure to submit receipts by November 15, 2024, may result in grant disqualification.