

2026 Downtown Colorado Springs Holiday Pop-Up Program

A program of the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority



Program Scope

This program is an initiative of the Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and private property owners intending to activate vacant properties by offering a low-rate short-term lease in a Downtown Colorado Springs storefront for the 2026 holiday season. The program allows growing retailers and established brands to test the Downtown Colorado Springs market, and for shoppers to have greater opportunities and experiences during the holiday season.

Retailers will be chosen based on concept viability, product quality, ability to grow and establish a local presence, and overall fit of the product offerings. Retailers also will be selected based on alignment with the Downtown brand, their availability to meet the required days and hours of operations, their ability to supply the program with data on sales and performance, as well as the availability of space within the market.

What will the program do?

- Enhance the festive holiday atmosphere of Downtown and generate more shopping visits to Downtown Colorado Springs.
- Enhance the retail core of Downtown with new products and exposure to new retail experiences.
- Reduce the visual impact of empty storefronts in the Downtown Colorado Springs.
- Offer a low-cost option for businesses to test new ideas and/or reach new customers.
- Assist newer retail stores in growing their businesses and learning the fundamentals of operating a brick-and-mortar location.
- Provide insights to the Downtown Partnership on the health of the retail market.

Who is encouraged to apply?

- Retail brands with the ability to absorb between 1,000 and 4,000 square feet of retail space in their own brick-and-mortar store.
- Retail brands looking to establish a future presence in the market, even if the available space and sizing is not a fit at this point in time, or the concept is too early for the 2026 season. Future pop-up opportunities as well as site selection services may be offered to these applicants.

Where will the shops be located?

Based on 2026 market conditions and limited retail space available in the core, vendors will be located on an as-available basis, primarily in the Downtown core along or near Tejon Street. Lease rates will be determined based on market asking rates, the needed space requirements and availability.

What are the dates for this year's program?

This year's pop-up shops will be open from Monday, November 15, 2026, through Sunday, December 31, 2026. Pop-up Shops may work directly with landlord or building owner to extend beyond these dates, but extensions will not receive additional DDA funding.

What types of business is this program designed to attract?

DDA seeks to local, regional and national brands that are looking to establish a presence in Colorado Springs. Downtown's retail brand currently reflects local or regional makers, artisans, longtime anchors in apparel, home wares, specialty items, gifts, sports and outdoor recreation. Ideal product offerings would fall in the following categories: gifts, apparel and accessories, specialty prepared/package food, books, sporting goods and supplies, pet supplies, Colorado/local and art/culture related retail items, as well as home goods, décor and other boutique items. Pop-ups should be complementary to the overall mix of Downtown's existing retail while providing fresh offerings designed to increase foot traffic and drive more shoppers to Downtown.

When is the application deadline?

The deadline to apply is 5 pm on Friday, October 31st 2026.

When will decisions on selected shops be made?

The selection committee will inform accepted merchants no later than Friday, October 31st, 2026. Agreements will be made available and commitments must be signed within two weeks of selection.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**Are there required hours of operation?**

Yes. In order to maximize lunchtime traffic, weekday office shoppers, weekend family visitors and Sunday parishioners, selected retailers are suggested to be open the following hours:

- 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wed-Thursday
- 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday
- 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday

Stores are permitted to be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day, though not required. Stores are encouraged to stay open later on First Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Christmas Eve. Hours of operation are based on feedback from current Downtown retailers and national best practices.

What are the legal requirements?

Program participants will enter into a lease agreement with the property owner, which stipulates the terms of the short-term space use requirements and wherein they agree to return the space to its original condition or an improved condition. Participants shall comply with insurance requirements as stipulated by the building owner and Colorado State Law, as well as any licensing requirements. Participants also will enter into a tri-party agreement with the property owner and the DDA.

What are the marketing requirements?

All retailers are required to have an online presence and market their pop-up location to ensure their own success. However, Downtown Partnership also is an active partner in marketing the program, and will provide technical assistance to each shop to assist with media relations, special events, promotional activities, traditional marketing and additional social media.

Are there any other requirements?

Downtown Partnership requires participating retailers to agree to supply weekly gross sales data at the end of the program. This is to allow staff to assess the program's success and continuation, as well as have a better understanding of the urban retail environment. A non-disclosure agreement will be entered into between Downtown Partnership staff and the Participant to ensure the information is confidential and only communicated in aggregate.

PROGRAM LOGISTICS

When can I have access to the space to set up?

Retail vendors will be able to access the space as soon as a lease has been signed and a move-in date agreed upon with the property owner. Participants will have access to their space no later than Friday, November 15, 2026 if all paperwork is completed, although we will work to obtain access as soon as possible for the pop-up shop. The deadline for lease signing and insurance validation is Friday, November 9, 2026.

When do I need to be open for business?

All program participants should be ready to open for business on Friday, November 15, and be prepared to remain in operation through Sunday, December 31, 2026.

When do I need to vacate the space?

Lease structure will determine when participants will need to fully vacate the space.

Will I receive marketing support?

Yes. While you should market your store independently, your efforts will be amplified by ours. Downtown Colorado Springs will promote the Holiday Pop-Up Shops, as well as existing downtown retail, in our holiday promotional materials, our monthly newsletter, ads, storefront window clings and social media. Pop-Up Shops also will have the opportunity to offer a holiday coupon in the downtown coupon book.

TO APPLY

Fill out the following application and submit to craig@DowntownCS.com by 5PM **Friday, October 30, 2026**. The selection committee will review all applications and contact applicants by phone or email with any questions. Prospective applicants are highly encouraged to call the Downtown Colorado Springs office at 719-886-0088 with any questions throughout the application process.

What criteria will the selection committee consider when reviewing my application?

- The appeal of how the product(s) add to the overall mix for holiday shoppers.
- How well the proposed concept works in synergy with current full-time tenants.
- The ability to add excitement to the festive holiday atmosphere through in-store events, social media and promotion.
- The viability of the business concept and ability to generate revenue.
- The likelihood of the participant establishing a long term presence Downtown.
- The quality of the overall aesthetic and design.
- The store's ability to occupy available spaces.

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION

Interested applicants are advised and welcome to contact us for more information. Contact Craig Compton, Craig@DowntownCS.com, or 719-886-0088.

Application is a Separate Document