BUILDING ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

ABOUT THE DDA

Voters established the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in November 2006 to provide programs and financial incentives to encourage Downtown development. DDA is governed by a board of 11 people appointed by Colorado Springs City Council. Downtown Partnership executes the work of the DDA as a contracted affiliate. In 2026, City Council adopted the Elevate Downtown Plan as the updated plan of development for DDA. The DDA is funded in two ways: first, by a 5-mill tax levy within the district to support its operations, and second, through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The latter tax is the capture of increased property tax revenues following a baseline assessment. TIF revenues go into a special fund and as it grows, the funds can be leveraged for support of Downtown projects. The DDA's TIF will expire in 2037. The DDA board meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month.

MISSION OF THE DDA

To build public and private investment partnerships that promote the physical and economic growth of Downtown Colorado Springs.

PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

The Elevate Downtown Plan serves as the plan of development for DDA. The plan was created in 2026 as an update to the Experience Downtown Plan, which governed the DDA from 2016 through the newest plan's adoption in 2026. The plan can be found at: DowntownCS.com/elevate

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The DDA encompasses roughly two square miles of downtown. For a map, click here.

ABOUT BUILDING ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Building Enhancement Grants are designed to supplement or match funds for exterior building improvement projects on existing buildings within the DDA. Grants are provided on a reimbursement basis after project completion. The grant enables applicants to enhance their design with higher quality materials, lighting, signage and façade elements; improve public safety around the building; add new public ream enhancements such as landscaping or seating; and include new public art into the project design. These enhancements stimulate economic vitality within the DDA and help the DDA to achieve its goals as identified in the Plan of Development.

APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be owners or tenants doing business within the boundary of the DDA.
- Tenants must apply jointly with property owners.
- Properties must demonstrate as current on all city, county and state property and income taxes.
- Projects must have a usable life of at least 10 years.
- Project work must be launched within six months of the date the grant is awarded and completed within one year.
- Projects with a higher ratio of owner or tenant direct investment will be given greater consideration.
- Grants will not be awarded for work completed prior to the grant application date.

- Grants will not be awarded for project elements considered to be "deferred maintenance."
- All work must comply with applicable laws, ordinances, building codes and zoning ordinances.
- Applicants must have a track record of successful operations within the DDA district, or, for new businesses, an articulated business plan.
- Grantees must agree to provide a final report and receipts upon project completion.

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS

- Eligible costs could include:
    - Repair or replacement of exterior features and architectural elements.
    - Storefront conversion.
    - Exterior painting, awnings, canopies, lighting, signage.
    - Restoration of exterior historic elements.
    - Exterior landscaping, addition of café seating and railings.
    - Professional design fees.
- Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:
    - Appraiser or attorney fees
    - Expenses incurred prior to application date.
    - Property acquisition costs or loan fees.
    - Building permit fees.
    - Maintenance items.
    - Interior renovation work that is not associated with expansion.
    - Interior furnishings.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

The application process is competitive, and only those projects demonstrating a strong improvement of property and potential to grow the tax base of the DDA will be selected for funding. The strongest applications will demonstrate a high ratio of private to public dollars, as well as improving a property in a manner that will grow the tax base of the DDA. Competitive applicants must demonstrate how the project meets the goals of the Elevate Downtown Plan.

GRANT STRUCTURE

- Projects demonstrating at least $25,000 in eligible exterior improvements may be eligible for a grant of up to $10,000.
- Projects demonstrating at least $50,000 in eligible exterior improvements may be eligible for a grant of up to $25,000.
- Projects demonstrating at least $50,000 in eligible exterior improvements ***and*** more than $500,000 in ***total property improvements*** and/or unique circumstances meeting the goals of the Elevate Downtown Plan may be eligible for a grant of up to $50,000.

GRANT PAYMENTS

- Grantees must sign a Grant Agreement within 30 days of receipt.
- Payments are awarded to recipients as reimbursements to completed and inspected work.
- All work must be in compliance with the aforementioned requirements and original receipts for work performed must be provided in order to receive reimbursement.
- Grant awards are competitive and based on market demand and conditions; grants are capped at amounts based upon total eligible exterior improvements and total project cost.

TO APPLY

- Interested applicants are highly encouraged to first call the Downtown Partnership staff to discuss the project, its eligibility and its competitiveness.
- Applications must be received and confirmed by Downtown Partnership staff prior to the start of any work reflected in the grant request in order to receive reimbursement.
- Applications must be received by the third Tuesday of the month. Every attempt will be made to schedule board review of grant requests within eight weeks of submittal.
- Submit one complete copy of the application plus attachments to the Downtown Partnership. Notification on your grant status will be provided within 90 days.

Downtown Development Authority of Colorado Springs
Building Enhancement Grant Application

Summary sheet

- Application date
- Business name
- Property address
- Business owner
- Business owner address
- Business owner phone
- Business owner email
- Property owner
- Property owner address
- Property owner phone
- Property owner email
- Is this an existing or new business?
- Is the business expanding? If so, state amount of square footage to be added.
- If the business is relocating, when was the business established? What is the current address?
- Current number of PT and FT jobs the business provides
- Estimated number of new PT and FT jobs created through this project
- Estimated start date of project
- Estimated completion date of project
- Total project budget
- Amount requested
- Amount requested reflected as a percentage of total costs

Supplemental application information

- A narrative of no more than four pages describing in detail how this project will benefit Downtown within the DDA boundaries and how the project fits the priorities of the DDA.
- Architectural plans, rendering or illustrations depicting the work to be performed.
- Photos of the existing property.
- A thorough project budget.
- If the applicant is a new business owner, please include a copy of your company's business plan.

All decisions concerning aspects of the grant application process, including eligibility, are within the sole discretion of the Downtown Development Authority board.

Submit grant application and supporting documents electronically to: info@downtowncs.com. Address questions to Downtown Partnership at 719.886.0088.