RETAIL INCENTIVE 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.

MISISON 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 1.1 square miles of downtown. For a map, click here.

GOALS OF RETAIL INCENTIVE GRANT

- Attract and assist select retail, restaurant and service businesses to diversify the mix of offerings at the street level Downtown.
- Foster entrepreneurship while simultaneously enhancing existing and new spaces Downtown.
- Provide resident-serving amenities not currently offered Downtown.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be the business owner; property owners are not eligible applicants unless they will be the owner of the business for which the application has been submitted.
- Applicants must provide a new and in-demand retail, restaurant or service type not currently offered Downtown. This can include restaurants offering cuisines not common Downtown, wellness/fitness services not currently offered, and retail concepts that do not yet exist Downtown, with special emphasis on resident-serving business types.
- Applicants must be new to Downtown or expanding/relocating.
- Applicants must submit a business plan which includes a financial plan including sources and uses of funds.
- Properties must demonstrate as current on all city, county and state property and income taxes.
- 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 investment will be given greater consideration.

- Grants will not be awarded for work completed prior to the grant application date.
- All work must comply with applicable laws, ordinances, building codes and zoning ordinances.
- Grantees must agree to provide a final report and receipts upon project completion.
- Grantees must provide a signed lease for the leasable space with a term of at least three years.
- Grantees must agree to a minimum of three consultation sessions with the Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center during the first year of operations (this requirement waived for business that already have operated successfully in other locations).

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS

- Eligible costs could include:
    - Tenant improvements, exterior improvements
    - Rent
    - Business equipment and/or inventory
    - Signage
    - Marketing
- Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:
    - Expenses incurred prior to application date
    - Building permit fees
    - Payroll, insurance, utilities or other similar operating costs

FUNDING DETERMINATION

Grants range from $10,000 to $50,000 and will take into consideration the following criteria:

- How the applicant meets the Applicant Eligibility criteria.
- How the applicant demonstrates alignment with the Experience Downtown Plan.
- The soundness of the business plan and the ability of the business concept to fill a gap in the mix of Downtown retail/restaurant/service offerings.
- Square footage or size of the proposed business.
- Length of lease.
- If the business will result in the renovation of a currently underutilized building.
- The quality of the proposed storefront renovation.
- Higher consideration is given to applications that can show a good sources and uses chart. The project should not be contingent on receiving this program's funds and/or the program's funds should not be the sole funder of the proposed business.

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.Se
- 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.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Summary sheet
- Narrative describing your business
- Business plan including sources of financing
- Budget associated with grant request and/or renovation project
- Pictures or renderings of renovation if applicable

- Pictures/demonstration of type of business and products offered
- Any additional materials to support application

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 of your grant status will be provided within 90 days.

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 summary sheet and supporting documents electronically to: info@downtowncs.com**.** Address questions to Downtown Partnership at 719.886.0088.

Downtown Development Authority of Colorado Springs
Grant Application Summary Sheet

1. Application Date _____
2. Type of Business _____
3. Business Name_____
4. Business Owner_____
5. Business Owner Address_____
6. Business Owner Email_____
7. Business Owner Phone_____
8. Property Owner_____
9. Property Address_____
10. Property Owner Email_____
11. Property Owner Phone_____
12. Do you have a lease, and if so, how long?_____
13. Is this an Expansion or New Business? _____
14. If expanding, state amount of square footage to be added: _____
15. If the business is relocating, when was the business established? _____
16. What is the current address if relocating? _____
17. Estimated Number of new Part Time and Full Time jobs created through this project: FT_____PT_____
18. Estimated Start Date of Project _____
19. Estimated Open Date of Business _____
20. Total Project Budget (Renovations)_____

21. Total Signage Budget (if applicable)_____

22. Total Inventory Budget (if applicable):_____

23. Grant Request_____

24. What will Grant be allocated towards_____

Attachments (Check if included)

- ☐ Summary sheet
- ☐ Narrative describing your business
- ☐ Business plan including sources of financing
- ☐ Budget associated with grant request and/or renovation project
- ☐ Pictures or renderings of renovation if applicable
- ☐ Pictures/demonstration of type of business and products offered
- ☐ Any additional materials to support application