

Commercial Buildout Grant Program

Offered by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of the City of Stone Mountain

Application Instructions:

Before you apply, please carefully read all instructions, review eligibility requirements, and understand program restrictions to ensure your application meets all necessary conditions.

Applications are accepted and reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. It's strongly recommended that applicants apply early, as funds may be limited. The DDA's oversight committee will evaluate all complete applications. Final approval and notifications typically occur within one month.

Supporting Documents and Information:

- Applicant Name and contact information
- Legal Business Name
- Proof of business address (lease agreement or utility bill, if different from license address)
- Georgia State Sales Tax Number
- Estimated Total Project Cost
 - Requested Grant Amount (cannot exceed 80% of total project cost)
 - Amount Covered by Applicant (Total Project Cost minus Grant Request)
 - Detailed Project Summary
 - Project Manager contacts
 - Contractor details and licensing (if applicable)
 - Architectural plans, specifications, and proposals
 - Itemized Cost Breakdown (each cost must be listed individually)
 - Anticipated Project Start and Completion Dates (must start within 3 months and be completed within 6 months).

Who Can Apply: Eligibility Requirements:

To qualify, applicants must be a licensed business owner or commercial property owner located within the DDA district, and must meet all of the following criteria:

All taxes, fees, and assessments must be current, including:

- Property taxes
- Business license fees
- Occupation taxes
- The business/property owner must not:
 - Have any current legal judgments
 - Be involved in bankruptcy proceedings
 - Be under state or federal tax liens

- Applicants must demonstrate the financial capability to cover the required matching contribution
- Nonprofit organizations are not eligible

Project Requirements: What Qualifies:

Projects must be practical and appropriate for current market conditions.

Code Compliance: All projects must adhere to local codes, permitting, and design guidelines. Any exterior or interior upgrades exceeding \$1,000 may require a City of Stone Mountain Building Permit. Contact Angela Newborn at: anewborn@permitservicegroup.com for guidance.

Project Scope:

Improvements must benefit both current and future tenants. If only the current tenant will benefit, the business must remain operational at that location for at least two years. If the business closes or relocates within two years, a prorated refund of grant funds may be required.

Projects must not begin until the grant agreement is signed.

Taxes are not eligible for reimbursement.

Routine maintenance work does not qualify.

Program Limitations and Conditions:

Grant applicants must contribute at least 20% of the total project cost.

For example: A \$10,000 project may receive up to \$8,000 in grant funding.

If an awardee does not sign the grant agreement within 30 days of receiving the award letter, the grant will be forfeited. This may also disqualify them from applying for other grants for one year. Grantees who fail to use their awarded funds within the specified timeframe may also lose eligibility for future grants for one year.

Projects must begin within 3 months and be completed within 6 months of approval. One extension (up to 6 months) may be granted if necessary and consistent with local permitting timelines. Funds are disbursed via reimbursement after the work is finished and verified for compliance.

Grant Review Process:

The DDA Director manages the application process, ensuring all submissions are complete and presented to the DDA Board for review. The Director also provides funding recommendations to the Board and oversees grantee compliance, including required reporting and performance tracking.