

Atlanta Open for Business Fund Commercial Property Improvement Grant (CPIG) Guidelines

Invest Atlanta, as part of the Wells Fargo Open for Business Fund, has launched the Commercial Property Improvement Grant program to support local small businesses located in the City of Atlanta.

Small Business owners are eligible to apply for grants up to \$50,000 that can be used for both internal and external improvements to their commercial property. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis until program funds are fully allocated, or the end of the program term in 2024.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility of Applicants:

Applicants must meet the following eligibility guidelines:

- Applicants must show a current City of Atlanta business license.
- Small businesses and nonprofits operating in commercial properties smaller than 15,000 square feet located in the City of Atlanta are eligible to apply.
- Priority will be given to small businesses located in disinvested areas of the City, as identified in the [One Atlanta Economic Mobility Plan](#).
- Small businesses who lease their commercial space should have a minimum of 1-year left on their lease and will need approval from the property owner.
- Owners of vacant commercial properties that meet the size requirements may be eligible to apply. Please reach out to the Program Manager prior to submitting an application, as vacant properties may be eligible if scope of work will bring them into leasable condition.
- Properties constructed in the last 10 years are not eligible.
- Properties with national credit tenants (i.e., national chain businesses) are not eligible.
- Properties occupied by religious institutions, public agencies or nonprofit agencies are not eligible.
- Properties not in a commercial zoning category, properties operating as package stores or for purposes of adult entertainment, including gambling are not eligible.
- Small businesses in multi-tenant commercial buildings with a total building size smaller than 15,000 square feet are eligible,
- Awardees must provide a match equal to at least 10% of the grant award.

Eligible Uses:

Improvements should visually enhance the interior and/or exterior of the subject property and meet the following guidelines:

Eligible exterior improvements include:

- Painting
- Lighting
- Windows, doors, framing, etc.
- Signage, canopies, awnings, etc.
- Gates, fencing, landscaping, etc.
- Building surface repairs- concrete, siding, limestone, etc.
- Surface upgrades on the ground- tiling, asphalt resurfacing, etc.

Eligible interior improvements include:

- Flooring, walls and ceiling upgrades
- HVAC, water heater, plumbing, electrical, and other systems repairs
- Structural repairs to walls, floors, stairs, and interior doors

Certain soft costs, such as architectural and planning services are eligible but shall not exceed 10% of grant amount.

Operations, inventory, and other soft costs are not eligible expenses.

Application Requirements:

In addition to a completed application, applicants must provide the following uploaded with their application in the Neighborly application portal:

- Map showing location of property (ex. Screenshot of property via Google Maps);
- A copy of the applicant's current business license from the City of Atlanta;
- Current photographs of property identifying the need for proposed improvements;
- Evidence of property control through a lease or deed;
- Evidence of authorization to make the proposed building improvements with owner's consent, in the form of the Application Affidavit provided in Neighborly.
- Itemized budget/scope of work with supporting documentation (Ex. Contractor estimates, purchase orders, etc.)

Required Due Diligence Documents:

To execute a grant agreement upon approval of funding, grantees will be required to provide the following documentation. Note these are **NOT** application requirements.

- 1) Owner Entity Documents:
 - Articles of Incorporation/Organization, Secretary of State Documentation
 - Copy of Business License
 - SAVE affidavit (including a copy of driver's license)
 - Demonstrate that the owner of the subject property is current on all property taxes
- 2) General Contractor Documents:
 - List of contractors or subcontractors to be engaged with specific tasks
 - Business license and proof of liability insurance for reach contractor
- 3) Site Documents:
 - Evidence of Ownership; ex., vesting deed or lease (lease must have a minimum of one year remaining)
 - A current copy of the Business Owners Insurance Policy
- 4) Project Documents (Exhibits for Development Agreements must be Acceptable to and approved by the Authority):
 - Approved Project Description Sheet including a general description of improvements to be made. Applicants who lease their commercial property will attach a notarized letter from Property Owner indicating approval of the Project Description Sheet
 - Approved Community Impact Contribution Description Sheet including a description of the activity or project the applicant will undertake to meet the Community Impact Contribution requirement.
 - Project Budget, including itemized quotes and/or purchase orders for all expenses to be covered by grant funding
 - Verification of any additional project costs to be covered by applicant
 - Drawings or examples of proposed improvements if requested by Invest Atlanta
 - Project Construction Schedule

Grant Funding:

Grant proceeds cannot be used for improvements completed prior to application approval and execution of Grant Agreement. Grant proceeds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis or will be used to pay

project vendors directly upon submission of invoices from grantee and verification by Invest Atlanta. Requisitions for grant funds cannot be submitted more frequently than every 30 days and are subject to the terms and conditions identified in the grant agreement.

Approved grants are subject to the terms and conditions of an executed grant agreement. Additional grant requirements include:

- Grant recipients agree to provide periodic progress reports in the form of an electronic survey response, as periodically requested by Invest Atlanta.
- Construction on improvements shall commence within 60 days of executing a Grant Agreement, and shall be completed within 12 months.
- Grant recipients shall complete a Community Impact Contribution activity to positively impact the community surrounding their business. Community Impact Contributions can include:
 - Creating community access to fresh produce at your business
 - Dedicating an exterior wall for a community mural
 - Volunteering to clean up surrounding neighborhoods
 - Organizing and running a community food drive

APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE

Application Process:

Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis through 2024, or until all funding is allocated. Awarding of grants is subject to funding availability. Invest Atlanta staff will review all completed applications. The process for awarding grant dollars includes the following steps:

All Applicants:

- 1) Complete pre-application questions in Neighborly application portal
- 2) Eligibility confirmed, Applicant admitted to full application in Neighborly Application Portal, with priority to businesses located in disinvested areas identified in the One Atlanta Economic Mobility Strategy
- 2) Application review & selection by Invest Atlanta Selection Committee
- 3) Notification to selected grantees
- 5) Submission of final construction contracts and due diligence items outlined above
- 4) Execution of Grant Agreement for selected grantees
- 5) Grant proceeds disbursed through Invest Atlanta's requisition process, on a reimbursement basis or by direct payment to vendors work completed and verified by Invest Atlanta

Complete CPIG applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- A. Project Readiness & Eligibility
 - Documentation of eligibility according to CPIG program guidelines
 - Detailed project plan and budget
 - Detailed estimates for all labor and materials
 - Photos of the property and of specific areas proposed for improvements
- B. Project Need & Business Impact
 - Explanation of how these improvements will positively impact business performance
 - Explanation of financial need for grant funding for the project improvements
 - Priority to minority-owned businesses
 - Priority to businesses located in disinvested areas identified in One Atlanta Economic Mobility Strategy

Invest Atlanta reserves the right to reject any applications, to request additional information from some or all applicants, to amend/modify the application and the process, or to discontinue the process at any time.

Application Submission:

Submit applications via Neighborly, at www.investatlanta.com/CPIG

Applications must be submitted via Neighborly. No hard copy applications will be accepted. Applications should include upload of all required components, as outlined above.

Questions or assistance with an application should be directed to: Ashley Rivera (arivera@investatlanta.com) and Paige Mitchell (pmitchell@investatlanta.com)