

# Legacy Empowerment Grant Guidelines

## BACKGROUND

Invest Atlanta recognizes the invaluable contributions of Atlanta's legacy businesses, which have shaped the city's cultural and economic landscape for decades. To support these businesses in adapting to changing market conditions and ensuring long-term sustainability, Invest Atlanta has launched the Legacy Empowerment Grant.

This reimbursable grant provides financial assistance to modernize operations, improve marketing strategies, and integrate technology enhancements. The program aims to preserve and empower businesses that have been in continuous operation for 30 years or more, ensuring they continue to serve Atlanta's communities.

## GRANT DESCRIPTION

**Total Funding:** Up to \$5,000 per business (reimbursable basis)

**Application Period:** May 1, 2025 – June 2, 2025

**Use of Funds:** The grant funds may be used for business process modernization, technology improvements, professional services, and marketing. Grantees must submit all receipts and paid invoices within sixty (60) days from the date the grant agreement is executed to request reimbursement, as there will be only one payment request.

## ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

### Eligible Applicants

To qualify for the Legacy Empowerment Grant, businesses must:

1. **Be located within the City of Atlanta**
2. **Have been in continuous operation for at least 30 years**
3. **Hold an active City of Atlanta business license**
4. **Operate from a commercial space** (home-based businesses are ineligible)
5. **Be in good standing with the Georgia Secretary of State and the City of Atlanta**
6. If the business has multiple locations, **funds must be used solely for the original location**
7. Priority will be given to:
  - Businesses in historically **disinvested areas**
  - Businesses that experienced **temporary closures due to economic disruptions**
  - Businesses that have received **minimal or no previous grant funding**

### Eligible Uses of Funds

- Funds must be used for modernization and business sustainability efforts, including:
- Marketing & Advertising (website development, SEO, social media ads, promotional materials)
- Professional Services (legal, accounting, business consulting)
- Technology Improvements (e-commerce platforms, CRM software, payment processing systems)

## **Ineligible Applicants**

The following businesses are not eligible for funding:

- Businesses engaged in illegal activities under federal, state, or local laws.
- Corporate-owned franchises or national credit tenants.
- Government-owned entities.
- Life insurance companies.
- Financial businesses primarily engaged in the business of lending, such as banks, finance companies, loan packagers, and factors.
- Businesses located in a foreign country.
- Businesses owned or operated by officials or employees of the City of Atlanta or Invest Atlanta (or their family members).
- Businesses engaged in adult businesses as defined by City Code §16-29.001(3).
- Businesses deriving a significant portion of their income from gambling activities (except those earning less than one-third of their annual gross revenue from Georgia lottery sales).
- Liquor stores or businesses where 51% or more of revenue comes from alcohol sales.
- Pyramid sale distribution plans.
- Private clubs that limit membership for reasons other than capacity.
- Businesses engaged primarily in political or lobbying activities.
- Businesses principally engaged in teaching, instructing, counseling or indoctrinating religion or religious beliefs, whether in a religious or secular setting.
- Passive businesses owned by developers and landlords with no active ties to for-profit business activities at the location.
- Businesses that have defaulted on a City of Atlanta or Invest Atlanta loan, grant, or assisted financing (unless waived for good cause)

## **APPLICATION PROCESS & TMELINE**

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

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

#### **Legal Documents and Other Information:**

- Current City of Atlanta Business License
- Certificate of Incorporation or Certificate of Organization from the GA Secretary of State's Office\*
- Annual Registration from Georgia Secretary of State\*
- Certificate of Existence\*
- Signed Operating Agreement or Bylaws\*
- Executed Lease Agreement or Property Deed
- Complete and Notarized SAVE Affidavit
- Franchise Agreement (if applicable)\*
- At least two (2) different estimates for items to be funded
- Certificate Designating Authorized Grantee Representative\*
- Completed Form W9
- Labeled pictures of the exterior and interior (for commercial site)
- Government-Issued ID
- If not a U.S. Citizen, proof of resident alien status (PHOTOCOPY both sides of "Green Card")

Note: Documents with an asterisk mark at end are also the due diligence items required by the legal team to execute a grant agreement.

### **Grant Selection & Scoring**

Applications will be evaluated using the following scoring matrix (100-point maximum):

	<b>Max Points</b>	<b>Scoring Criteria</b>
<b>Business Longevity</b>	20	30-39 years = 10 pts, 40-49 years = 15 pts, 50+ years = 20 pts
<b>Community Impact &amp; Local Contributions</b>	15	Strong evidence = 15 pts, Moderate = 10 pts, Minimal = 5 pts
<b>Job Creation &amp; Retention</b>	15	10+ jobs retained = 15 pts, 5-9 jobs = 10 pts, 1-4 jobs = 5 pts
<b>Financial Need &amp; Stability</b>	15	Significant need with sustainability plan = 15 pts, Moderate need = 10 pts, Minimal need = 5 pts
<b>Historical/Cultural Significance</b>	10	Strong documented significance = 10 pts, Moderate = 5 pts, None = 0 pts
<b>Adaptability &amp; Modernization</b>	10	Strong adaptation = 10 pts, Moderate = 5 pts, None = 0 pts
<b>Location in Historically Disinvested Areas</b>	10	Located in a disinvested or underserved community = 10 pts, Partial impact area = 5 pts, Not applicable = 0 pts
<b>Previous Grant Funding</b>	5	No prior funding = 5 pts, Some prior funding = 3 pts, Significant prior funding = 0 pts

Applicants **must meet a minimum score threshold** to be considered for funding.

### **Evaluation Process & Funding Priority**

1. **Minimum Score Requirement:** Applicants must score at least **60 points** to be considered for funding.
2. **Priority Consideration:**
  - a. Businesses in historically disinvested areas
  - b. Businesses that experienced economic disruptions (e.g., COVID-19 closures)
  - c. Businesses that have received minimal or no previous grant funding
3. **Tiebreaker Criteria:** If multiple applicants score equally but exceed available funding, Invest Atlanta will prioritize businesses based on:
  - a. Highest business longevity
  - b. Highest community impact score
  - c. Level of financial need for funds per impact statement

### **Selection Process Timeline**

1. **Pre-Application Screening:** Invest Atlanta staff will verify applicant eligibility.
2. **Application Review:** The Grant Selection Committee will evaluate and score eligible applications.
3. **Notification:** Approved businesses will receive an email confirming their selection.
4. Submission of due diligence items outlined above to the legal team.
5. **Grant Agreement & Disbursement:**
  - o Selected businesses must sign a grant agreement.
  - o Reimbursement will be processed upon submission of paid invoices, receipts, and financial documentation.
6. **Reporting Requirement:** Grantees must submit a follow-up report detailing the impact of the funds on their business operations within 90 days after receiving their funds.

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 Invest Atlanta's website**

Applications must be submitted via Invest Atlanta's website. No hard copy applications will be accepted. Applications should include upload of all required components, as outlined above.

Questions or assistance regarding an application should be directed to:

Alicia Gadson [agadson@investatlanta.com](mailto:agadson@investatlanta.com)

Invest Atlanta's chat box [Contact Us](#)

Phone number 404-474-7294