Downtown Greensboro Incorporated (DGI) has designed a Vibrancy Grant program (VGP) to stimulate business growth and enhance the aesthetics of downtown storefronts. This program will provide financial support to cover various expenses geared towards improving services, expanding commercial opportunities, and enhancing the visual appeal of storefronts. Made possible through the generosity of the Duke Energy Foundation, our goal with this grant is to foster a thriving and vibrant downtown community. For more details on guidelines, eligibility, and the application process, please see below.

**GUIDELINES:**

* DGI has the sole discretion to make grants to businesses who submit a completed application that DGI determines meets the goals and objectives of the program
* Grant recipients will receive a reimbursable grant of up to $2,500
* Eligible businesses must be physical storefronts located within the Downtown Greensboro Business Improvement District (BID)
* Business must have fewer than 50 employees
* Business must supply verifiable receipt or cancelled check to document reimbursement
* The Program could also consider other creative initiatives, such as activating an adjacent alleyway or vacant lot, if it helps the business to expand and thrive.
* Projects should consider community impact and engagement, enhancing the overall downtown experience.

**ELIGIBILITY**

* Eligible grant expenditures include:
  + **New Technology for Sales Efficiency:** This covers investments in new point-of-sale systems and other electronic equipment, expanding advertising and digital marketing efforts, increasing social media presence, and programs aimed at workforce development and job creation.
  + **Investments to Expand Services and Commerce:** Eligible expenses include modifying physical spaces to improve functionality, covering material and construction costs, and reimbursing for tools, furniture, fixtures, and equipment such as tables, chairs, and display counters. Signage, billboard expenses, and sourcing goods and services from local suppliers are also covered.
  + **Storefront Beautification:** This includes projects that improve the appearance or curb appeal of the business, such as interior and exterior painting, awnings, lighting fixtures, outdoor seating or gathering areas, and planters.
* Projects that do not contribute to business growth or activation of the space are ineligible for program funds. This includes expenses like payroll, rent, and utilities, which are commonly excluded from consideration.

Prior to receiving approval, applicants must be in good standing with the City with respect to taxes, fees, loans, or other financial obligations to the City, and in compliance with all City codes.

**ADMINISTATION:** All VGP applications will be reviewed by Downtown Greensboro Inc. staff. The final decision to award funds for the project will be made by DGI’s Board of Directors. DGI staff will assist applicants in planning and implementing the proposed project. The assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* Review storefront design features with the applicant or applicant’s designee and recommend specific design elements for the storefront.
* Facilitate and coordinate the City’s building permit process; Assist and monitor construction activities and compliance.

**GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS**

* Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact DGI staff to discuss project details before submitting a grant application. Applicants should also determine early in the planning phase any applications and/or permits needed for the project. Applicants are responsible for all permitting and necessary approvals prior to commencing work on the project.
* An applicant submits a completed application package with all required attachments. Applications must include details about proposed changes and additions and describe how this will enhance the growth and vibrancy of their business downtown.
* If the project review is favorable, staff will forward the grant application to DGI’s Board of Directors for final action. The Board will review the recommendation, normally within 10 working days.
* If the application is approved, DGI staff issues a letter of commitment to authorize funding, subject to the review of the finished construction and determination that the project meets the guidelines of the Program.
* Within 30 days of completion, applicants must submit via email:
  + Before and after photographs of the project
  + Copies of all receipts associated with the project confirming payment or project expenses