



DOWNTOWN CATALYST FLEX GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES, CRITERIA, & APPLICATION PACKET

Administered by the City of Griffin Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

City of Griffin Economic Development

201 East Solomon St.

Griffin, GA 30223

(770) 228-5356

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Statement of Intent

The Flex Grant program is a discretionary, performance-based gap-financing tool designed to leverage substantial private capital investment, accelerate major building renovations, and drive high-impact economic development within both the designated Griffin Downtown Development area and the TAD1 overlay.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) recognizes that major commercial, industrial, market-rate residential, and mixed-use developments frequently encounter late-stage capital gaps or severe, unforeseen development hurdles. This targeted incentive is designed to bridge those exact financing gaps, ensuring projects move forward that would otherwise stall, while delivering community benefits including an increased tax base, job creation, and the elimination of blight and long-term building vacancies.

2. Grant Limitations & The 10% Financing Cap

The Flex Grant is an explicitly discretionary cash grant awarded by the DDA Board on a highly competitive basis. To ensure the financial sustainability of the program across fiscal cycles, funding limitations are strictly enforced:

- **The 10% Rule:** The maximum award amount for any single project shall be capped at **10% of the total verified project funding/capital investment.**
- *Examples of Maximum Funding Boundaries:*
 - A \$500,000 verified capital investment is eligible for a maximum grant of up to \$50,000.
 - A \$1,000,000 verified capital investment is eligible for a maximum grant of up to \$100,000.
- **Discretionary Scaling:** Meeting the minimum criteria and the 10% threshold does not guarantee maximum funding. The DDA Board determines final award sizes based entirely on the project's overall positive impact on the community. Larger grant awards are prioritized for projects that:
 1. Project significantly higher local tax revenue generation.
 2. Create a substantial number of permanent, high-quality jobs.
 3. Formally agree to take on, stabilize, and fully rehabilitate key, large-scale blighted or vacant properties within the district.
 4. Feature high-density mixed-use development that directly integrates both commercial spaces and downtown housing units.

3. Annual Budgeting & Program Availability

The DDA maintains an overall fixed allocation for the Flex Grant program within its annual fiscal budget. A discrete number of grants are available each fiscal year. Once the annual funding pool is fully committed by the Board, no further grants will be evaluated or awarded until the following fiscal cycle.

OFFICIAL PROGRAM CRITERIA & COMPLIANCE

1. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for evaluation by the DDA Board, an applicant and project must meet the following baseline thresholds:

- **Location:** The underlying real estate asset must be located entirely within the designated legal boundaries of the Griffin Downtown Development Authority zone.
- **Eligible Uses:** The project must be classified as a commercial, industrial, market-rate residential, or mixed-use development.
- **Minimum Capital Threshold:** The applicant must demonstrate a verified minimum capital investment of **\$500,000** dedicated strictly to building improvements, structural renovations, and core machinery/equipment purchases.
- **Zoning & Regulatory Compliance:** The project must meet all local City of Griffin zoning requirements, planning ordinances, historic preservation guidelines, and building codes.

2. Timeline & Project Commencement Policy

- **Active Project & Hardship Consideration:** While applications are ideally submitted prior to construction, the DDA will consider applications for projects already underway that have unexpectedly stalled due to documented financing gaps or severe, unforeseen development expenses (such as hidden utility complications, hazardous material mitigation, or critical structural failures discovered mid-renovation).
- **The "At-Risk" Rule:** Applicants must understand that commencing or continuing construction prior to an official board vote is done **entirely at the developer's financial risk**. The DDA is under no legal obligation to close active funding gaps, and application submission carries no explicit or implied guarantee of an award.
- **Monthly Intake Deadlines:** Applications are processed year-round. To be placed on the agenda for the monthly DDA Board Meeting (held on the **second Tuesday of each month at 8:15 AM**), a completely executed application and all required attachments must be received by the DDA Executive Director by the close of business on the **first Monday of that month**.

- **Mandatory Board Presentation:** The applicant (or an authorized corporate officer) must attend the scheduled DDA Board meeting to deliver a maximum 10-minute presentation. This presentation must feature physical or digital architectural drawings, site plans, and visual mock-ups to contextualize the project and address board inquiries.

A formal funding determination will be rendered within 45 days of the presentation.

3. Performance Agreement & Fund Disbursement

- **The Performance Contract:** Following board approval, the grantee must execute a formal, legally binding Performance Agreement detailing the specific capital investment targets, project timeline, and job creation projections.
- **Reimbursement Delivery Model:** No upfront capital is provided. The Flex Grant operates strictly as a reimbursement mechanism. Funds will only be disbursed via a single check after:
 1. The project achieves full physical completion.
 2. The City of Griffin issues a final Certificate of Occupancy (CO).
 3. The grantee submits comprehensive, audited documentation (paid contractor invoices, equipment receipts, lien waivers) verifying that the proposed capital investment was fully made. Receipts will be checked line-by-line against the originally approved budget.

4. Post-Completion Sustainability & Clawback Schedule

To protect public funds and ensure long-term economic returns, the grant remains under evaluation for a four-year compliance period post-completion. Grantees must submit an annual project update report to the DDA detailing operations, tenancy, and sustainability.

If the business closes, moves out of the DDA zone, or fails to maintain the agreed-upon capital investment level during this four-year window, a mandatory clawback will be legally enforced according to the following strict schedule:

- **Closure/Default within Year 1: 100% Clawback** of total grant funds.
- **Closure/Default within Year 2: 75% Clawback** of total grant funds.
- **Closure/Default within Year 3: 50% Clawback** of total grant funds.
- **Closure/Default within Year 4: 25% Clawback** of total grant funds.
- **Beyond Year 4: 0% Clawback** (The grant terms are deemed successfully fulfilled).

5. Mandatory Project Timelines, Milestones, and Fund Expiration

Project Commencement Mandate: Active construction, rehabilitation, or development work on the approved project must officially commence within twelve (12) months of the DDA Board of Directors'

formal award approval date. Failure to initiate verifiable project work within this 12-month window will automatically render the grant allocation null and void.

Standard Completion Window: Approved projects must achieve Final Completion within twenty-four (24) months of the DDA Board of Directors' formal award approval date. This timeline ensures that public matching funds are deployed efficiently.

Definition of Final Completion

For the purposes of fund disbursement and performance evaluation, a project shall be legally recognized as having achieved "Final Completion" only when all the following administrative criteria have been executed and verified by DDA staff:

- One hundred percent (100%) completion of all construction, structural stabilization, facade improvements, and machinery acquisitions outlined in the approved application budget layout.
- Official inspection and final building sign-off by local municipal officials, culminating in the issuance of an unconditional Certificate of Occupancy (CO) by the City of Griffin Building Department.
- Submission of all paid subcontractor invoices, general contractor lien waivers, and financial accounting documents required for the mandatory line-item receipt audit conducted by DDA staff.

Board-Level Extension Variance Policy

The DDA recognizes that large-scale redevelopments frequently face volatile materials markets, labor shortages, or complex historic preservation permitting delays. If a grant recipient faces a documented development hardship that threatens the standard 24-month performance deadline, they may petition the DDA for a timeline variance under the following strict parameters:

1. **Variance Duration Cap:** Each individual timeline extension request shall be strictly capped at a maximum variance of three (3) calendar months per petition.
2. **Frequency of Submission:** A grant recipient is permitted to submit a "Project Milestone Extension Request Form" multiple times throughout the lifecycle of the construction phase if consecutive or distinct hardships arise.
3. **Limitation of DDA Obligation:** The DDA Board of Directors retains absolute discretionary authority over all extension petitions. The DDA is explicitly under no obligation to grant any variance at all. The submission of an extension request does not establish an entitlement, precedent, or implied obligation for the DDA to approve a timeline adjustment, regardless of the severity of the construction delay.
4. **Submission Deadline:** The formal "Project Milestone Extension Request Form" must be filled out completely, attached to verified construction progress logs, and received by the DDA Executive Director at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the expiration of the then-current active performance window (the original 24-month deadline or the previously approved

extended deadline).

5. **Automatic De-obligation:** Failure to achieve Final Completion within the standard 24-month window (or the approved 3-month extended window) will result in the immediate and automatic expiration of the grant award. Upon expiration, all encumbered public matching funds will be automatically de-obligated and returned to the general DDA discretionary funding pool without further action or liability by the Board.

Contact & Program Administration

For technical questions, pre-application intake consultations, or assistance with application packet formatting and slide submission requirements, please contact the City of Griffin Economic Development office. Completed application packets and supplemental visual exhibits must be formally submitted to the DDA Executive Director for administrative vetting and agenda placement.

Office Location: City of Griffin Economic Development, 201 East Solomon St., Griffin, GA 30223

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