



# Downtown Pop-Up Opportunity Fund

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **Downtown Pop-Up Opportunity Fund** is a grant initiative supported by the Eastside and Westside Tax Allocation Districts (TADs). It is designed to accelerate the lease and activation of vacant or underutilized commercial storefronts in Downtown Atlanta within the TADs.

The program specifically intends to support independent, locally owned retail and restaurant businesses seeking to occupy storefront locations ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and other upcoming large-scale events.

Grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, helping cover tenant improvement costs that may otherwise prevent businesses from securing Downtown space.

The Fund is administered by Central Atlanta Progress in partnership with Invest Atlanta and Showcase Atlanta. These guidelines constitute the official governing document of the Program and are subject to change at our discretion.

## GRANT AMOUNT

- Eligible applicants may request up to \$50,000.
- Funds are intended for physical improvements associated with new leases or license agreements within ground-floor, commercial storefronts.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Downtown Pop-up Opportunity Fund aims to:

- Stimulate lease-up and/or short-term activations of vacant or underutilized commercial storefronts in Downtown Atlanta.
- Provide local small businesses with access to high-demand retail and restaurant spaces.
- Leverage property-owner relationships to accelerate leasing in ready-to-occupy storefronts.
- Maximize economic opportunities for existing Atlanta businesses during the 2026 FIFA World Cup and other large events.



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## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

### Qualified Small Business

Applicants must meet **ALL** the following criteria:

- **Locally Owned & Independent:** Be independently owned and operated by a local entrepreneur; franchises and national chains are ineligible. Local is defined as the Metro Atlanta area, with a preference to City of Atlanta based entities.
- **Business Type:** Be a retail or restaurant operator, including soft good retailer, café, bakery, bar, full-service restaurant, or specialty retailer. Professional services (e.g., accounting, legal, marketing, consulting) that do not primarily serve retail consumers are ineligible.
- **Scale:** Be a small, independent business that “but for” the micro-grant support would be challenged to secure a Downtown lease. There is no strict employee or revenue cap
- **Location:** Must have a new letter of intent, lease, or license agreement for a vacant storefront in the Downtown area within Eastside or Westside TAD boundaries. [\[Address Look-up Tool\]](#). **Note: Businesses currently operating in an existing leased space are not eligible, and funds cannot be used to improve an already-occupied location.**

### Property Owner

Applicants may also be **property owners** who meet ALL of the following:

- Own commercial property within the Downtown Atlanta area within Eastside or Westside TAD boundaries. [\[Address Look-up Tool\]](#)
- Control vacant or underutilized storefronts available for lease to eligible small businesses.
- Have legal authority to enter into a lease or tenant improvement agreement with qualifying small businesses
- Have a new letter of intent, lease, or license agreement for a vacant storefront in the eligible area.



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## WHAT CAN FUNDS BE USED FOR?

### Eligible Improvements

Grant funds may be used for physical improvements either interior or exterior of a previously vacant space that:

- Comply with local zoning, design and historic preservation guidelines.
- Enhance customer experience and storefront appearance, function, and condition.
- Examples include:
  - Construction of walls, ceilings, and structural elements
  - Flooring, painting, lighting
  - Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems improvements
  - Signage, canopies, awnings, vendor branding
  - Food prep surfaces, counters, fixed displays
  - Furniture, fixtures, and equipment (up to 20% of total grant)

### Ineligible Uses

Grant funds **cannot** be used for:

- Operating expenses or payroll
- Rent or lease payments
- Inventory or working capital
- Marketing or advertising
- Any costs incurred prior to grant award
- Improvements to a currently occupied space

## REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION

The application will require the following:

- Business (Tenant) contact information
- Details about the proposed space, including a summary of the work the grant would fund
- Copy of lease, license agreement, or Letter of Intent for a space within the eligible geography.
- Copy of City of Atlanta business license



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- Articles of Incorporation/Organization or Secretary of State registration
- Business U.S. IRS W-9
- Estimated budget/ scope of work
- Proposed project timeline

## Application Process

Applications are reviewed and approved by Central Atlanta Progress and Invest Atlanta staff on a rolling basis based on eligibility and funding availability.

Due to a desire to maximize grant deployment before FIFA World Cup, as well and the timelines associated with any required permits for grant supported work, we highly encourage applicants to submit applications no later than Friday, March 6, 2026.

## Funding Process

Upon award, grant proceeds are distributed on a reimbursement basis to the applicant. **Direct payment to vendors may be approved only in limited circumstances and solely at the discretion of Central Atlanta Progress.** All work must be performed by appropriately licensed professionals as required by Georgia law. Successful applicants will be required to execute a Grant Agreement with Central Atlanta Progress that will further document the grant requirements and reimbursement process.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

All other questions on the application or about the funding process can be directed to [retail@atlantadowntown.com](mailto:retail@atlantadowntown.com) with "Program Questions" as the subject line.