

Main Street: Open for Business - FAQs

Administration

- What is the match?
20% of the grant total, less with demonstrated need.
- What is the limit?
Individual projects are estimated to range between \$10,000 and \$150,000; anticipated average award of \$50,000. Total award limit is \$1,000,000.
- Can we commit or obligate the funds but spend them after June 30, 2022?
No. All funds must be spent by June 30, 2022.
- Could you clarify administrative costs?
Up to 5% of the grant award can be used to cover administrative costs. Administration can be handled by the granted entity, or can be completed by a partner entity, such as the local nonprofit Main Street program; a hired contractor; or partner agency, such as a council of government.
- Can local ARP funds be used as match?
Recipients should check U.S. Treasury guidance on the DOLA website and their own legal counsel. Note that if federal funds are used, Section 106 rules must be followed, causing possible delays.

Eligible Buildings/Businesses

- Are strip malls eligible?
Not likely. The intent of funds is to invest in small businesses in downtowns and create a ripple effect of property investment.
- Are vacant buildings eligible?
Maybe - If business will open by June 30, 2022, and applicant can demonstrate its potential impact to improve the downtown.
- Will all buildings/businesses in a grant application be awarded funds?
It is our hope to award complete proposals; however, any proposed building/business may not be funded due to ineligible expenses or lack of clear return on investment (increased sales/jobs, decreased energy costs). Proposals should reflect a package of projects that will be a catalyst for further investment in downtowns, and make an appreciable difference in the town's aesthetics.
- What is your definition of "small, local business"?
Generally, a locally owned business in the permanent building stock of downtowns that can demonstrate increased sales revenue/jobs and decreased energy costs (retail, restaurant, salons, etc.)

- Are buildings with second-floor tenants eligible?
Yes, if there is a business open on the first floor that can demonstrate the metrics for return on investment.
- Are municipal/county buildings eligible?
Not likely. The intent of funds is to invest in small businesses in downtowns and create a ripple effect of property investment. If the building rents space to businesses, it may be eligible. Public/nonprofit theaters may also be eligible.
- What is your definition of “downtown”?
Typically, a downtown district will meet *two or more of the following*: the city’s historic area of commerce; may be the area around the courthouse or city square; commercial area for the community; buildings of historical significance, but not primarily residential; areas included in or contiguous to the economic center of the community; and the retail area for the community that does not include single-family dwellings.
- Do buildings have to be historic or in a historic district?
No. Buildings should be in a traditional downtown (see above).

Design / Eligible Expenses

- **What are the basic design review expectations of the grant program?**
 - Compliance with all local design guidelines and local protocol for all building improvements including obtaining any required permits and approval of desired improvements (such as Historic Preservation Commission and/or Design Committee).
 - All designs are subject to recommendations by the Open for Business Grant Review Committee. All applicants are encouraged to reach out to the Colorado Main Street team for review of proposed changes, especially if there is no local review process.
- **What if the building is on the State or National Register, and/or has received State Historical Fund grants in the past?**
All work on buildings on the State or National Register must follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, and proposed work is subject to review by History Colorado.
- **What does it mean if a project is using federal funds as a match and Section 106 review rules apply?**
Any use of federal funds on a project requires determination of historic eligibility. While Colorado Main Street will have a consultant to help with some of this review, capacity is limited and this may cause delays in projects. An exception would be if a building is already listed on the National or State Register (or in a National or State District), in which case, work may proceed along Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.
- **Will you fund private outdoor dining spaces?**

The project would also need to enhance the aesthetics of the building/business and downtown, as that (along with energy efficiency) is the primary purpose of the grants. Another option to expand outdoor seating if the expanded area is municipal right-of-way and open to the public is the CDOT Revitalizing Main Street grant (<https://www.codot.gov/programs/revitalizingmainstreets>). If the property is privately owned, the City would have to have an open application and selection process to award specific businesses.

- **Will the addition of “garage doors” in place of windows qualify as an eligible expense?**

It depends. All designs should keep in mind the above guidelines regarding local design commissions and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for designated buildings. We also advise design appropriateness and authenticity, respecting the building's past and future. Any questions as to appropriateness should be directed to Main Street Architect Larry Lucas, larry.lucas@state.co.us.

- **Some of our buildings are close to the CDOT ROW so construction work might need temporary construction easement.**

DOLA Main Street will connect with CDOT to explain the project and offer any requested input.

- **Can we submit two separate applications, if our community has two business corridors that could meet the definition of a historic district?**

The maximum award will still be \$1 million dollars for the municipality. Even if they are separate URAs, etc. only one application by the Town will be accepted.