

Business Improvement Grant Program



Program Guidelines and Application Packet

HOW TO GET STARTED

Step 1: Confirm the building is within the GCRA District.
Visit gainesvillefl.gov/GCRAmap and enter the building address.

Step 2: If within the GCRA District, complete the Application.

Questions?

Contact the GCRA at 352-393-8200 or DG_GCRAPrograms@gainesvillefl.gov

As approved by the Gainesville City Commission

November 5, 2020 (Legistar #200275)

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De minimis changes approved May 15, 2025



Gainesville
Community
Reinvestment
Area



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The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area ("GCRA") was created in 2019 through the adoption of Ordinance 181001. The goal of the GCRA is to encourage investment in underserved areas within the district.

Section 1. About the Business Improvement Grant Program

The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA), a department of the City of Gainesville, is offering the Business Improvement Grant Program. This program assists building and business owners in improving their façades and approved permanent interior improvements. A “façade” is defined as the exterior of a building facing a public way. The building must be located within the GCRA district as defined in Section 5.

The purpose of the Business Improvement Grant Program is to use GCRA funds to encourage private investment in making significant improvements to building exteriors and approved permanent interior improvements to major building systems such as HVAC, plumbing, electrical/gas, and other features that extend the economic life of a building. Improvements made are expected to return public benefits such as enhanced corridor aesthetics, improved pedestrian comfort, re-activation of existing building stock, and public safety. The Business Improvement Grant Program meets reinvestment objectives identified within the GCRA 10-Year Reinvestment Plan.

Section 2. Eligibility Requirements

1. To be eligible the building must be located within the boundary of the map shown in Section 5. Addresses can be verified online at gainesvillecra.com/gcra-project-map/, or by calling (352) 393-8200.
2. Non-profits may apply, but residential and governmental facilities do not qualify for this Program. Residential is defined within the context of this Program as single, multi-family homes, or properties intended for short-term leasing. Private businesses that are tenants in governmental facilities are eligible for the program.
3. Businesses must provide proof they are current with their business tax payment with the City of Gainesville (a copy of their business licenses or proof of payment must be attached to the Application). If the entity is not required to have a business tax license with the City as determined by City staff and presented with the application, this requirement is waived.
4. Properties with judgment liens, code violations, or delinquencies in mortgage or tax obligations are not eligible. The exception to this is if the building was purchased with code violations, in which case the grant funds can be used to address said violations. The property must also have any zoning required for the intended use in place prior to being awarded a grant under this Program.
5. If the Applicant is not the building and property owner, the building and property owner must agree in writing to allow and support the Application as part of the application process (per GCRA Owner Consent Form, page 20). “Applicant” is defined as the entity that is completing the Application.
6. Buildings constructed within the last fifteen years are not eligible for this grant.
7. Project must have proper City permits and GCRA approval prior to beginning work. Any work that begins prior to receiving permits and/or GCRA approval is not eligible for reimbursement. The sole exception is Section 3.6 concerning architectural and engineering work performed prior to grant approval that becomes part of the approved grant. “Project” as defined here refers to the work to be done by the Applicant.
8. An estimated amount of time in months to complete the Project must be provided on the Application for exterior and/or interior improvements. The Project must be started within 60 days and completed within 18 months of the date the GCRA approves the Application. Failure to do so without an approved extension by the GCRA will result in the termination of the grant. An example of an acceptable extension request that would be granted would be a delay caused by a hurricane. Acceptance of an extension request is at the discretion of the GCRA Director.

Section 3. Eligible Improvements

Eligible exterior improvements are restricted to work done on the exterior of the building and associated elements that are visible from the associated Transit Corridor. A Transit Corridor can be a public road or thoroughfare for pedestrian traffic. All work must be performed according to applicable codes.

Eligible interior improvements are restricted to work done on major permanently installed building systems, including electrical upgrades, plumbing upgrades, and other work that the GCRA staff deems appropriate,

Examples of eligible improvements are listed below; however, this list is not exhaustive:

1. Signs - including removing the old and the design, production, and installation of new signs or renovation of existing signage.
2. Awnings/Canopies - including the removal of old awnings and canopies and the design, production, and installation of new awnings and canopies.
3. Façade- includes work performed on the exterior storefront of a building such as cleaning masonry (high-pressure water or steam - sandblasting is prohibited on masonry structures), painting, re-pointing (filling in or repair to joints), woodwork, window and/or door replacement, and other repairs (that are not maintenance related), or rebuilding historic storefronts. As used in this document, a storefront is defined as the front side of a store facing a transit corridor.
4. Walls, fencing, and landscaping – includes work that removes and replaces or adds appropriate fencing and landscaping to hide incompatible uses or negative site elements such as storage yards, outdoor fabrication, work areas, or dumpsters.
5. Removing and disposing of old façade coverings - i.e. vinyl and aluminum cladding, window boards.
6. Architectural and engineering fees - not to exceed 10 percent of Project amount. Upon grant approval work performed in this category can be reimbursed up to this limit.
7. Outdated security features - removing roll-up metal security doors and metal window grates.
8. Restoring original decorative building elements.
9. Increasing glazing (window area) - increasing amount of glazing to attain a minimum of 50% of façade area, except where such improvement would negatively impact the integrity of a historic building.
10. Upgrading of electrical panels and wiring.
11. Upgrading of HVAC systems.
12. Upgrading plumbing systems.
13. Repairs that ensure a building's structural integrity include work on foundations, exterior walls, roofing members, and interior load-bearing walls.
14. Any other permanent interior improvements as approved by the GCRA that, in its judgment, will extend the economic life of a structure.
15. Permanent improvements to aid compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

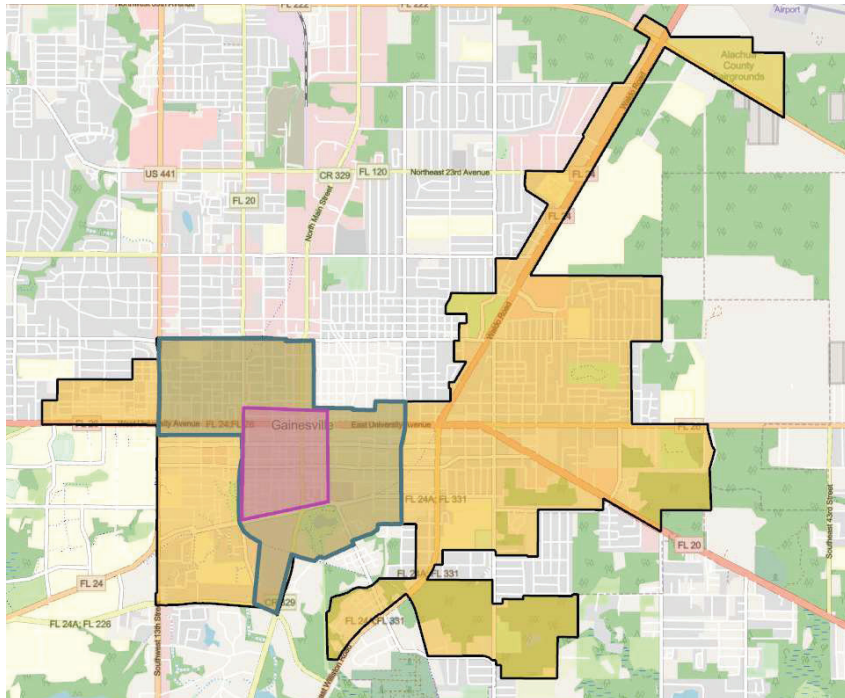
Section 4. Ineligible Improvements

The following items are not eligible for the grant: exterior improvements visible less than 24 hours per day, features designed to be installed temporarily, features that do not meet the applicable provisions of the City of Gainesville Land Development Code, including special area plans and maintenance activities. Examples of activities that are primarily for maintenance are painting, asphalt sealing, and landscape maintenance. Power-washing, in general, is considered a maintenance activity, but power-washing to maintain brick masonry is allowable per Section 3.3. Any form of abrasive washing should only be done by a professional who is insured against any damage they may cause. The GCRA does not assume any liability for damage caused by the Applicant's power-washing. Sandblasting is not an eligible activity in the BIG program. Any interior improvements that the GCRA determines do not extend the economic life of the building will not be allowed.

This list is not exhaustive. If painting, power-washing, brick repair, or similar cosmetic work is proposed to take place with significant exterior enhancements, those activities will be eligible for the incentive.

Section 5. Business Improvement Grant Boundary

On October 20, 2022, the City of Gainesville adopted its Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan. The plan identified the Strategic Plan Focus Area that serves as the foundation for the Business Improvement Grant's core.



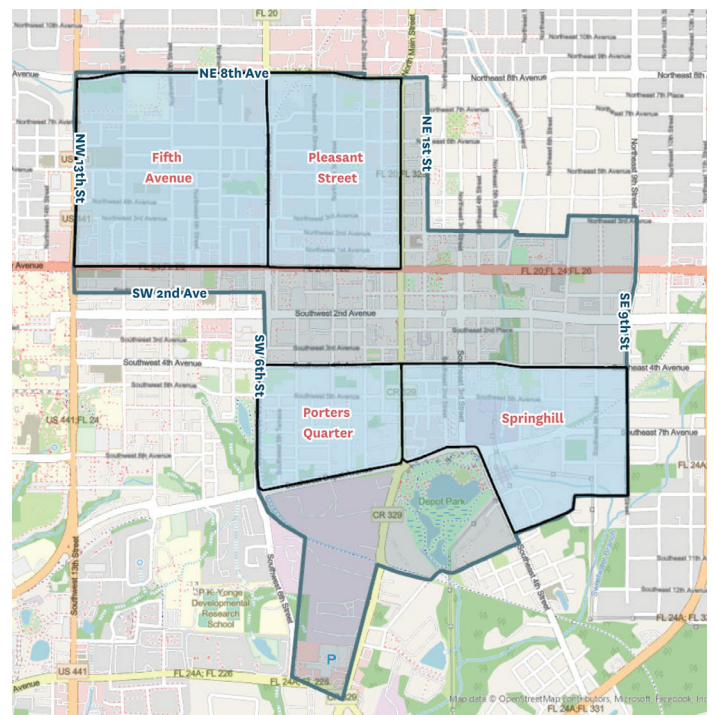
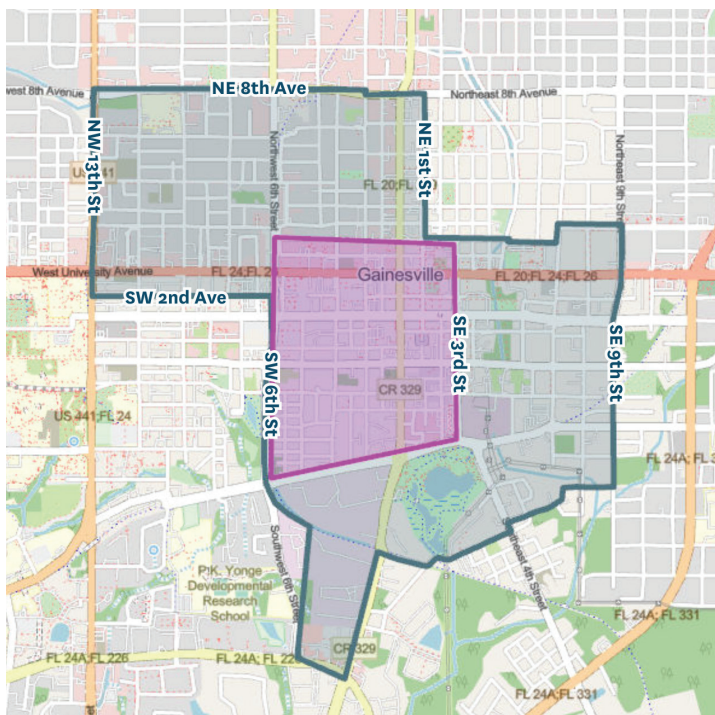
LEGEND

GCRA BOUNDARY

BOUNDARY OF BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

DOWNTOWN CORE BOUNDARY

NEIGHBORHOODS



Section 6. Available Funding Tiers

The Business Improvement Grant program has funding available in tiers. Tier 1 funding is available throughout the year until its funds are allocated, and tiers 2 through 3 funding are available in application cycles. Applications in tiers 2 and 3 are reviewed and ranked within the same ranking pool. Grant funds are capped **at a maximum per parcel** at the tier that is applied for minus any lower tier application granted. For example, John's Jacket Shack applied for a Tier 1 grant and received \$5,000. The following year, they applied for a Tier 2 grant for \$50,000. They were awarded the grant but would receive $\$50,000 - \$5,000 = \$45,000$ available to them under the Tier 2 grant. If they then applied the following year for Tier 3 and were awarded, the maximum available to them would be $\$150,000 - \$50,000 = \$100,000$.

Tier 1

Provides up to \$5,000 of grant funds at a 100 percent match. GCRA staff will review and assign points from the Objective portion of the Decision Matrix. Upon review and assignment of a minimum of 17 points this tier can be approved administratively by the GCRA Director and City leadership and will be available until funding for this tier is exhausted.

Funding for this tier will be determined annually and will be set at 10 percent of the total Program's funding for the fiscal year. For example, if the Program were funded at \$200,000 for the fiscal year this tier would have funding of \$20,000 for the year. Continuing the example with \$20,000 for the year, each of the two cycles would receive $(\$20,000 * 0.50) = \$10,000$. If the first cycle for the year at this tier does not use the full amount, it rolls into the second cycle for the year.

Tier 2

A 50 percent matching grant that provides up to \$50,000 of grant funds. The Applicant must receive a combined minimum total of 18 points from the Objective and Subjective portions of the Decision Matrix and their ranking position for the application window must have available remaining funds.

The total funding for this tier on an annual basis is forty percent of the Program's budget. Each cycle receives half of the resulting tier funds. Continuing the example above, if \$200,000 of funds were designated for the year, it would provide $(\$200,000 * 0.40) = \$80,000$ total for the tier, and each of the two cycles would receive \$40,000. If the first cycle for the year at this tier does not use the full amount, it rolls into the second cycle for the year.

Tier 3 Historic Building Grant

A 50 percent matching grant that provides up to \$150,000 of matching grant funds. The City of Gainesville's Historic Preservation Officer must review the proposed work and come to a finding that the proposed work does not impact the Historic Preservation of the building. If the Applicant does not agree with the Historic Preservation Officer's finding, they can appeal to the Historic Preservation Board for a review of the finding. If the Historic Preservation Board also rejects the Application, then the Application will not be allowed to proceed. If the proposed work is approved by either the Planner or the Board, a letter will be provided to the Applicant stating that the proposed work is acceptable to the City, and the Application will be allowed to proceed.

The Applicant must receive a combined minimum total of 25 points from the Objective and Subjective portions of the Decision Matrix and their ranking position for the application window must have available remaining funds. One of the following individual designations must be in place on the property by the time of the Downtown Advisory Board's review (this is an exception to all documents must be complete at time of application).

- a. Building is individually designated on the National Register of Historic Places
- b. Building is individually designated on the City of Gainesville's Historic Local Register as identified at: www.cityofgainesville.org/PlanningDepartment/HistoricPreservation.aspx

The total funding for this tier on an annual basis is fifty percent of the Program's budget. Each cycle receives half of the resulting tier funds. Continuing the example above, if \$200,000 of funds were designated for the year, it would provide $(\$200,000 * 0.50) = \$100,000$ total for the tier, and each of the two cycles would receive \$50,000. If the first cycle for the year at this tier does not use the full amount, it rolls into the second cycle for the year.

Any grant request greater than \$100,000 will go to City Commission for final review and approval

Section 7. Application Cycles / Timeline

Fall / Winter

February 1
5 p.m.

March Board
Meeting

End of March

March / April

Application
Deadline

Downtown
Advisory Board
Approval

Notified of
Decision

Execute
Agreement

Project Period 18 Months from
Agreement Execution Date

Spring / Summer

August 1
5 p.m.

September Board
Meeting

End of September

September /
October

Post-Completion and Pre-Grant Payout
Tier 1 - 5 Year Improvement Preservation Easement
Tier 2 - <\$25,000 - 10 Year Improvement Preservation Easement
 >\$25,000 - 10 Year Forgivable Mortgage
Tier 3 - 15 Year Forgivable Mortgage

*Note if the application deadline is on a weekend or holiday, the next business day at 5 p.m. becomes the deadline

Section 8. Matching Funds

Upon application and agreement approval, Applicants must expend their own funds to pay for the Project in its entirety prior to reimbursement from the GCRA. The GCRA reimbursement is a maximum of 50% of documented and eligible Project costs up to the approved grant maximum as determined by funding availability. The only exception to the 50 percent matching funds is the Tier 1 for the \$5,000 of 100 percent matching funds. The only form of matching funds by the Applicant that will be accepted are the cash value of goods and services used for allowable improvements. Sweat equity by the recipient is not allowed for reimbursement.

Upon reaching the reimbursement request stage, the Applicant will submit a spreadsheet showing, at a minimum, the following: vendor name, City of Gainesville Purchase Order number, invoice number, dollar amount paid, and date of payment. GCRA staff can provide a sample spreadsheet. All receipts are required to be submitted for staff review, and the GCRA reserves the right to reject any expense deemed inappropriate.

Section 9. Application Requirements

1. Completed application form.
2. Proof of building ownership shown by either a copy of the deed or county tax records.
3. Copy of City of Gainesville business tax license or proof of current payment. If the building owner is not required to have a City of Gainesville business tax license, the building owner must provide a statement from the City to that effect.
4. Evidence of agreement with Business Improvement Grant Program requirements by the building owner, if different from the Applicant. This evidence must be in the form of properly notarized GCRA Owner Consent documentation. GCRA Owner Consent documentation is not required if the Applicant is the owner of said property.
5. Photographs of every external wall of the Project building showing existing conditions and their relationship (if any) to the transit corridor.
6. Photographs of the interior areas that the applicant is seeking funding assistance with permanent renovations. For example, photographs of existing electrical service that needs to be upgraded.
7. Sketches and/or digital illustrations of building elevations with proposed improvements. For proposed internal improvements sketches or digital illustrations showing what the improvements will look like. In the case of electrical or plumbing work diagrams of the modifications to be made are acceptable.
8. A minimum of two cost estimates from different sources. If the applicant is a general contractor and wishes to quote for the work to be performed, then three cost estimates must be provided. Cost estimates MUST be for the same improvements. Estimates should be broken out in detail, especially if any non-eligible improvements are being completed, as this allows the GCRA to compare based on only grant-eligible improvements being performed. If general contractors are providing the quotes they should provide a break out of their costs. The Applicant can choose to use the more expensive quotation, but the GCRA matching grant funds will not exceed the lowest cost estimate.
9. Selected contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license.
10. Work schedule that shows when work is expected to start and be completed. The schedule can be expressed in months from when the final grant agreement is executed with the City.
11. The Applicant agrees to answer a follow-up Business Improvement Grant survey.

Section 10. How to Apply

Applications are accepted for Tier 1 on a continuous, first come, first served basis, subject to funding availability. Applications for Tier 2 and 3 must be submitted in the appropriate cycle for review.

Assistance is available throughout the application process by appointment.

Step 1: Pre-application period

Attend a pre-application workshop or contact the GCRA to discuss the program, eligibility requirements, and application.

Step 2: Application submittal

Submit the application by email, mail, or in person at the address below.

Step 3: Grant approval

Upon submission, GCRA staff will review the Application and notify the Applicant of approval or additional information needed within 30 days.

- Completed applications for the Tier 1 Applications will be approved internally by the GCRA with the Director or designee approval subject to funding availability. After internal GCRA approval the City Manager or Designee must approve the grant request.
- Completed applications for Tier 2 of 50 percent matching grant funds up to \$50,000 will be reviewed by the Downtown Advisory Board based on scoring a minimum of 18 points on the combined Decision Matrix and their ranking position for the application window's funding.
- Completed applications for Tier 3 (Individually listed historic properties) of 50 percent matching grant funds up to \$150,000 will be reviewed by the Downtown Advisory Board based on scoring a minimum of 25 points on the combined Decision Matrix and their ranking position for the application window's funding. Prior to review by the Downtown Advisory Board, the City's Historic Preservation Officer will make a determination if the project is compliant with the City's historic preservation guidelines.
- Applications that are approved for over \$100,000.00 in matching funds will be taken to the City Manager for review, prior to being submitted to the City Commission for approval or denial.
- The City Manager or designee is the final approver of any grant less than \$100,000.
- After grant approval by either the City Manager or City Commission per the above process, a Business Improvement Grant agreement will be executed with the applicant.

Step 4: Agreement and commencement of work

- Once approved, Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) will complete the Business Improvement Grant Program Agreement, which must be notarized and returned prior to commencement of work. The eighteen-month period to complete the Project begins the date the Agreement is signed by the City of Gainesville.
- Applicant completes work according to the approved schedule.

Step 5: Completion of work

- Once work has been completed, the Applicant provides the required documentation and Certificate of Completion to the GCRA for approval. Additionally, the Applicant will provide the GCRA with the total amount invested during the refurbishment. GCRA staff will be allowed access, as deemed necessary by the City, for in-person inspection to confirm work was completed and take photographs for promotional purposes. The Applicant will also allow the GCRA to place a sign at the property location advertising the Business Improvement Grant Program during the construction and for up to three months afterward.
- GCRA will file and record the Improvement Preservation Easement for Tier 1 grants. Tier 2 and 3 grants, any grant under \$25,000 will be an Improvement Preservation Easement, and any grant over \$25,000 will be a Mortgage per the terms of the Agreement that will be executed and filed. The cost of recording the documents will be deducted from the final grant award. (The Mortgage, if conditions are met, is forgiven at no cost to the Applicant).

Step 6: Award

- Approved grant reimbursement is paid to Applicant within 30 days of Improvement Preservation Easement or Mortgage being filed.

Return completed application to:

Email

GCRAprograms@gainesvillefl.gov

In Person

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area
ATTN: Business Improvement Grant Program
2153 SE Hawthorne Road, Suite 223
Gainesville, FL 32641

By Mail

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area
ATTN: Business Improvement Grant Program
PO Box 490, Station 48
Gainesville, FL 32627

Section 11. Application Deadline

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, contingent upon the availability of Business Improvement Grant Program funding for Tier 1. Tier 2 and Tier 3 application deadlines are shown in Section 7. The Business Improvement Grant Program may be temporarily paused if funding for the fiscal year is exhausted or if it is undergoing a revision. If the Business Improvement Grant Program is paused, a waiting list will be established for Applicants in the Tier 1 process who will be notified when it restarts. Applicants in the Tier 2 and 3 process will be notified when the next application cycle is opened.

Section 12. Evaluation of Applications

GCRA staff will perform an initial review of grant applications within 30 days of receipt for completeness. Incomplete applications will be returned to the Applicant to resolve issues. Only completed applications are eligible for consideration by the Business Improvement Grant Program. Applications received within five days of the deadline may not have time for an initial review and response to the Applicant to ask for clarifications.

All applications are decided by the decision matrix shown in Appendix A. The decision matrix answers are based on information provided within the Application completed by the Applicant. The objective portion of the decision matrix is completed by GCRA staff members, and the subjective portion is the average of the Downtown Advisory Board point assignments. All tier awards are subject to funding availability.

Tier 1 of 100 percent matching grant funds of up to \$5,000 are reviewed and approved solely by GCRA staff with final approval by the City Manager or designee and must have assigned a minimum of 17 points on the Objective portion of the Decision Matrix.

Tier 2 with 50 percent matching grant funds of up to \$50,000 must earn a minimum of 18 points on the combined Decision Matrix with final approval by the City Manager or designee.

Tier 3 (individually listed historic property) with 50 percent matching grant funds of up to \$150,000 must earn a minimum of 25 points on the combined Decision Matrix. Final approval for any grant of less than \$100,000 will be by the City Manager or designee. Any grant request greater than \$100,000 will go to the City Commission for final review and approval.

Section 13. Program Guidelines

1. Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) agrees that any improvements made using grant funds awarded under this Program will be maintained for a minimum of five years for Tier 1, ten years for Tier 2, and fifteen years for Tier 3. If the improvements are replaced or not maintained for the requisite time then, Tier 1, 2, or 3 Applicants receiving up to \$25,000 must repay a pro-rata portion of the grant proceeds invested in the Project for the number of months remaining, as further described in the property Improvement Preservation Easement that must be filed under this Program, a copy of which is available upon request and can be found on the City's website. Tier 2 and 3 Applicants receiving grant funds over \$25,000 are subject to default penalties per the executed mortgage. The Applicant understands that the Improvement Preservation Easement expires after five years for Tier 1 grants \$5,000 and under, and after ten years for any grant between \$5,000.01 and \$25,000 as long as the Property Owner is not in default of the Easement. The City, upon request, will provide a letter stating the Easement is no longer in effect after the expiration of the Easement, but any additional filing costs after the five years shall not be paid by the City.
2. The following exceptions apply to this requirement:
 - a. The improvement has been damaged beyond repair (i.e. broken awning), at no fault of the Applicant, and the Applicant has replaced the improvement, pursuant to the GCRA's acceptance.
 - b. The improvement was replaced for the purpose of further renovation that will enhance the original Project, as determined at the sole discretion of the GCRA Director or designee.
3. Applicant must obtain all required building permits for the work undertaken and be in conformance with any zoning requirements. The Applicant must keep current on any applicable requirements throughout the Project.
4. Time extensions may be granted by the GCRA, at the sole discretion of the GCRA, on a very limited, case-by-case basis, such as when the contractor is having difficulty meeting the deadline due to weather delay or proven supply issues.
5. The GCRA is not responsible for and will not be held liable for any workmanship, design, or construction-related issues to the Project receiving grant funds under the Business Improvement Grant Program.

6. Only completed applications will be considered for possible grant funding.
7. Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) agrees to allow the GCRA and City of Gainesville to photograph the Project for use in future publications.
The applicant (and the Building Owner if the applicant is not the Building Owner) will allow the GCRA to place temporary signage on the property both before and after the work is completed to advertise that the work is being partially funded by the Business Improvement Grant Program. The temporary signage would not extend beyond three months past the certificate of completion unless the Applicant desired it to remain in place longer.

Section 14. Nondiscrimination

The City of Gainesville/GCRA does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, or gender identity. The City of Gainesville/GCRA will not allow any such discrimination by or against its employees or citizens utilizing GCRA services, Programs, and activities.

Section 15. Program Revisions

The GCRA Director and/or City Manager may approve de Minimis changes to this Business Improvement Grant Program that does not involve changes to grant dollar values or Program geographical areas. Any changes to grant dollar values or Program geographical areas must be approved by the City Commission.

Section 16. Program Metrics

To determine the effectiveness of the program, metrics must be collected over the course of each fiscal year for analysis. The metrics to be collected for analysis are:

- Number of businesses that contact the City to ask about the Program
- Number of businesses that contacted the GCRA who are within the GCRA boundary
- Number of businesses that contacted the GCRA and are outside of the GCRA boundary
- Number of businesses that submit an initial application
- Number of businesses that submit a completed application
- Number of businesses that submit per Tier and their requested grant amounts
- Dollar amounts of each approved grant
- Number of businesses that are placed on a waitlist due to insufficient budgeted funds
- Dollar amount of applications that are not funded due to insufficient budget
- Number and percentage of businesses awarded grants that complete within the eighteen-month time frame
- Dollar amount paid out in grant funds to program recipients after all work is complete and approved
- Total dollar amount invested into the property by the grant recipient
- Comparison of current fiscal year number of applicants, number of successful applicants, grant funds paid out, and total investment by recipient to the previous fiscal year
- Applicants will be asked to complete a survey post-payout to provide feedback for future Program improvement

SECTION A: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name:_____ Business Name:_____

Business Federal ID#:_____ Year Established:_____ Legal Structure:_____

Is the business currently registered with the City of Gainesville to pay local business tax?: _____

Is the business registered with the City of Gainesville as (check all that apply):

Registration available at <https://gainesvillefl.diversitycompliance.com>

☐ Small ☐ Local ☐ Diverse

Applicant Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone:_____ E-Mail:_____

Website:_____

Has the Applicant previously received CRA or GCRA business improvement grant funds or commercial façade grant funds for a business within the City of Gainesville?

☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, when?_____

Has the storefront been vacant for over three months?

☐ Yes ☐ No How long?_____

How wide is the storefront (in feet): _____

Is the storefront comprised of multiple stories?

☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many?_____

Will the proposed work encompass multiple stories of the building (if applicable?)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you, as the Applicant, work on-site within the boundary of the Program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you planning renovations on 75 percent or more of storefronts within a single building complex? For example, a shopping center has 4 storefronts, and you are planning to do exterior improvements to at least 3 of the businesses.

☐ Yes ☐ No How many storefronts are being renovated and how many are there?_____

Are you planning to perform interior work under the Program that meet Program guidelines in excess of \$25,000?

☐ Yes ☐ No How much?_____

Does the location for the Grant have a second elevation visible from a Transit Corridor (defined in Section 3) that will have improvements under the Grant?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Will the property derive at least fifty percent of its sales from groceries, clothing, or physical art?

☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION A: CONTINUED

Is the Building individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the Building individually listed on the City of Gainesville's Historic Local Register as identified at:

www.cityofgainesville.org/PlanningDepartment/HistoricPreservation.aspx

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the Building listed as a Contributing Structure in one of the City's Historic Districts that are contained within the Program boundary? (If the building is both listed as a Contributing Structure and is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places then they will be scored in the Objective scoring as having been listed on the City's Historic Local Register). (Maps of the Historic Districts can be found here <https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/Government-Pages/Government/Departments/Sustainable-Development/Historic-Preservation>)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Has the City of Gainesville's Historic Preservation Officer submitted a letter on behalf of the applicant that the property contributes to the overall historic character of the area?

☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, when? _____

Applicant attests that they either have the funds needed to perform the work up-front or have already lined up external funding pending award of the grant.

☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION B: PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (if different than applicant)

Property Owner Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

SECTION C: BUILDING INFORMATION

Project Building Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Is the Property located within the Downtown Core Boundary (see Section 5): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the Property being applied for located along Main Street or University Avenue within the Downtown Core Boundary (see Section 5)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the Property being applied for located within the Fifth Avenue, Pleasant Street, Porters Quarters, or Springhill neighborhoods within the Program boundaries as shown within Section 5?

☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION D: DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Describe the work that you are planning to perform with grant funds below. Note that the answers with an asterisk “*” relate directly to the decision matrix used in the determination of whether the grant request is funded. Please use additional paper as necessary:

What improvements are to be made? (Please call out if any structural integrity/upgrades are to be made)*

Explain how this improvement will positively impact the City of Gainesville’s Downtown*

Provide a narrative as to how the funds will encourage more customers to Downtown*

Does the Project correct code deficiencies that were inherited with the purchase of the building?* If so, please explain and include details as to what specific work will be done to address the inherited code deficiencies.

SECTION D: DESCRIPTION OF WORK (Continued)

Will the work improve Americans with Disabilities access to the business? * If so, how?

Explain what if any sustainable/environmental upgrades will be completed. If proposed LEED certifications or equivalent please detail them.*

Is this a historic building as listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the City of Gainesville's Historic Local Register? If so, please identify which one or both.*

Is the Building a contributing building within the Pleasant Street Historic District (either National or Local Register)? If so, please list which or both.*

Has the City's Historic Planning Officer provided a written statement that the building is a contributing building to the historic character of Downtown Gainesville?*

If it is a historic building, please detail what restoration work will be done. Also, provide what date the City's Historic Preservation Board will approve (or has approved) the proposed renovation work.*

Is this Project necessary to retain or attract new tenants?

SECTION D: DESCRIPTION OF WORK (Continued)

How many new jobs are expected to be created once the work is completed?

If the proposed work involves renovations to spaces to aid in leasing them, please detail what work needs to be done and why it has not been done to date. Provide details that demonstrate why grant funds are needed to assist in the renovations.*

Describe in more detail the proposed improvements: the new primary colors, a description of materials to be used, what if any construction methods will be used for the improvement, the Applicant may provide pictures that illustrate examples of the final Project.

Estimated number of months from potential grant approval to project completion: ____months*

SECTION D: DESCRIPTION OF WORK (Continued)

Explain why the grant funds are necessary and what will not be done if the grant is not available.*

Any other applicable information concerning this proposed improvement.

It is recommended that the Applicant submit a three-minute pre-recorded audio or video “elevator pitch” for Tier 2 and 3 grant applications. This elevator pitch will be provided to the Downtown Advisory Board for review with the application. The elevator pitch serves in place of the Applicant speaking for up to three minutes at the board meeting. The GCRA will provide basic recording assistance to the Applicant, if desired, at its office by appointment. Neither the elevator speech nor speaking to the Downtown Advisory board in person is required.

Check which Tier you are applying for, note funding of the tiers is dependent on yearly funding allocation, the number of qualified applicants, and their rankings.

- o Tier 1 (up to \$5,000)
- o Tier 2 (up to \$50,000)
- o Tier 3 (up to \$150,000)

SECTION E: CONTRACTOR'S COST ESTIMATES

Applicant must develop and provide the scope of work to the GCRA as an attachment to this Application. The scope of work must detail work to be performed and must separate out any non- grant applicable work from grant applicable work. You must attach at least two cost estimates from different contractors for the scope of work or three if you are a general contractor that will also be providing costing. (It is recommended that you have at least three price quotes). The proposals from the contractors must be comparable, for example two new windows are to be installed the contractors should provide pricing for the same type of double paned glass window. You must provide copies of the selected contractor(s)' general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license.

The below is a synopsis of your received bids. The original bids must be included with the Application. Please place in the #1 position the desired prime contractor selected for this Project. If multiple contractors are going to be used their work must have comparable bids and they are to be provided.

Name of Contractor #1 : _____ Cost Estimate: \$ _____

Name of Contractor #2 : _____ Cost Estimate: \$ _____

Name of Contractor #3 : _____ Cost Estimate: \$ _____

SECTION F: OWNER CONSENT FORM

The undersigned acknowledges and represents the following to be true and correct statements and consents to be bound by the statements contained herein:

The Owner _____ is the fee simple title holder of the Property described in the Business Improvement Grant Program Agreement dated _____ (the "Agreement") between the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area, a Department of the City of Gainesville ("GCRA") and _____ (the "Applicant"); and The Owner agrees that the Property will benefit from the Project to be undertaken pursuant to the Agreement; and

In consideration of the benefit to the Property, the Owner agrees to be bound by Section 2.04 of the Agreement, agrees to execute and be bound by either the Improvement Preservation Easement for grants up to \$25,000 or the Mortgage for grants over \$25,000 attached as Exhibit "B" to the Agreement, and agrees to be bound by Article 4. Indemnification, Article 8. Dispute Resolution and Article 10. Miscellaneous of the Agreement.

This Consent and Acknowledgment is executed by the Owner on _____

Signed, sealed & delivered in the Presence of:

Name: _____

Name: _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this ____ day of _____, 20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public

My commission expires _____

Owner: _____

Print name: _____ Print title (if applicable): _____

STATE of _____ COUNTY of _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this ____ day of _____, 20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public

My commission expires _____

SECTION G: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGNATURES

By signing and submitting this Application, the Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) certifies, attests, and agrees to the following:

1. Applicant/Building Owner has been provided a copy of and has read, understands, and will comply with the Business Improvement Grant Program guidelines. Applicant's failure to comply with the Guidelines will result in ineligibility to participate in this Program.
2. Applicant/Building Owner certifies that all information in the Application and furnished in support of this Application is true and complete to the best of Applicant's knowledge and belief. Any false statement will be grounds for immediate termination of the Application and subject the Applicant to financial responsibility. Applicant has a continuing obligation to inform the GCRA (in writing) of any changes relative to the information provided in this Application.
3. Applicant/Building Owner understands that the Business Improvement Grant Program will pay no more than 50 percent of GCRA approved Project costs with the exception of Tier 1 if approved for up to 100 percent reimbursement of \$5,000 of grant funds, and the Applicant/Building Owner is responsible for any remaining costs or overages.
4. The Building has no existing code violations and the Applicant/Building Owner is not named in any outstanding code enforcement liens. The only exception to this is if the building was purchased with existing code violations and the application seeks to have the Program assist in resolving said violations. It is at the City's discretion to fund this remedial work.
5. Applicant/Building Owner has chosen and approves of the contractors and the scope of work as listed in this Application.
6. The GCRA/City's financial responsibility under this Program is solely limited to payment to the Applicant up to the approved reimbursement amount for work completed in accordance with the Business Improvement Grant Program. GCRA/City expressly disclaims any other liability, warranty, or guarantee, expressed or implied, for the work completed.
7. Upon completion of the Project and inspection by the GCRA, and prior to disbursement of grant funds by the GCRA, the Applicant/Building Owner agrees to execute and deliver to the GCRA a Certificate of Completion and for grants up to \$25,000 an Improvement Preservation Easement and for grants over \$25,000 a Mortgage as provided by the GCRA to the Applicant/Owner. Additionally, upon Project completion the Applicant/Building Owner must provide color photographs of the improved upon building showing all exterior sides of the building and any approved interior work.
8. The required Improvement Preservation Easement or Mortgage ensures that the Applicant/ Building Owner maintains the work done under this Program in good condition and without material change for a period of five years for Tier 1 grants, ten years for Tier 2 grants, and fifteen years for Tier 3 grants. The GCRA will record the executed Easement or Mortgage and the filing cost will be deducted from the grant award.
9. Approval under this Program does not constitute a permit or approval of the City and the Applicant is responsible for obtaining such permits, if required, by the City or any other governmental entity.
10. The GCRA/City does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability (protected characteristics), and will not allow any such discrimination by or against its employees or citizens utilizing GCRA programs.
11. The Applicant/Building Owner shall not assign or attempt to assign, directly or indirectly, any rights under this Agreement or under any instrument referred to herein without the prior written consent of the City in each instance. Any assignee shall be bound by all the terms of this Agreement and associated documents.
12. The Applicant/Building Owner and the City each binds itself, its partners, successors, legal representatives, and assigns of such other party in respect to all covenants of this Agreement.
13. This Agreement and any associated documents will be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of Florida, without giving effect to its provisions regarding choice of laws.
14. This Agreement and payment of any Program funding is subject to the availability of funding.
15. All activities authorized by this Agreement are subject to and must be performed in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

SECTION G. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGNATURES (Continued)

16. The Applicant/Building Owner agrees to waive any right to, hold harmless, and indemnify the City (which includes the GCRA), its officials, agents, and employees from suits, actions, damages, liability, expenses, losses, and costs, including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees, arising from or in any way connected to this Agreement and any Program administration herein. This provision shall survive termination of this Agreement.
17. Nothing in this Agreement may be interpreted as a waiver of the City's sovereign immunity as granted under Section 768.28, Florida Statutes.
18. The Applicant/Building Owner acknowledges that the City has the right and responsibility to enforce this Agreement.
19. The Applicant understands that watching the training video or attending a Business Improvement Grant workshop will aid them in completing their application, while not mandatory it is highly suggested that they do so.

Upon execution by the Applicant/Building Owner and the GCRA, this document constitutes a binding agreement between the GCRA and the Applicant/Building Owner.

Signature of Applicant

Date

STATE OF _____,

COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20_____,
by _____, who is personally known to me or who has
produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public
My commission expires _____

Complete below only if the applicant is not the building owner

Signature of Building Owner

Date

STATE OF _____,

COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20_____,
by _____, who is personally known to me or who has
produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public
My commission expires _____

SECTION H: PROGRAM APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Completed application form.
- ☐ Proof of building ownership shown by either a copy of the deed or county tax records.
- ☐ Copy of current City of Gainesville business tax license or proof of recent payment or documentation from the City of Gainesville showing that it is not required.
- ☐ GCRA Owner Consent documentation signed by all applicable parties. Evidence of agreement with Business Improvement Grant Program requirements by building owner, if different from the Applicant. This evidence must be in the form of the GCRA Owner Consent Form (page 20) that has been properly notarized. The Owner Consent form is not required if the Applicant is the Owner of the property.
- ☐ Photographs of every external wall of the Project building showing existing conditions and their relationship (if any) to the transit corridor. Interior photographs if the Applicant is seeking under the Program interior renovation assistance.
- ☐ Sketches and/or digital illustrations of elevations of proposed improvements as applicable for the exterior and/or interior.
- ☐ Attached at least two cost estimates from different contractors for the scope of work or three if you are a general contractor that will also be providing costing. These cost estimates MUST be for the same improvements. Estimates should be broken out in detail, especially if any interior work is being done as this allows the GCRA to compare based on only grant allowable work being performed.
- ☐ Selected contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license (The Applicant can choose to use the more expensive contractor, but the GCRA matching grant funds will not exceed the lowest cost estimate).

SECTION I: GCRA PROGRAM STAFF CHECKLIST

FOR GCRA USE ONLY: DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION

Date & Time Initial Application Received: _____

Complete Application Received & Date: _____

Received by (print name): _____

Reviewed by (print name): _____

Tier applied for & qualified for consideration:

- ☐ Tier 1 (up to \$5,000)
- ☐ Tier 2 (up to \$50,000)
- ☐ Tier 3 (up to \$150,000)

Grant Amount Requested: _____

Documentation Received:

- ☐ Application
- ☐ Proof of building ownership and Owner Consent form if Applicant is not the Owner
- ☐ Proof of current City of Gainesville business tax license or approved exception
- ☐ Photographs of existing conditions and their relationship to the transit corridor
photographs of interior if proposed interior assistance is being applied for
- ☐ Sketches and/or digital illustrations of proposed improvements
- ☐ Cost estimates from two different sources minimum. Low bid amount: _____
- ☐ Contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license
 - ☐ Work schedule: Start Date: _____ Expected Completion Date: _____

SECTION I: GCRA PROGRAM STAFF CHECKLIST (continued)

FOR GCRA USE ONLY: DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION

Tier 1 Applications

- ☐ GCRA Staff scoring for Objective component of Decision Matrix in Appendix A: _____
 - if greater than 17 points they are allowed to receive funds following Program guidelines and grant funds availability

Tier 2 and 3 Applications

Date application is scheduled to go to Downtown Advisory Board for Tiers 2 and 3:

- ☐ GCRA Staff Objective Decision Matrix score
Appendix A: _____
- ☐ Downtown Advisory Board Subjective Decision Matrix tabulated score
Appendix A: _____
- ☐ Combined Score: _____
 - ☐ Did the score meet the minimum required per Tier? (18 points for Tier 2 and 25 points for Tier 3)
Yes/No
 - ☐ What was rank of the application out of how many applications?

The ranking determines the order in which funds are disbursed, subject to fund availability.

Rankings and dollar amounts awarded were as follows:

Date application will go to City Commission if request is for greater than \$100,000: _____

Approvals:

- ☐ Up to \$5,000. GCRA Director or staff designee and City Manager/Designee.
Date approved: _____
- ☐ \$5,000.01 to \$99,999.99. City Manager or designee final approval (Business Improvement Grant Agreement executed).
Date executed: _____
- ☐ Over \$100,000.00. City Commission. Escribe #: Date approved: _____

Grant Amount Approved: _____

- ☐ Business Improvement Grant Agreement executed. Date executed: _____
- ☐ Denied. Reason: _____
- ☐ Date Applicant notified in writing of Approval/Denial: _____

CERTIFICATE OF CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

Applicant Name: _____

Building Address: _____

OWNER'S CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY that the work under the above-named project including all appurtenances thereto, has been satisfactorily completed as of _____ (date); that all charges or bills for labor or services performed or materials furnished, and other charges against the subcontractors, have been paid in full and in accordance with the terms of the contract; that no liens have attached against the property and improvements of owner; that no notice of intention to claim liens is outstanding that no suits are pending by reason on the project under the contract; that all Worker's Compensation claims have been settled and no public liability claims are pending.

Certification is made for the purpose of requesting reimbursement under the GCRA Business Improvement Grant Program.

Applicant Signature

Date

Name

Street Address

City, State & Zip

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____,

20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has

produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public

My commission expires _____

APPENDIX A DECISION MATRIX AND EXAMPLE

Decision Matrix Objective Components

Objective Components are Rated by GCRA Staff

	Yes / No	Points
Business occupant/Owner is registered with the City of Gainesville as a Small, Local, or Diverse Business (worth 2 points)		
Has the Storefront been vacant for at least three months? (worth 2 points)		
The storefront is greater than 30 feet (worth 1 point)		
Is comprised of multiple stories (worth 1 point)		
Does the Applicant work on-site within the boundary of the Program (building owner or business owner)? (worth 1 point)		
Is the applicant planning renovations on 75 percent or more of storefronts within a building complex? (worth 2 points)		
Is the applicant planning interior work permissible under the Program in excess of \$25,000? (worth 1 point)		
Does the location have a second elevation visible from a Transit Corridor that will have improvements under the grant? (worth 1 point)		
Will the property derive at least fifty percent of its sales from groceries, clothing, or physical art? (worth 1 point)		
Is the building individually designated on the National Register of Historic Places? (worth 5 points)		
Is the Building individually designated on the City of Gainesville's Historic Local Register? (worth 5 points)		
Is the Building a contributing building within the Pleasant Street Historic District (either National or Local Register)? (worth 2 points)		
Has the City of Gainesville's Historic Preservation Officer submitted a letter on the behalf of the applicant that the property contributes to the overall historic character of the area? Cannot be listed on either of the two preceding items (worth 2 points)		
Is the Property located within the Downtown Core Boundary? (worth 2 points)		
Is the Property located along Main Street or University Avenue within the Downtown Core Boundary? (worth 1 point)		
Is the Property located within the Fifth Avenue, Pleasant Street, Porters Quarters, or Springhill neighborhoods within the Program boundary (worth 2 points)		
Does the Project correct code deficiencies that were inherited with the purchase of the building? (worth 1 point)		
Will the funds be used to implement Americans with Disabilities Act access to the building? (worth 2 points)		
Does the work improve the sustainability/environmental aspects of the building envelope? (worth 1 point)		
Will the upgrade result in LEED or equivalent level certification? (worth 1 point)		
Is the Project necessary to retain or attract new tenants? (worth 1 point)		
Total		

Maximum possible points 37

APPENDIX A DECISION MATRIX AND EXAMPLE

Decision Matrix: Subjective Components

Subjective points awarded by Downtown Advisory Board

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average tally
Was a compelling explanation provided on how the improvement will positively impact the City of Gainesville's Downtown?						
Was the narrative provided and, in general, compelling as to how the funds will be used to encourage more Downtown customers?						
Has the applicant adequately addressed their need for the grant?						
Will the façade improvement improve curb appeal for the site i.e. window/entryway/access/signage/lighting?						
Has the applicant adequately demonstrated how the proposed work enables leasing of currently vacant space(s) and why grant funds are needed to assist in renovations?						
Based on the totality of the application should this grant be awarded?						
Total						

Subjective point valuations

Strongly Disagree (-2) points

Disagree (-1) point

Neutral (0) points

Agree (1) point

Strongly Agree (2) points

Maximum possible Subjective points 12

APPENDIX A DECISION MATRIX AND EXAMPLE

Decision Matrix: Example

Subjective points awarded by Downtown Advisory Board

Example summation tally for ABC Business Grant application
22 Objective Decision Matrix Points Rated by GCRA Staff

Example Downtown Advisory Board Averaged Tally Compiled from members' votes

	Average tally
Was a compelling explanation provided on how the improvement will positively impact the City of Gainesville's Downtown?	1
Was the narrative provided and, in general, compelling as to how the funds will be used to encourage more Downtown customers?	1.5
Has the applicant adequately addressed their need for the grant?	0
Will the façade improvement improve curb appeal for the site i.e. window/entryway/access/signage/lighting?	2
Has the applicant adequately demonstrated how the proposed work enables leasing of currently vacant space(s) and why grant funds are needed to assist in renovations?	0
Based on the totality of the application should this grant be awarded?	1
Total	5.5

5.5 Subjective points awarded by the Downtown Advisory Board

27.5 = 22 Objective points + 5.5 Subjective points earned by the Applicant

The minimum score is zero and the maximum score is 49 (comprised of 37 Objective points and 12 Subjective points). Any applicant with a total score of 17 or below will not receive grant funds.

Example of rankings after Staff compiles totals

Applicants	Average tally
Jane's Jewlery	32
John's Jacket Shack	31
ABC Business	27.5
Alpha Watches	11

GRANT FUNDS ARE THEN AWARDED IN DESCENDING ORDER IN FULL PER REQUEST UNTIL SUCH TIME AS GRANT FUNDS FOR THAT APPLICATION WINDOW ARE EXHAUSTED

In this example, the total funding for the year is \$400,000 and each application window has \$200,000 assigned to it

- Jane's Jewlery is a historic building and asked for \$150,000. As they are ranked highest, they would receive the maximum possible of $(\$200,000 \times 50\%) = \$100,000$ based on funding availability
- John's Jacket Shack asked for \$50,000 and would receive the full amount. (Based on Tier 2 having \$80,000 of funds, leaving \$30,000 in tier 2 availability)
- ABC Business asked for \$25,000 and would receive the full amount. (which leaves \$5,000 remaining in Tiers 2 funds)
- Alpha Watch asked for \$5,000, and while funds remain, they scored below a 17 and would not qualify for grant funds