



City of Fayetteville, NC

Can-Do CORE Grant (CORRIDOR OPPORTUNITY REVITALIZATION for EXTERIORS) Program Guidelines

Established: February 3, 2020
Revised: July 1, 2026

433 Hay St
Fayetteville, NC 28301
910-433-1590
EconCommDev@FayettevilleNC.gov

Program Summary

The City of Fayetteville's **Can-Do CORE Grant** supports Fayetteville's small businesses by funding visible exterior upgrades such as storefront improvements, signage, lighting, landscaping, and front-facing enhancements within **Council-designated Priority Areas**. The goal is to strengthen priority business corridors, eliminate blight, and spur private reinvestment. The program aims to attract investment, support local businesses, and encourage development. The program encourages small-scale design improvements that rehabilitate existing buildings. Together, these efforts help foster a vibrant and thriving commercial environment. All projects must demonstrate job creation or retention for residents.

The Can-Do CORE Grant provides **50/50 matching funds** for eligible exterior improvements. The **minimum total project size** is **\$2,000** from all sources, and **City contributions are capped at \$7,500**. Eligible applicants must be **small businesses**, as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Property owners may assist with the application process, but the applicant must be the small business occupying the space.

The Economic and Community Development (ECD) Department has established this policy to outline the guidelines for administering the Can-Do CORE Grant and evaluating projects for potential funding through City General Fund or other local funds unless the award document expressly states that federal funds are being used. The program is authorized as a local economic development activity under N.C.G.S. § 158-7.1.

1. Program Administration

The Director of the Economic and Community Development (ECD) Department serves as the program administrator and is responsible for ensuring compliance with all state and local regulations.

Program Availability and Application Process

The Can-Do CORE Grant is available quarterly, subject to funding availability. Program information is published on the City's website at www.fayettevillenc.gov/ecd. Applications must be submitted electronically through the City's [Neighborly Portal](#), accessible via the program webpage.

Funding for the program is appropriated annually by City Council through the Annual Budget Process and is available beginning July 1 of each year. Funding may be adjusted mid-year through an amendment to the City's Budget, depending on demand and program performance.

Grant Review Committee

Completed applications will be presented by the Economic Development Manager to the Grant Review Committee, which includes:

- ECD Director (or designee)
- Two representatives from Development Services (one with code enforcement expertise, one with planning/zoning expertise)

The Grant Review Committee's charge is to confirm that each grant request meets all threshold requirements established in this policy. Specifically, the Committee reviews projects to ensure:

- Compliance with written program guidelines;
- Resolution of any outstanding code enforcement violations;
- Compatibility with planning and zoning regulations; and
- Sensitivity to community concerns.

This program is a **competitive process**. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis, and funds are

committed to eligible projects until exhausted. Projects must be approved and have a fully executed agreement in place before any work begins. Funding will then be replenished with the next program year beginning July 1.

Grant Evaluation and Selection

Grant evaluation and selection reviews will be conducted by the Economic Development Manager to ensure compliance. The City will apply the following evaluation and selection guidelines in evaluating all applications to ensure assistance with public funds is necessary and reasonable. Applicants must demonstrate:

- The project is financially viable without an undue return to the owner;
- The public subsidy is limited to the amount necessary to make the project feasible;
- Reasonable project costs, supported by third-party cost estimates; and
- That market demand exists for the proposed business or development.
- The Grant Review Committee will document compliance with these standards in the evaluation and selection memorandum for each project.

Duplication of Benefits

Prior to approval of any grant, the City will verify that no duplication of benefits occurs. Applicants must disclose all sources of federal, state, local, insurance, or private financing for the project. Publicly funded assistance may only be used for unmet need, and applicants must provide evidence that public funds are not duplicating other funding sources for the same costs.

2. Use of Funds

Funds may only be used for exterior improvements that enhance the visual appeal, safety, or functionality of a commercial property's exterior. All improvements must comply with applicable local building codes and zoning regulations. Improvements must remain with the property for a minimum of three (3) years following the disbursement of grant funds per this policy. Projects must be approved and have a fully executed agreement in place before any work begins.

To be approved, applicants must submit a complete application package, including proof of the required matching contribution, prior to City approval.

All projects must comply with applicable local and state regulations, including building codes, zoning ordinances, and accessibility standards.

Funds may be used for a range of commercial and mixed-use developments, including office, retail, food service, medical or health service facilities, hospitality venues, child care centers, business incubators or co-working spaces, light manufacturing or industrial facilities, educational or workforce training facilities, cultural or community venues, technology or research facilities, and other eligible commercial projects that support job creation or retention and meet program requirements.

Funds cannot be used for equipment purchases, operating expenses, or working capital. Funds are provided strictly on a reimbursement basis after ECD approval and inspection of completed work and will not be advanced. Unlike the Can-Do EDGE Grant, the CORE Grant does not allow the City to issue payments directly to contractors. All contractor payments must be made by the applicant. Reimbursement for 50% of eligible costs will be issued only after project completion and submission of required documentation. Work must start within 6 months of award and be completed within 18 months. No costs are eligible unless incurred after the agreement is fully executed.

Contractor Selection and Oversight

- The grantee is responsible for selecting and managing contractors and ensuring that projects are completed within the approved timetable and budget.
- The City will review the grantee's contractor selection, and determine cost reasonableness by reviewing project cost estimates. The City must concur with contractor selection before funds are released.

3. Eligible Applicants

Applicants must demonstrate the financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project and comply with all program requirements (as determined by the City). The business may only be eligible for this program twice within the life of the business and will not exceed the Project Investment Limits within this policy.

a. Small Business Requirements

Eligible applicants must be small business owners or property owners with a secured small business tenant. A "small business" is defined as a for-profit entity that:

1. Has a physical place of business within the U.S.
2. Is independently owned and operated.
3. Is not dominant in its field of operation.
4. Meets U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards (varies by industry).

Applicants must also be in good standing with the City of Fayetteville, including being current on all applicable taxes, permits, and having no outstanding fines or fees owed by the owner or any interested parties.

b. Job Creation and Retention Requirements

All CORE Grant recipients must create or retain at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) LMI job whose household income is at or below 80% AMI and remain in place throughout the 36-month compliance periods within one year of project completion. An FTE is defined as 40 total work hours per week, which may consist of:

- One full-time position, or
- A combination of part-time positions (e.g., two 20-hour/week roles, four 10-hour/week roles)

To count toward this requirement, jobs must meet the following criteria:

1. Created or retained within 12 months of project completion
2. Located at the improved property and tied directly to business operations
3. Permanently filled (not seasonal or temporary)

Each grant-assisted project must demonstrate a measurable workforce benefit by maintaining job documentation and making it available upon City request.

c. Conflict of Interest

No employee, agent, consultant, officer, elected official, or appointed official of the City who exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to assisted activities, or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to such activities, may obtain a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement with respect to the activities, or in the proceeds thereof, for themselves or those with whom they have

family or business ties, during their tenure and for one year thereafter. Exceptions may be granted by the City Manager on a case-by-case basis.

d. Ineligible Business Types

Funding will not be provided to: adult entertainment establishments; nightclubs/private clubs; vape, hemp, and tobacco shops; gambling establishments; home-based businesses; or educational, institutional, nonprofit, or showroom-only uses.

4. Eligible Properties:

a. To qualify for funding under this program, properties must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Comply with all applicable local building codes.
2. Be located at street level, with a storefront or commercial exterior visible from the public right-of-way.
3. Be zoned for uses generally associated with business activities, such as commercial, retail, office, hospitality, or light industrial, as defined by the City's Development Ordinance.
4. For tenant-based projects, have a lease term of at least one (1) year.
5. Be in a condition, either currently or after rehabilitation or new construction, that is acceptable to the City of Fayetteville.

b. Eligible Areas:

The Can-Do CORE Grant is only available in [Council Priority Redevelopment Area](#)

c. Historic Preservation Requirements

If the property is located within the City's Historic District, proposed work must receive approval from the Historic Resources Commission (HRC).

5. Project Investment Limits:

a. Maximum Project Amount (all Sources): \$15,000

Projects exceeding this amount may be referred to the **Can-Do EDGE Grant** for consideration under that program's guidelines.

b. Maximum City Grant Amount: Up to \$7,500

This represents a 50/50 match, with the applicant responsible for contributing the remaining funds.

c. Minimum City Investment: \$1,000.

Total project cost must be at least \$2,000 to meet the required match threshold.

6. Compliance and Monitoring:

ECD staff will inspect completed work to confirm compliance with approved plans and program guidelines before any funds are disbursed. All required permits must be obtained, inspected, and closed by the City or the relevant authority.

7. Recapture Enforcement:

The Can Do CORE Grant is structured as a reimbursement-based forgivable loan that is forgiven in three equal annual installments over a 36-month compliance period. To protect the City's investment, the Recapture section should clearly define events of default—including failure to create or retain the required job, unauthorized sale or transfer, business closure, prohibited business occupancy, material misrepresentation, removal of funded improvements, or other program

noncompliance. If a default occurs, only the unforgiven balance is subject to recapture, and the City may pursue appropriate legal remedies to enforce compliance and safeguard public funds.

8. Applicant Required Documents

Applicants must submit a complete application package, including:

1. Completed Application Form in Neighborly
2. Organizational documents (Articles of Incorporation/Organization, Operating Agreement, or Partnership Agreement)
3. Certificate of Good Standing from the NC Secretary of State (for corporations/LLCs)
4. Verification of active registered UEI numbers with Sams.gov
5. Copy of lease agreement (for tenant-based projects; must confirm at least a one-year term)
6. Evidence of insurance coverage (property, liability, workers' compensation if applicable)
7. Current property tax receipts (showing all taxes paid)
8. Proof of Ownership or owner consent form
9. Zoning Consistency Determination
10. Project Description (including scope of work and proposed improvements)
11. Itemized Cost Estimates from at least two licensed contractors (show of good faith)
12. Work writeups, Architectural Drawings, or other documents to support construction
13. Proof of minimum 50/50 matching investment
14. Current profit & loss statement (within the last 6 months)
15. Last two years' tax returns (business and personal for all owners with $\geq 20\%$ ownership)
16. Personal financial statements (for all owners with $\geq 20\%$ ownership)
17. Business plan with financials (if a new business)
18. Job Creation/Retention Plan (demonstrating commitment to creating or retaining at least one job for a low- to moderate-income person)
19. The City reserves the right to request additional documents as needed.

9. Staff Required Documents

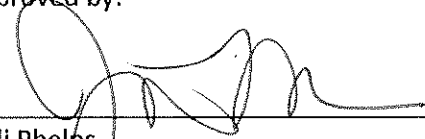
1. UEI number verification (Sam.gov)
2. Project decision record
3. Photographs of subject property (after)
4. Monitoring plan/checklist for annual compliance (jobs, insurance, financials)

Reviewed by:


Christopher L. Cauley, MPA, CECD
Economic and Community Development Director

7/1/26
Date

Approved by:


Jodi Phelps,
Assistant City Manager

7/1/26
Date