

# 2025 WESTSIDE TAD PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Ascension Fund Grant  
Resurgens Fund Grant  
Downtown Façade Improvement Grant  
Small Business Improvement Grant



133 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 2900  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404.880.4100 Phone  
404.880.9333 Fax  
[www.investatlanta.com](http://www.investatlanta.com)

## **SMALL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT (SBIG)**

Invest Atlanta intends to utilize available Westside TAD tax increment to help strengthen local businesses by providing matching grants toward the improvement of occupied commercial buildings, thus making small businesses more vibrant and attractive to customers. Invest Atlanta invites qualified commercial property owners and small business owners seeking to make interior and exterior improvements to properties within the Westside TAD to apply for grant funding through the SBPIG program.

### **GRANT AWARD**

Small Business owners are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 that can be used for both internal and external improvements to their commercial property. For eligible renovation costs and expenses, see Eligibility and Requirements below. Applicants are required to make a matching contribution equal to at least 10% of the grant award. For example, a grant award of \$50,000 would require a minimum \$5,000 match from the awardee.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The SBIG Program goals are to:

- Enhance the appearance of commercial areas while building safer, more attractive and stable neighborhoods;
- Help new and established businesses attract customers and generate increased revenues;
- Leverage private investment; and
- Complement other community revitalization efforts.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS**

Improvements should visually enhance the subject property and meet the following guidelines:

- A minimum of 25% of SBIG funds must be used for exterior improvements to the property.
- All exterior improvements must be visible from the public right-of-way.
- Eligible exterior improvements include:
  - Painting
  - Lighting
  - Windows, doors, framing, etc.
  - Signage, canopies, awnings, etc.
  - Gates, fencing, landscaping, etc.
  - Building surface repairs- concrete, siding, limestone, etc.
  - Surface upgrades on the ground- tiling, asphalt resurfacing, etc.
- Interior improvements should enhance the customer and employee experience. Eligible interior improvements include:
  - Flooring, walls and ceiling upgrades
  - HVAC, water heater, plumbing, electrical, and other systems repairs
  - Structural repairs to walls, floors, stairs, and interior doors
  - Certain soft costs, such as architectural and planning services are eligible but shall not exceed 10% of grant amount.
  - Operations, inventory, and other soft costs are not eligible expenses.

Projects **MUST** meet the following requirements to be eligible for Westside TAD funding under the SBIG program:

- be located within the geography of the Westside TAD boundaries (see **Exhibit A**);
- be occupied by a business
- owners of vacant commercial properties **MAY** be eligible to apply for SBIG funds if the scope of work bring the space into leasable condition. Owners of vacant property should contact the Program Manager.
- be located in a commercial building less than 15,000 square feet in size;
- evidence property control through either a deed, lease, or contract/option. Business owners leasing space (tenants) are eligible to apply to the SBIG Program, but must:
  - provide a current lease with a minimum of two (2) years remaining from the date of application;
  - provide written approval from the property owner to participate in the SBIG Program to proceed with the improvements;
- demonstrate that the project as proposed would not happen but for the TAD grant assistance; and
- be capable of investing the match requirement equal to at least 10% of the grant award upfront from private financing.

The following property types are specifically **excluded** from the SBIG Program:

- New construction (defined as constructed within the last ten years);
- Vacant commercial properties, unless proposed scope of work brings the property into leasable condition;
- Properties owned or occupied by a government or public agency;
- Properties used entirely for residential purposes or zoned residential;
- Properties operating as package stores or for purposes of adult entertainment, including gambling; and
- Churches and religious institution facilities

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to a completed application, applicants must provide the following uploaded with their application in the Neighborly application portal:

- Map showing location of property (ex. Screenshot of property via Google Maps);
- A copy of the applicant's current business license from the City of Atlanta;
- Current photographs of property identifying the need for proposed improvements;
- Evidence of property control through a lease or deed;
- Evidence of authorization to make the proposed building improvements with owner's consent, in the form of the Application Affidavit provided in Neighborly.
- Itemized budget/scope of work with supporting documentation (Ex. Contractor estimates, purchase orders, etc.)

### **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

1. Register in Neighborly

Neighborly Portal: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/INVESTATLANTA/Participant>

When you access the Portal for the first time, you'll need to Register your account by clicking on the Register link. The registration process will create a username (which is your email address) and password that will be used for future logins. The email address you choose will also be used for system emails/ notifications, so it is recommended to use your primary email address. For security purposes, the system will validate that you own the registered email address by sending an email with a validation link.

2. Complete & Submit Preliminary Questionnaire

After logging into Neighborly, select 'Development Incentives Application' and complete the preliminary questionnaire. Upon receiving a completed questionnaire, Invest Atlanta project managers will review and contact you with additional questions. If the project is determined to be eligible for a funding program, you will be granted access to the development incentives application.

3. Complete & Submit a Development Incentives Application

Upon receipt of an application, Invest Atlanta staff will review the application for content and completeness. After a fully complete application has been reviewed for consistency with Invest Atlanta and programmatic goals, staff will analyze and evaluate the project. The project manager will contact you with any additional questions and to provide a timeline overview.

### **PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

In addition to meeting the statutory and project requirements, applications will be closely evaluated on the following criteria:

A. Project Readiness & Eligibility

- Documentation of eligibility according to CFIG program guidelines
- Detailed project plan and budget
- Detailed estimates for all labor and materials
- Photos of the property and of specific areas proposed for improvements

B. Project Need & Business Impact

- Explanation of how these improvements will positively impact business performance
- Explanation of financial need for grant funding for the project improvements
- Priority to minority-owned businesses
- Priority to businesses located in disinvested areas identified in One Atlanta Economic Mobility Strategy
- Impact on community grocery accessibility, enhancement of the property, and alignment with the City of Atlanta's food access goals

Invest Atlanta reserves the right to reject any applications, to request additional information from some or all applicants, to amend/modify the application and the process, or to discontinue the process at any time.

**REQUIRED DUE DILIGENCE DOCUMENTS:**

To execute a grant agreement upon approval of funding, grantees will be required to provide the following documentation. Note these are **NOT** application requirements.

- 1) Owner Entity Documents:
  - Articles of Incorporation/Organization, Secretary of State Documentation
  - Copy of Business License
  - SAVE affidavit (including a copy of driver's license)
  - Demonstrate that the owner of the subject property is current on all property taxes
- 2) General Contractor Documents:
  - List of contractors or subcontractors to be engaged with specific tasks
  - Business license and proof of liability insurance for each contractor
- 3) Site Documents:
  - Evidence of Ownership or site control; ex., vesting deed or lease (lease must have a minimum of one year remaining)
  - A current copy of the Business Owners Insurance Policy
- 4) Project Documents (must be Acceptable to and approved by the Authority):
  - Approved Project Description Sheet including a general description of improvements to be made. Applicants who lease their commercial property will attach a notarized letter from Property Owner indicating approval of the Project Description Sheet
  - Approved Community Impact Contribution Description Sheet including a description of the activity or project the applicant will undertake to meet the Community Impact Contribution requirement.
  - Project Budget, including itemized quotes and/or purchase orders for all expenses to be covered by grant funding
  - Verification of any additional project costs to be covered by applicant
  - Drawings or examples of proposed improvements if requested by Invest Atlanta
  - Project Construction Schedule

**GRANT FUNDING**

Upon execution of an Westside TAD SBIG Grant Agreement, applicants must expend their committed match requirement equal to at least 10% of the grant award, with submission of corresponding documentation, prior to submitting any grant requisitions. Requisitions for grant funds cannot be submitted more frequently than on a monthly (30-day) basis and are subject to the terms and conditions identified in the Grant Agreement.

Grant proceeds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis, as Grantee incurs expenses for eligible items. Grant proceeds may also be used to pay vendors hired by grantees directly, upon Invest Atlanta's approval.

Professionals requiring special licenses must be licensed in the State of Georgia and shall be responsible for those portions of the work as may be required by law. All completed work will be reviewed by Invest Atlanta staff as to compliance with the Grant Agreement.

**FEE STRUCTURE**

All fees are **non-refundable**.

**Application Fee:** Equal to \$150 payable to Invest Atlanta and due upon submission.

**INQUIRIES**

All inquiries regarding the Westside TAD Program guidelines or application must be received in writing via email. Questions must be submitted to:

Semira Ajani  
Assistant Director, Westside Initiatives  
Invest Atlanta  
[sajani@investatlanta.com](mailto:sajani@investatlanta.com)