

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant Program
Notice of Funding Availability
April 11, 2022

I. OVERVIEW

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”) hereby notifies interested Applicants of the availability of one-time funding allocated in the FY2022 Amended State Budget for the purpose of supporting transformative economic development projects in rural downtowns that will revitalize the community. The availability and use of these funds are subject to all applicable state laws and regulations, and is further subject to DCA’s policies. DCA is the administrator of the state’s Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant Program.

In releasing this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), the objective is to provide financial resources to communities who have planned for and are ready to initiate projects within their core downtown areas that have the potential to revitalize the community, while being transformative in nature. Generally speaking, DCA is seeking to fund construction projects that have likely to have already undergone a large degree of planning by the community. As a result, applicants should be able to provide commitment of all necessary partnerships, plans, architectural/engineering designs, the remaining balance of funding, and any other relevant documentation to demonstrate the readiness of the project to proceed. The intent is to award applicants that propose to create transformational change within the downtown area as a result of the application’s implementation.

Throughout the state, particularly in rural areas, the downtown area is traditionally the heartbeat of the community. As DCA’s mission is to help build strong, vibrant communities, the intersection between the needs of the community and the mission of the Department provides a unique opportunity for the community and the agency to partner in this endeavor. As one-time funding has been appropriated by the General Assembly for this purpose, DCA will move rapidly to solicit applications, review those submitted, and announce funding awards before the end of state fiscal year 2022.

DCA’s intent is to provide a broad framework by which communities can define projects that they deem transformative. However, DCA does not intend to make awards to applicants that are not ready to proceed, seek funding for operational costs, or have projects contingent upon other funding at the time of application. DCA’s commitment is to provide communities with financial resources to help implement those transformative downtown projects that would not take place at this time without state assistance. While transformation means different things in different communities, for the purposes of this grant, DCA is seeking applications that will increase opportunities for private investment to be injected into areas of disinvestment, increase commerce within the downtown, facilitate additional visitors/shoppers/activities within the downtown space, address workforce development and/or downtown housing needs that contribute to the overall revitalization of the community. The relationship between the community’s current state, the activities defined in the application and the outcomes anticipated from their implementation should be clearly documented.

While there is no preconceived idea of what may or may not be fundable under this program, some activities that will not be considered by the panel (resulting in applications not being reviewed) include applications:

- Requesting operational costs;
- Proposing plans or studies;

- Projects contingent upon other funding;
- Grant administration costs;
- Proposing activities that violate state laws; and/or
- Activities inconsistent with locally-approved planning documents.

A copy of this NOFA and the Application package and other related materials will be available on the DCA website at the link listed below concurrent with the posting of this NOFA.

II. AMOUNT OF FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR AWARD

DCA anticipates awarding approximately \$17 million under this NOFA. DCA reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this NOFA.

III. MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT REQUEST

DCA is establishing a maximum amount of grant request at \$5,000,000. A funding floor has also been established at \$1,000,000. DCA anticipates funding between five (5) and fifteen (12) applications under this NOFA.

IV. MATCH REQUIREMENT

The minimum match requirement is generally no less than 10% of the total project cost. Significant investment from the community and its partners, however, contribute to a stronger application. Any legal source of matching funds will be allowed under this program. For example, computation of the matching requirements shall be as follows:

- \$2,000,000 total project cost will have a minimum \$200,000 match requirement (with \$1,800,000 requested).
- \$1,000,000 total project cost will have a minimum \$100,000 match requirement (with \$900,000 requested).

V. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Units of general purpose local government (cities or counties), as well as authorities, are eligible to apply for this funding. Applications may be submitted individually by one eligible applicant, or jointly, by two (2) or more eligible applicants. Only one application per general purpose local government/authority, whether individually or jointly submitted, shall be eligible for competition. If more than one is submitted, only the first submission shall be reviewed.

A. Additional Eligibility Requirements for all Applicants

1. Applicants shall be in compliance with all applicable audit report/grant certification form submission requirements as provided under O.C.G.A. Section 36-81-7 and Section 36-81-8.1.
2. Applicants shall be in compliance with all statutory reporting requirements that must be submitted to the Department.
3. Recipients of prior DCA funding must resolve all outstanding audit, and/or monitoring (compliance) findings and/or deficiencies prior to being eligible for Rural Downtown Grant funding. Sanctions applied under any of the other DCA grant programs will also apply to this program.

VI. ACTIVITY SUMMARY

All activities must be eligible activities to be completed utilizing state funds. Applicants who have received funding under other programs whereby a commitment for matching funds had been made may not supplant those committed funds with Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant funding.

VII. APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

DCA will generate a tutorial regarding applying for funds under this NOFA and place such notice on its website at (insert URL) no later than April 15, 2022.

A. Application Submission Instructions

Deadline: June 3, 2022 at 11:59 PM

Submit via: https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/mesecunnoejk (hard copy applications will not be accepted)

Any application received after the designated date and time will not be considered for funding.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

All applications will initially be reviewed by DCA to determine completeness. Complete Applications will be screened to determine whether the Application meets the minimum NOFA eligibility requirements. DCA will evaluate and rank each complete and eligible application using qualitative and quantitative metrics, according to the priorities identified herein.

IX. APPLICATION AWARD AND NOTIFICATION

All applications will be reviewed, evaluated, and ranked according to the priorities and preferences outlined in Section I. DCA will consider the geographic distribution of these resources across the State prior to making final funding decisions. All award results will be posted on DCA's web site and Applicants notified in writing.

X. TIMEFRAME FOR COMMENCEMENT AND COMPLETION OF PROJECT

These downtown economic development funds for projects to enhance the rural downtowns must be expended and all activities completed by June 30, 2024. "Completion" is defined as all construction activities being complete, all development funds expended, and all close out procedures have taken place.

XI. COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Recipients must comply with Georgia's Public Works Construction law.

For additional information regarding this Notice of Funding Availability or any additional requirements, please contact Kimberly Carter, Community Finance Division Director at kim.carter@dca.ga.gov.