

Legacy Empowerment Grant Guidelines

BACKGROUND

Invest Atlanta recognizes the invaluable contributions of Atlanta's legacy businesses, which have shaped the city's cultural and economic landscape for decades. To support these businesses in adapting to changing market conditions and ensuring long-term sustainability, Invest Atlanta has launched the Legacy Empowerment Grant.

This reimbursable grant provides financial assistance to modernize operations, improve marketing strategies, and integrate technology enhancements. The program aims to preserve and empower businesses that have been in continuous operation for 30 years or more, ensuring they continue to serve Atlanta's communities.

GRANT DESCRIPTION

Total Funding: Up to \$5,000 per business (reimbursable basis)

Application Period: Continuous until funds are fully allocated

Use of Funds: Business process modernization, technology improvements, and marketing. Grantee may draw down the proceeds of the grant for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of the grant agreement execution (the "Draw Period").

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

To qualify for the Legacy Empowerment Grant, businesses must:

1. **Be located within the City of Atlanta**
2. **Have been in continuous operation for at least 30 years**
3. **Hold an active City of Atlanta business license**
4. **Operate from a commercial space** (home-based businesses are ineligible)
5. **Be in good standing with the Georgia Secretary of State and the City of Atlanta**
6. If the business has multiple locations, **funds must be used solely for the original location**
7. Priority will be given to:
 - Businesses in historically **disinvested areas**
 - Businesses that experienced **temporary closures due to economic disruptions**
 - Businesses that have received **minimal or no previous grant funding**

Eligible Uses of Funds

- Funds must be used for modernization and business sustainability efforts, including:
- Marketing & Advertising (website development, SEO, social media ads, promotional materials)
- Professional Services (legal, accounting, business consulting)
- Technology Improvements (e-commerce platforms, CRM software, payment processing systems)

Ineligible Applicants

The following businesses are not eligible for funding:

- Businesses engaged in illegal activities under federal, state, or local laws
- Corporate-owned franchises or national credit tenants
- Government-owned entities
- Businesses owned/operated by City of Atlanta or Invest Atlanta officials/employees or their family members
- Adult businesses as defined by City Code §16-29.001(3)
- Businesses that derive significant income from gambling (except those earning less than 1/3 of annual revenue from Georgia Lottery sales)
- Liquor stores or businesses where 51% or more of revenue comes from alcohol sales
- Pyramid sale distribution plans
- Private clubs that limit membership for non-capacity reasons
- Businesses primarily engaged in political/lobbying activities
- Businesses primarily engaged in religious instruction or indoctrination
- Businesses that have defaulted on a City of Atlanta or Invest Atlanta loan, grant, or assisted financing (unless waived for good cause)

APPLICATION PROCESS & TMELINE

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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

Legal Documents and Other Information:

- Current City of Atlanta Business License
- Certificate of Incorporation or Certificate of Organization from the GA Secretary of State's Office*
- Annual Registration from Georgia Secretary of State*
- Certificate of Existence*
- Signed Operating Agreement or Bylaws*
- Executed Lease Agreement or Property Deed
- Complete and Notarized SAVE Affidavit
- Franchise Agreement (if applicable)*
- At least two (2) different estimates for items to be funded
- Certificate Designating Authorized Grantee Representative*
- Completed Form W9
- Labeled pictures of the exterior and interior (for commercial site)
- Government-Issued ID
- If not a U.S. Citizen, proof of resident alien status (PHOTOCOPY both sides of "Green Card")

Note: Documents with an asterisk mark at end are also the due diligence items required by the legal team to execute a grant and release agreements.

Grant Selection & Scoring

Applications will be evaluated using the following scoring matrix (100-point maximum):

	Max Points	Scoring Criteria
Business Longevity	20	30-39 years = 10 pts, 40-49 years = 15 pts, 50+ years = 20 pts

	Max Points	Scoring Criteria
Community Impact & Local Contributions	15	Strong evidence = 15 pts, Moderate = 10 pts, Minimal = 5 pts
Job Creation & Retention	15	10+ jobs retained = 15 pts, 5-9 jobs = 10 pts, 1-4 jobs = 5 pts
Financial Need & Stability	15	Significant need with sustainability plan = 15 pts, Moderate need = 10 pts, Minimal need = 5 pts
Historical/Cultural Significance	10	Strong documented significance = 10 pts, Moderate = 5 pts, None = 0 pts
Adaptability & Modernization	10	Strong adaptation = 10 pts, Moderate = 5 pts, None = 0 pts
Location in Historically Disinvested Areas	10	Located in a disinvested or underserved community = 10 pts, Partial impact area = 5 pts, Not applicable = 0 pts
Previous Grant Funding	5	No prior funding = 5 pts, Some prior funding = 3 pts, Significant prior funding = 0 pts

Applicants **must meet a minimum score threshold** to be considered for funding.

Evaluation Process & Funding Priority

1. **Minimum Score Requirement:** Applicants must score at least **60 points** to be considered for funding.
2. **Priority Consideration:**
 - a. Businesses in historically disinvested areas
 - b. Businesses that experienced economic disruptions (e.g., COVID-19 closures)
 - c. Businesses that have received minimal or no previous grant funding
3. **Tiebreaker Criteria:** If multiple applicants score equally but exceed available funding, Invest Atlanta will prioritize businesses based on:
 - a. Highest business longevity
 - b. Highest community impact score
 - c. Level of financial hardship

Selection Process Timeline

1. **Pre-Application Screening:** Invest Atlanta staff will verify applicant eligibility.
2. **Application Review:** The Grant Selection Committee will evaluate and score eligible applications.
3. **Notification:** Approved businesses will receive an email confirming their selection.
4. Submission of due diligence items outlined above to the legal team.
5. **Grant Agreement & Disbursement:**
 - o Selected businesses must sign a grant agreement and release agreement.
 - o Reimbursement will be processed upon submission of paid invoices, receipts, and financial documentation.
6. **Reporting Requirement:** Grantees must submit a follow-up report detailing the impact of the funds on their business operations.

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.

Application Submission: Submit applications via Invest Atlanta's website

Applications must be submitted via Invest Atlanta's website. No hard copy applications will be accepted.

Applications should include upload of all required components, as outlined above.

Questions or assistance regarding an application should be directed to:

Chris Dorelus cdorelus@investatlanta.com

Invest Atlanta's chat box [Contact Us](#)

Phone number 404-614-8292