



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

5C
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: September 9, 2025

Title of Item: 2026 Revitalization Grant Program Approval

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only	
Submitted by: Mark Jeffers		Department: Economic Development
Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator		Estimated Time Needed: 5 minutes
Summary of Issue: Economic Development staff, with collaboration and recommendation by the Economic Development Committee, has developed and offers the Revitalization Grant Program for approval. Aitkin County has received Federal Fiscal Recovery Funding through the American Rescue Plan Act. The Fiscal Recovery Fund was established to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery. Program Purpose: This grant program is designed to assist local businesses in upgrading and revitalizing the exterior presence of their properties. By investing in visible improvements, we aim to support community vitality and promote economic growth. A welcoming and professional exterior image fosters pride, encourages commerce, and demonstrates a commitment to local success. The Economic Development Committee recommends approval to execute this program. The County Attorney has reviewed the document.		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments: 		
Recommended Action/Motion: Economic Development requests a motion to approve execution of the 2026 Revitalization Grant Program		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i> Planned economic ARPA funding		



AITKIN COUNTY BUSINESS REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Aitkin County has received Federal Fiscal Recovery Funding through the American Rescue Plan Act. The Fiscal Recovery Fund was established to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

To directly support the community, the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners has approved the creation of the Aitkin County Business Revitalization Grant Program.

Program Purpose:

This grant program is designed to assist local businesses in upgrading and revitalizing the exterior presence of their properties. By investing in visible improvements, we aim to support community vitality and promote economic growth. A welcoming and professional exterior image fosters pride, encourages commerce, and demonstrates a commitment to local success.

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

- Aesthetic upgrades to the building exterior and entrance
- Replacement of worn or outdated awnings and signage
- General revitalization of outdoor business areas or structures

Grant Guidelines: Guidelines for application and awarding of Aitkin County Business Revitalization grants are as follows:

1. **Funding Limits**
Grants will range from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$5,000 per application. The Economic Development Committee may recommend adjustments to the award amount, with final approval by the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners.
2. **Matching Funds Required**
Applicants must provide a 1:1 match of awarded funds. Priority will be given to proposals demonstrating strong local investment and/or in-kind contributions.
3. **County-Wide Distribution**
Funds will be awarded with consideration to geographic distribution to ensure communities across the county benefit equitably.
4. **Ineligible Uses**
Grant funds may not be used for:
 - Salaries of business staff
 - Prizes or promotional items



- Reimbursement of expenses incurred prior to grant approval
- 5. Creative Impact Consideration
Applications will be evaluated based on the creativity and potential visual impact of the proposed improvements.
- 6. Eligible Projects
 - Exterior building or entrance upgrades
 - New or replacement awnings and signage
 - Outdoor aesthetic improvements to existing structures
- 7. Eligible Applicants
 - For-profit businesses located within Aitkin County

Application Process: Guidelines for applications are as follows:

1. How to Apply
Submit completed applications via:
 - Email: mark.jeffers@aitkincountymn.gov
(Subject line: *Revitalization Grant 2026*)
 - Mail:
Mark Jeffers
Aitkin County Government Center
307 2nd Street NW, Room 316
Aitkin, MN 56431
2. Review Timeline
Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds are depleted. Reviews will occur during regularly scheduled meetings of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee in 2026.
3. Final Approval
Funding recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.



Reporting Requirements

1. All grant recipients must submit proof of fund usage before the end of the one-year grant term. Instructions will be included in the award letter.
2. Economic Development staff will work with awardees to verify appropriate use of funds.
3. The recipient business must remain in operation for a minimum of three (3) years from the date of grant award. If the business ceases operations before that time, the grant funds must be returned on a pro-rated basis, calculated according to the number of full months the business remained open relative to the required 36 months.
4. Any unspent funds at the end of the grant period must be returned to Aitkin County.

Further information and additional forms and materials may be obtained by contacting:

Mark Jeffers
Aitkin County Economic Development Coordinator
218-531-6188
Mark.jeffers@aitkincountymn.gov



Application for Aitkin County Business Revitalization Grant Program 2026

1. How to Apply

Submit completed applications via:

a. Email: mark.jeffers@aitkincountymn.gov
(Subject line: *Revitalization Grant 2026*)

b. Mail:
Mark Jeffers
Aitkin County Government Center
307 2nd Street NW, Room 316
Aitkin, MN 56431

2. Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee.
3. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Business Name:

Address:

Person in Charge of Project:

Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code):

Contact Person's Phone #:

Contact Person's Email:

Description of your organization:



Mission Statement of your organization:

FUNDING:

Amount requested from Aitkin County \$
(Minimum \$1000, maximum request is \$5,000). The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.

Amount of the business' match \$

Total projected budget \$

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.

PROJECT BUDGET: in the space below, provide a budget for the entire project.

Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
TOTALS			



Will your organization accept a grant if it is partially funded? Y N Explain:

Along with your application, please attach all documents that will assist the committee in their decision. Examples may include drawings or sketches of planned awning or signage upgrades, detailed quotes of work to be accomplished (if available).

Business Owner Signature:

Name _____ Date: _____



TO:
FROM: Mark Jeffers
DATE:
Award Amount:

The undersigned agrees with the following conditions:

1. To use funds only for the designated purposes described in the grant application, and to notify the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee (EDC) and receive consent for any substantial deviation from the approved application.
2. That the total amount of the grant may be discontinued, modified, or withheld at any time if, in the judgment of EDC, such action is necessary to comply with legal requirements or if any of the rules stated in this agreement are not met.
3. An Expense Worksheet must be completed and returned with copies of all receipts upon completion of the event or project.
4. A grant closure letter will be provided once all required documents are submitted and approved.
5. All materials and promotions related to the program must indicate/acknowledge Aitkin County Economic Development as a *supporter* (not a sponsor) of the event or project.
6. Any unused grant funds must be returned to Aitkin County along with the final financial statement and evaluation.
7. No interest shall accrue on grant funds provided through this program.
8. No reimbursement grants will be awarded.
9. Grant funds shall not be used to pay the salaries of part- or full-time staff associated with the event, business development activity, or the organization hosting such activities.
10. Funds shall not be used for any type of prizes or other material items that may be offered, awarded, sold, or given away. These funds are not intended to supplement an annual budget, but to support incremental business development and recreation.
11. All events and grant-related documents must be completed and submitted by December 31.
12. The recipient business must remain in operation for a minimum of three (3) years from the date of grant award. If the business ceases operations before that time, the grant funds must be returned on a pro-rated basis, calculated according to the number of full months the business remained open relative to the required 36 months.



By signing below, the Grant Recipient accepts the conditions of this Agreement and requests that the grant payment be executed.

Grant Recipient _____ **Date** _____

Economic Development Coordinator _____ **Date** _____