



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- Replacement of worn or outdated awnings and signage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