



City of Columbus ARP Business Grant Program



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COVID-19 Small Business Economic Recovery Grant Program

Program Overview

Columbus Consolidated Government has partnered with StartUP Columbus and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce to develop and administer a business relief grant program. The City of Columbus ARP-Business Grant Program will assist small businesses in Columbus that have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding Source

Funding for this grant program is provided under the American Rescue Plan Act through the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Funding Amounts

Up to \$40,000 in Reimbursable Expenses* for businesses with 1-25 employees.

* Assistance is in the form of a grant with no repayment requirement.

- ARP-Business Grant Program funding must be used for rent/mortgage, utility, and/or operational retrofitting.

Application Period

Up to \$3,000,000 is available for the ARP-Business Relief Grant Program. Applications will be accepted until all available funds are expended. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all available funds are committed to eligible businesses and expenses.

Program Eligibility

To be considered for the ARP-Business Relief Grant Program, a business must meet all eligibility criteria listed below:

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- For Profit businesses that are NOT publicly traded, partially owned by a hedge fund, or a corporate owned franchise.
 - For Profit businesses that have a current Muscogee County business license.
 - For Profit businesses that are in good standing with the City of Columbus.
 - For-profit businesses located in City of Columbus with 1-25 employees at time of application to the Small Business Economic Recovery Grant Program.
 - For Profit businesses with a physical presence of an organization or business in a building or other structure.
 - For Profit businesses who can demonstrate ongoing business operations since March 1, 2019.
 - For Profit businesses that are not in bankruptcy, current with all local, state, and Federal taxes, fees, and be in compliance with all City of Columbus business obligations including, but not be limited to, licensure, insurance, tax obligations and zoning/land use requirements.
 - * For Profit businesses that are operational at the time the grant is awarded.

*If the businesses temporarily closed due to the pandemic, the business must be opened prior to the grant being awarded.

Application Process

The ARP-Business Relief Grant Program application will be available online at:
<https://www.columbusga.gov/arp>

- Applications should only be submitted by the owner, partner, or authorized corporation member, and Applicant is 51% + majority owner of business.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

In addition to the application, the following documents are required:

- Completed W-9 form for business. DBA, Tax ID Number (or Social Security Number for sole proprietor), and Mailing Address for Grant Check must match entries in General Information section.
- E-Verify Number. (For businesses with 10 or fewer employees, who are not required to use E-Verify by the State of Georgia, a signed and notarized Affidavit of Agreement must be submitted in place of an E-Verify Number.)
- Valid state issued photo ID of business owner/signatory.
- Copy of current City of Columbus business license.
- Bills/invoices for expenses meeting eligible reimbursable COVID-19 expenses along with proof of payment.
- Business operating agreement (for multiple owners)

Business Financials

For Individuals (Sole Proprietors and individual/single-owner LLCs)

- Sole Proprietor Certification
- 2020 Schedule C (Form 1040) –OR–
 - o If no 2020 Schedule C is available, provide 2019 Schedule C (Form 1040)
- Profit and Loss Statement for period in which expenses occurred.

For Corporations (C-Corps, S-Corps, corporate Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs))

- 2020 Corporation Income Tax Return (Form 1120 or Form 1120-S) –OR–
 - o If no 2020 tax return is available, provide 2019 tax return
- Profit and Loss Statement for period in which expenses occurred.

For Partnerships

- 2020 Return of Partnership Income (Form 1065) –OR–
 - o If no 2020 tax return is available, provide 2019 tax return
- Profit and Loss Statement for period in which expenses occurred.

Application Review

Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee convened by StartUP Columbus in consultation with the City of Columbus for threshold requirements and needs evaluation. The application will be scored on a pass/fail basis related to the requirements provided in these guidelines. Applicants recommended for funding will be contacted by the City of Columbus to execute their written agreement which will allow for distribution of funds.

Appendix A: Reimbursable Expense Information

Reimbursable Expenses

To alleviate documentation and tracking of this grant, the City of Columbus ARP-Business Relief Grant Program seeks to reimburse awarded firms for expenses incurred between July 1, 2020 and the date of their written agreement with the City of Columbus.

The categories of eligible expenses that the City of Columbus ARP-Business Relief Grant Program can reimburse awarded firms are:

- Space Costs for your business: Rent, Mortgage, Lease and Insurance Costs.
 - Utility Costs: Electric, gas, water, internet and phone service directly supporting awarded firms' operations.
 - Operational Retrofitting: includes building modification expenses to support enhanced business persistence.
- o Note: Documentation should include an invoice from a licensed inspector, proof of payment, permit receipts if applicable, as well as proof of occupancy certification.

Documenting Reimbursable Expenses

To receive payment under the City of Columbus ARP-Business Relief Grant Program, awarded firms must show documentation of the eligible expense(s), listed above of which, they wish to be reimbursed, up to the maximum award that they receive. In addition, awarded firms must show documentation demonstrating that they have paid the cost associated with the Eligible Expense.

Documentation for Expenses:

- Space Costs: Awarded firms seeking Reimbursement for space costs must provide a copy of their Lease or Mortgage Agreement that clearly states the time period that they are responsible for these costs, and what the monthly cost for these expenses are.

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- **Utility Costs:** Awarded firms seeking Reimbursement for Utility costs must provide copies of the bill(s) from the Utility provider that clearly associate with the firm and their location of operation. The bill(s) must also clearly state the amount due from the firm and be separated from any non-business-related expenses.
 - **Operational Retrofitting Costs:** Awarded firms seeking Reimbursement for operational retrofitting costs must provide copies of an invoice from a licensed contractor, any applicable lien waivers proof of payment, permit receipts if applicable, as well as proof of occupancy certification.

For the Expenses listed above, in addition to the documentation requested, the City of Columbus requires demonstration of proof of costs incurred. Awarded firms must also provide proof that their firm paid the outstanding amounts for these expenses.

This documentation can be in the form of a cancelled check, bank statement clearly stating the payment to the vendor, or an invoice that is marked Paid and signed by the Vendor.

New Vendor Documentation

In addition to the documentation above, the City of Columbus will require some basic vendor information to process your payment. These documents include the following items:

- Current Company W-9 Form.
- Copy of current City of Columbus business license.

Please feel free to contact Robert Scott, Community Reinvestment Director, at scott.robert@columbusga.org or Josh Beard, Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce Manager of Small Business & Regional Initiatives, jbeard@columbusgachamber.com with any questions that you may have about the processes or requirements described above. The City of Columbus, StartUp Columbus and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce look forward to assisting you in sustaining and growing your business, and providing needed goods, services, and employment to our local community.