

Colorado Community Revitalization Grant 2021—2022 Guidelines



THE INTENT OF THE COLORADO COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM is to provide grant funding to finance various projects across the state that are intended to create or revitalize mixed-use commercial centers. This grant program will support creative projects that combine creative industry commercial spaces, performance space, community gathering spaces, child care centers, retail and workforce housing partnerships for the purpose of economic recovery and diversification by supporting creative sector entrepreneurs, artisans and community non-profit organizations.

The effort is led by the Colorado Office of Economic Development’s Colorado Creative Industries Division (OEDIT—CCI) in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Division of Local Government (DOLA—DLG). This funding initiative was enacted in [Senate Bill 21-252](#).

Highly competitive applications will include mixed-use projects with elements of workforce housing, live/work space for creative sector workers and their families, non-residential space for community creative uses, and can include creative industry commercial and retail space. Projects can also include enterprises and organizations that serve community needs such as performance space, child care, health and wellness, and space for non-profit groups. Grants will be provided for gap funding to projects in creative districts, historic districts, main streets and commercial centers in Colorado in 2021 and 2022. Each project must demonstrate a high level of community engagement in response to community needs, including strong evidence of being able to attract additional sources of funding and broad support from local governments and surrounding communities or neighborhoods. Projects shall also demonstrate how they will stimulate economic recovery and economic diversification and an ability to commence work within a reasonable amount of time.

A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT should serve as a catalyst for a community’s commercial center and should be indicative of the jurisdiction's goals, strategies and strategic plans for development. Projects could incorporate workforce housing and a mix of creative industry commercial and/or community uses that would diversify or strengthen the local economy and increase the availability of affordable space in the commercial core of the community, with an emphasis on creative industries and community services increasing the livability, daily activity and economic vitality of the neighborhood. The project, through new construction or renovation of existing buildings, can be transformative, celebrate the artistic or historic character of the community, provide infill development and/or elimination of blight and increase property values. A successful project should be a demonstration of community values and a positive public investment in local community revitalization through the creative industries. Projects should reflect a combination of multiple sources of funding such as local resources, federal or state

funding, loans, mortgages, or philanthropy. The Community Revitalization grant funding is intended to fill the gap bringing a project across the finish line.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Colorado municipalities, local government, special districts, Creative Districts, Historic Districts, Main Street Program participants, School Districts, Business Improvement Districts, Urban Renewal Authorities, Downtown Development Authorities, as well as non-profit and for-profit business entities are eligible to apply for grant funding.

The lead applicant can be an individual representing the types of organizations listed above. The applicant must designate a primary point of contact to respond to requests for information, documentation, payments, reporting, and general communication with Colorado Creative Industries. (See APPENDIX A—DEFINITIONS)

Additional eligibility requirements:

- Creative mixed-use projects may include workforce housing units, as well as other types of uses including mixed-use commercial, co-working, cooperative/shared work studios, community space, space for nonprofit organizations, education, child care, and health care, for example, with an emphasis on creative industries.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- Grant funds cannot be used for general operating expenses and/or developer’s fees
- Projects that do not meet basic energy efficiency standards will not be eligible

THE APPLICATION PROCESS will begin with a brief pre-application. Following review of the pre-application, applicants that meet the intent of the program will be invited to submit a full application. This will be an open application process beginning July/August 2021 and concluding Dec. 1, 2022. Applications will be reviewed by a panel. All applicants must submit a pre-application before being invited to submit the full application.

TIMELINE

Grant funding will be distributed in three rounds, each to consist of a pre-application, full application, and panel review. The first round of funding will open to pre-applications beginning July/August 2021 until October 1, 2021. After an initial review by Program Managers, applicants may be invited to submit a full application.

All rounds of funding will be completed by **Thursday, December 1, 2022**.

July 2021 Thursday, December 1, 2022 Upon Receipt of Completed Application August 2021—June 30, 2023	Staff support available Rolling deadline up to final deadline—4:00 p.m. Review panels evaluate applications Funding period
--	--

GRANT AMOUNTS

Funding amounts will be based on three factors:

1. Total project cost
2. Other sources of secured permanent funding
3. Gap amount needed for the project.

For grant requests over \$100,000, to the extent practicable, the awarded funding amount will not exceed more than fifty percent of the total costs of the project. Grants will be capped at a maximum of \$5 million per project in order to distribute the funds broadly. Projects that are specifically designed for artist live/work space may be eligible for grants higher than \$5 million, not to exceed more than 50% of the total project cost.

REVIEW CRITERIA & PROCEDURES

The following criteria and weights are used by reviewers to evaluate and rank proposals
(See **APPENDIX B—NARRATIVE QUESTIONS**)

- Project Readiness (25%)
- Community Buy-In (25%)
- Project Features (25%)
- Financial Information (25%)

Pre-applications and full applications (by invitation) will be accepted in three rounds until all available funding is committed. Applications will be reviewed by a group of subject matter experts, selected based on the elements of the project and as outlined in the legislation, which may include housing, commercial, retail, health, energy efficiency, tourism and outdoor recreation, child care, regional representatives from the Department of Local Affairs, OEDIT Rural Prosperity Representatives, historic preservation, and business funding and incentives specialists.

Priority will be given to projects:

- that have the highest degree of project readiness for immediate construction or renovation of buildings.
- with significant leverage of other funds.
- that address economic challenges such as economically disadvantaged communities, economically challenged groups, economic diversification of local economy, business and/or resident attraction or retention considerations.
- that are located in creative districts, historic districts, main streets and commercial centers.
- that include a mix of uses and align with community goals and priorities.
- that include energy efficiency measures.

Grant funds are intended for statewide distribution. Program Managers and the review panel will have the discretion to approve projects to ensure the geographic diversity of funds. The review panel may request local government prioritization if multiple applications are submitted from a single jurisdiction or community.

ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Pre-applications will be open July/August 2021, and will continue on a rolling basis with the first round beginning August—October 1, 2021.

Pre-applications that are approved will be provided with a timeline and instructions on how to submit a full application. Full applications will be accepted until funds are fully expended. No full application will be accepted after 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 1, 2022.

This document contains program guidelines only. **New users will need to register for an account on the CCI Grants Portal (<https://co-cci.smapply.org>).**

All users are required to log into the portal and complete the online application. All support materials are uploaded into the online system. No hard copies or emailed copies of the application or support materials will be accepted. We recommend that applicants register in the portal and review the online grant system with plenty of time before the deadline to allow staff proper time to assist with any questions or issues. Each organization has a Primary Administrator for their organization's portal account. This is the only person who can add members to the organization's account. **(See APPENDIX C—GRANT PORTAL)**

For additional help on using the online grant system, contact Sami Wells at (303) 892-3822 or Sami.Wells@state.co.us.

PRE-APPLICATION

The pre-application will require the following information:

- Name of organization intending to apply for grant funding
- Name of individual representing the organization
- Description of the project elements and uses
- Description of any project partners and funders
- Description of community engagement process and how project meets community goals and objectives
- Estimated timeline for project completion
- Confirmation that the design and engineering phase of the project been completed
- Project cost and estimated gap needed to cross the finish line

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Each narrative question in the pre-application and full application allows for 500 words. Here are examples of narrative questions that will be included in the application.

- Applicants will describe the need for this funding
- Applicants will describe the community engagement process undertaken to ensure projects meet community needs and goals

- Applicant is required to provide a timeline for project commencement and completion including key project benchmarks.

(See APPENDIX B—NARRATIVE QUESTIONS)

FINANCIALS & SUPPORT MATERIALS

Applicants are required to submit financial information and support materials as described below. **Omission of any required support materials will make your application ineligible for review.**

- **REQUIRED:** Detailed financial information about secured and unsecured sources of funds for the project including permanent, long-term, short-term and temporary and/or restricted sources or any funding, applications and requests for funding that are pending or planned
- **REQUIRED:** Must provide documentation for secured funding sources
- **REQUIRED:** Letter of support from a representative of local government organization in which the project is geographically located (local government grantees are exempt from this requirement)
- **REQUIRED:** Resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, City Council, or Town Board (Local Governments only)

GRANTEE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & GRANT CANCELLATIONS

Grantees will be required to provide any requested information by OEDIT—CCI for reporting to the state legislature on the use of funds by way of an annual final report to be completed in the online grant portal.

Grantees will be required to submit project status reports on the use of the grant funding as stipulated in the award letter.

Applicants must return funds if the project is unable to proceed due to funding restrictions or other factors that prevent the project from being completed.

OTHER CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

As a condition of the grant, Colorado Creative Industries requires the recipient of public funds to comply with all state laws and regulations. Those terms and conditions can be found here: [state terms](#), and [grant terms](#).

During a period of ten (10) years following the date of closeout of the Grant by the State, the Grantee may not change the USE or planned use of the property. If the Grantee decides to change the use of the property to a use which the State determines does not qualify in meeting the original intent of the Grant, the Grantee must reimburse to the State an amount equal to the current fair market value of the property, less any portion of the value attributable to expenditures of non-grant funds for acquisition of and improvements to, the property. At the end of the ten (10) year period following the date of completion and thereafter, no State restrictions on use of the property shall be in effect.

Any material submitted regarding application for grant funds becomes the property of the State of Colorado and is subject to the terms of Colorado Revised Statutes 24-72-201 through 24-72-206, Public Open Records. The State of Colorado has the right to use any or all information/material presented in reply to the Announcement, subject to limitations for proprietary or confidential information. Disqualification or denial of the application does not eliminate this right. Any restrictions on the use or inspection of material contained within the proposal shall be clearly stated in the proposal itself. The contents of the application will become contractual obligations if the project is funded.

ABOUT COLORADO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

[Colorado Creative Industries](#) (CCI) is a division in the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade and capitalizes on the immense potential for the creative industries to drive economic growth in Colorado. The mission of CCI is to promote, support and expand the creative industries to drive the economy, foster job growth and enhance the quality of life in communities and neighborhoods across the state. Colorado is a magnet for creative enterprises and creative workers. Indeed, with more than 8,000 businesses and 186,000 jobs, the creative sector comprises the state's 5th largest employment cluster. Colorado ranks #1 in the nation for the percentage of adults engaged in creative pursuits.

ABOUT DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS

Created in 1966, DOLA's Division of Local Government (DLG) has been a strong voice for local governments and believes that strong local communities create a strong Colorado. DLG advocates for self-reliance, local empowerment, resilient practices and strong local leadership. DLG provides strategic expertise, advocacy, and funding. The division promotes local problem solving, informs decision making and invests in communities.

APPENDIX A—DEFINITIONS

WORKFORCE HOUSING is defined as the average of unit rates set at or below 140% of Area Median Income (AMI).

SUSTAINABLE includes both financially affordable and environmental sustainability.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY is a commitment to maintain at or below 120% of AMI for workforce housing for a minimum of 40 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY includes energy efficiency standards including renewable energy sources and electric vehicle charging stations.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS as defined by the International Building Code (IBC)

COMMERCIAL CENTERS include neighborhood commercial centers and downtown areas with a concentration of creative industries and creative spaces for arts and entertainment.

APPENDIX B—NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

You will answer the following narrative questions in the online application. **Each question text box allows up to 500 words.**

Project Description

- Describe the project, including physical location, how this project diversifies the economy, expands economic opportunities and and/or increases livability within the community
- Describe how the project enhances the artistic or historic character of the community
- What is the current zoning of the subject property? Will a zone change be required? Will the property require annexation or subdivision?
- Is the project connected to utilities? Will any utility upgrades be required?
- Has design/engineering been completed? Has a construction bid package been developed?
- If not, how were cost estimates for the project determined?
- Has a general contractor been selected? If so, was a public competitive bid process completed prior to awarding the contract?
- Provide financial background of your organization. *Developers only
- Provide annual financial information. *Local government / Special districts

Financial Information

- Provide a list of all financial sources and indicate which sources are committed funding, which are pending and when a decision will be finalized for any pending sources, and which are short-term bridge loans that cannot be extended.
- Local governments: please provide a detailed explanation of any unassigned general fund revenue, or revenue committed to this project.
- Developers: Please provide a detailed explanation of any developer fees
- Is this project scalable or can it be done in phases, and if so, please describe the phases of the project.
- Local Government applications: Does the applicant jurisdiction have voter authorization to receive and expend state grants without regard to TABOR spending limits? If yes, explain.

Community Buy-In

- Describe the community engagement process that has been undertaken.
- How does this project fit into the community's visioning plan, strategic plan, or other capital plan for local government? Please cite the specific plan and the year that plan was developed/adopted by the local government.

APPENDIX C—GRANT PORTAL

Each organization should have only **one organization account** assigned to a Primary Administrator. This admin can add members to the organization and give access to applications. If registering for an account in the grant portal for the first time, there are 3 steps to complete:

- Register as an organization/business
- Verify your email address

Each time a user logs into the portal, the system defaults to the individual account. If you are trying to access organization/business applications, you will need to switch to the organization/business account by selecting your name in the upper left corner. (additional grant portal [instructions](#))

To successfully submit your application, **all tasks** must be completed and then the submit button will be available. A confirmation email will be sent upon a successful submission.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- STEP 1: Read the Guidelines and Application Instructions thoroughly.
- Verify your eligibility. If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact CCI staff before starting the application.
 - Review the Guidelines and make special note of program requirements, funding criteria, required attachments and application deadline.
- STEP 2: Complete required registrations and updates.
- Create (or update) your Account information in the **online grant portal**.
- STEP 3: Prepare the Colorado Community Revitalization application.
- Grant request information
 - Narrative Questions
 - Prepare your answers. Click into the narrative field and a word countdown will start. Each question text box allows a maximum of 500 words
 - Uploads/Attachments
 - Excess pages, items not listed in the guidelines or alternative formats are not acceptable.
- STEP 4: Review your application thoroughly and submit the application.
- Call CCI staff with any questions at least a day or two prior to the deadline.
 - Hit the “Submit” button with plenty of time before the 4:00 p.m. deadline.
No extensions will be granted.

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this application.

STAFF CONTACTS

Applicants seeking assistance are advised to contact CCI staff well in advance of the application deadline. Prior to contacting a staff member, applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly.

Colorado Creative Industries
1600 Broadway, Suite 2500
Denver, CO 80202
Tel: 303-892-3840

Email: oodit_creativeindustries@state.co.us

Website: <https://oodit.colorado.gov/colorado-creative-industries>

For General questions and assistance in using the online grant system:

[CCI Grant Portal Assistance Document](#)

Sami Wells
303-892-3822
Sami.Wells@state.co.us