In an effort to combat the economic impacts of COVID19, the Thornton Start Up Grant is designed to assist small business owners with starting new business or relocating and expanding their existing business into a new location in the City of Thornton. Thornton City Council understands the challenges and financial limitations small business owners face when opening a business and would like to attract new and unique businesses to the city of Thornton by supporting entrepreneurs with bringing their ideas to reality. The Thornton Start Up Grant assists businesses most in need with building improvements, cost of permitting and licensing, regulatory compliance, relocation costs, equipment, furniture and fixture purchases, façade improvements, signage and the first month of rent. This program will reimburse pre-approved eligible expenses, up to the amount of the grant awarded. The business plan/strategic plan and application must be reviewed and approved by the grant review committee before an award letter will be issued. Please contact the Alliance Business Assistance Center with questions and for assistance in applying for the grant 720-674-3547.

1. **Applications are accepted January 2023 through October 31, 2023. No extensions will be allowed. Grants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the funding is gone.**
2. **Applicants must be**:
	* Opening a new commercial business at the identified city of Thornton address. The new business owner must be starting or expanding a commercial business into an existing building.
	* If business is subleasing space in a building, the maximum grant is $5,000.
	* Locating in non-residential zoning designations, not on public property.
	* In compliance with all government fees and taxes, licensing, and applicable laws and ordinances.
	* **INELIGIBLE FOR THE GRANT:** Non-profits, marijuana related businesses, pawn shops, bail bonds money lending, used car lots, and check cashing businesses, liquor stores, adult oriented in nature businesses, religious institutions, and residential living facilities.

### An Applicant is eligible for the Start Up Grant funding only once per location.

* + If Certificate of Occupancy has already been issued, it must have been issued within 6 months of the date you submit your completed application.
1. **Applicants are responsible for:**
	* Scheduling business consulting sessions with the Alliance Business Assistance Center. Please contact the Alliance Business Assistance Center for details. 720-674-3547.
	* Filling out all application documentation *COMPLETELY*, including an approved business plan/strategic plan. An incomplete application will not be reviewed for consideration.
	* **Submitting an approved business plan/strategic plan with the application before the application will be accepted and considered for review.**
	* Determining the Scope of Work for each project.
	* Determining the qualifications of the contractors.
	* Submitting a summary of the planned projects and purchases to be made.
	* Paying the difference, if any, between the approved grant amount and total project costs.
	* Ensuring that all work is permitted and inspected properly. Some inspections may need to be performed during the actual work, rather than afterward. Speak to the Building Department for more information on permits and inspections.
	* Collecting and compiling invoices, receipts, and photos for one submission in an orderly manner.
	* Providing a current Business Plan, if in business less than 2 years, or a Strategic Plan, if in business longer than 2 years. Assistance is available through a no-cost consultation with the Alliance Business Assistance Center. **Your Business Plan or Strategic Plan must be completed and submitted with your application for your application to be accepted as complete.** Once a completed application has been accepted, your application will go through the review and approval process for consideration of funds.
	* Compliance with all City taxes, licensing, and applicable laws and ordinances.
	* Obtaining a Thornton Business License and final Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Thornton before funding will be disbursed.

### Contractors

* Hiring Thornton-based contractors is strongly encouraged. To view a list of local licensed contractors, go to: <http://www.cityofthornton.net/government/citydevelopment/Pages/contractors.aspx>

### Application Submittal Process

1. Applications, required documents, and current Business Plan or Strategic Plan (if required) may be submitted online, dropped off, returned through the mail or by email to the Alliance Business Assistance Center.
	* The application will be reviewed by the following departments: Economic Development, Sales and Use Tax, Building Division, Development Engineering, and the Planning Division and Fire Department.
2. The application and business plan (if applicable) will be evaluated and approved by a review committee according to the Start Up Grant Scoresheet, which can be found online at <https://businessinthornton.com/>
	* If the business is a new start-up or in business for less than 2 years, a Business Plan approval by the grant application review committee is required.
	* If the business has been operating for more than 2 years, a Strategic Plan approval by the grant application review committee is required.
	* **Your application and Business Plan or Strategic Plan must be submitted together to be considered by the review committee.**
	* The Alliance Business Assistance Center may be able to help with creating Business Plans/Strategic Plans.
3. If funding is used for marketing purposes, the Start Up Grant review committee must approve all marketing samples for grant funding to be reimbursed. The Economic Development Office will notify the applicant if they have been approved or denied grant funding within 1 week of the application review. If approved, the applicant will be advised of:
	* Approved grant funding amount
	* Business Plan/Strategic Plan change recommendations or approval
	* Permits and other regulatory requirements
4. The applicant will then work directly with Sales and Use Tax, Planning, Building, and Development Engineering division representatives to coordinate all licenses, permits, inspections, and other required elements of all project work. The Alliance Business Assistance Center can assist with navigating this process.
5. Thornton Economic Development reimburses awardees based on *proven total project cost*.
6. Reimbursement will occur once all approved project work is complete and paid for. Applicant must submit an itemized statement of expenses and paid invoices/receipts along with after photos and a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy and Business License.

### Funding and Eligible Expenses

1. **The maximum amount is $10,000.**
2. **The maximum amount is $5,000** for businesses who are subleasing space (sublease – sharing the same physical address as another business). Exception: separate unit numbers or suites that are registered with the City of Thornton and US Postal Office.
3. **Taxes and Fees:** The City is required by Federal tax law to report to the IRS any grant money awarded to a business above $600 as income. Sales and Use Tax, Permit, and Design Review Fees will be charged, as applicable.
4. **Eligible projects:** must be for code compliance costs, permitting fees, licensing fees, equipment costs, marketing of your new Thornton location (maximum marketing grant award is $1,000 with a 50/50 match), exterior or interior improvements such as:

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| --- | --- |
| * Facades, gutters, downspouts
 | * Energy Efficiency, recycling, water efficiency etc.
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| * Exterior lighting
 | * Signage
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| * Awnings, canopies
 | * Furniture, fixtures, and equipment
 |
| * Painting and masonry cleaning
 | * Doors, roofs, and windows
 |
| * Landscaping and fencing
 | * Licensing and permitting fees
 |
| * Irrigation system
 | * Fire sprinkler or alarm system improvements
 |
| * Parking lots and sidewalks
 | * Some exclusions: Inventory Employee Wages
 |
| * ADA accessibility improvements
* Security and crime prevention
 | * Fees/interest associated with obtaining a bank loan to cover up front costs of the project
 |
| * First month of rent
 |  |

### Requirements

### Application Requirements:

* + Schedule a business consultation with a staff or counselor from the Alliance Business Assistance Center
	+ Submit an approved business plan or business strategy plan to be reviewed by the grant review committee.

**Reimbursement Requirements:**

* + Obtain final approval from the appropriate City department on all work requiring a permit and inspection.
	+ Have been issued a Business License and Certificate of Occupancy.
	+ Pay for the work of the contractor prior to submitting for reimbursement.
	+ Submit an itemized list of your receipts and invoices, including date of purchase, name of company, description of project or purchase, and amount. Attach all supporting project documentation including receipts (i.e., proof of payment), lien waivers, and “after” photographs, indicating project completeness to the Economic Development Office.
	+ Applicants are responsible for itemizing permit fees and loan interest in their reimbursement request.

## Alliance Business Assistance Center 550 Thornton Parkway Unit 170

**Thornton, CO 80229**

**720.674.3547**