

2024 South Thornton Attraction & Revitalization Grant (STAR) Applicant Requirements & Information

The STAR Grant is designed to enhance and revitalize commercial areas in the South Thornton Development Area (South TDA; identified as within the TDA, South of 104th Avenue) by attracting and supporting new and expanding businesses to the area, assisting business owners with building improvements, and assisting with the cost of permitting and licensing, regulatory compliance, equipment purchases or exterior and façade improvements. This program will only reimburse eligible expenses, up to the preapproved grant amount, for eligible projects. The business plan must be reviewed and approved by the STAR grant review committee before an award letter is issued.

1. Applicants must be:

- A new business owner at the identified address, locating or expanding a commercial business into an existing building, within the South Thornton Development Area.
- 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.
- EXCLUSIONS:** funding cannot be used for non-profits, marijuana related businesses, pawn shops, bail bonds, money lending, used car lots, check cashing, liquor stores, adult oriented nature, religious institutions, and residential living facilities.

2. Applicant is eligible for STAR grant funding only once per location.

3. If Certificate of Occupancy has already been issued, it must have been issued within 6 months of the date you submit your completed application and business plan.

4. Applicants are responsible for:

- Scheduling business consulting sessions with the Alliance Business Assistance Center. Please contact the Alliance Business Assistance Center at 720-674-3547 for details.
- Filling out all application documentation COMPLETELY. An incomplete application may result in the dismissal of the application.
- 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. Contact the Building Inspections Division for more information on permits and inspections. 303-538-7396.
- Collecting and compiling invoices, receipts, and photos for one submission in a concise and 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, submitted, and approved before funds are reserved.
- 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.
- Meeting all above requirements before **December 9, 2024**. Incomplete reimbursement packets or late submittals will not be accepted, and funds will not be reimbursed.

5. Contractors

- Thornton-based contractors are strongly encouraged. If a Thornton contractor is hired, or purchases are made at a Thornton business, reimbursement will be awarded at 60%. Non-Thornton contractor services will be reimbursed at 50% of the actual cost. To view a list of local licensed contractors, go to: thorntonco.gov/government/citydevelopment

6. Timelines and Requested Documentation

- **Applications are accepted January 2024 – October 31, 2024.** Applications will be reviewed on a **first-come, first-served basis** until the funding is gone. Submit your application early to give yourself the best opportunity for grant approval.
- **Deadline for project completion is December 9, 2024 – no extensions will be entertained.** For reimbursement, all projects must be completed, paid for, and have passed required inspections.

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Application Submittal Process

1. Applications, required documents, and current business plan or strategic plan may be completed online, dropped off, returned through the mail or by email to the Alliance Business Assistance Center by 5:00 p.m. on October 31, 2024.
 - The application will be reviewed by the following departments: Office of Economic Development, Building Division, Development Engineering, Planning Division, and the Fire Prevention Division.
2. The application and business plan or strategic plan will be evaluated and approved by a review committee according to the STAR rubric scoresheet, which can be found online at www.businessinthornton.com. The application review committee meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.
 - If the business is a new start-up or in business for less than 2 years, a business plan approval is required from the grant application review committee before applications will be approved.
 - 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/strategic plan must be complete to be reviewed by the review committee.
 - The Alliance Business Assistance Center can help with creating business/strategic plans.
3. If funding is used for marketing materials, the grant review committee must approve all marketing samples for grant funding to be reimbursed.
4. The Office of Economic Development 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/Strategic Plan change recommendations or approval.
 - Permits and other regulatory requirements.
5. The applicant will then work directly with Sales and Use Tax, Fire Prevention, Planning, Building, and Development Engineering division representatives to coordinate all permits, inspections, and other required elements of all project work. The Alliance Business Assistance Center can assist with navigating this process.
6. The Thornton Office of Economic Development reimburses awardees based on proven total project cost.
7. Reimbursement will occur once all approved project work is complete. 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. **Tier 1** - An initial grant up to \$10,000 per business license holder and business location.
2. **Tier 2** - Projects exceeding \$10,000 can receive an additional \$5,000 grant with a 50/50 match, for a maximum grant award of \$15,000 per business license holder.
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.
 - Contractors are responsible for itemizing permit fees and loan interest in their reimbursement request, which will be included in STAR Grant funding reimbursement calculations.
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:
 - Facades, gutters, downspouts
 - Exterior lighting
 - Awnings, canopies
 - Painting and masonry cleaning
 - Landscaping and fencing
 - Irrigation system
 - Parking lots and sidewalks
 - ADA accessibility improvements
 - Security and crime prevention
 - First month of rent
 - Energy efficiency, recycling, water efficiency etc.
 - Signage
 - Furniture, fixtures, and equipment
 - Doors, roofs, and windows
 - Licensing and permitting fees
 - Fire sprinkler or alarm system improvements
 - Some exclusions: inventory, employee wages
 - Fees/interest associated with obtaining a bank loan to cover up front costs of the project

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Requirements – the Applicant must:

- Schedule business consulting sessions with the Alliance Business Assistance Center and receive a business plan or business strategy approval from the grant review committee.
- Schedule and pass the final inspection and receive approval from the appropriate city departments on all work requiring a permit.
- 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 Office of Economic Development no later than December 9, 2024.
- Applicants are responsible for itemizing permit fees and loan interest in their reimbursement request.

**Alliance Business Assistance Center
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720.674.3547**