



## ***AITKIN COUNTY BUSINESS REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM***

### ***PROGRAM OVERVIEW***

Aitkin County has received Federal Fiscal Recovery Funding from 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. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners, have approved funding to be used to directly impact the Community of Aitkin County by establishing the Aitkin County Business Revitalization Grant Program.

The purpose of this grant fund is to help support local businesses to upgrade/revitalize the outside presence of their business property in our community in an effort to drive economic growth. As business owners and members of our community, it is important that we establish and maintain an image of growth and success. The fund will help support upgrades of awnings, signage, outdoor aesthetics and general business image and appearance.

**Grant Guidelines:** Guidelines for application and awarding of Aitkin County Business Revitalization grants are as follows:

1. **Funding Limits:** Minimum of \$1000 and a maximum of \$5,000 per grant application. The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.
2. **Matching Funds:** The Aitkin County Business Revitalization grant Program is intended to leverage locally funded promotions and not replace that funding. Significant consideration will be given to the amount and quality of matching funds/in kind contributions when grant applications are evaluated by the Economic Development Committee and County Board. Applicants are required to provide a 1:1 match of all funds awarded.
3. **County-Wide Distribution:** The intent of this program is to provide assistance throughout Aitkin County. Consideration shall be given to amounts awarded and number of grants approved for any particular region of the county to ensure that an equitable level of funding is available throughout the county.
4. Grant funds shall not be used to pay the salaries of part or full time staff associated with your business activity. Funds shall not be used for any type of prizes or other material items that may be offered, awarded, sold or given away.
5. Aitkin County Business Revitalization Grant funds may not be used to reimburse expenses occurred prior to grant approval by Aitkin County.
6. The Aitkin County Economic Development Committee will rank applications based on creativity and beautification concepts.
7. **Eligible Project Examples:**
  - Improvement of exterior building and/or entry aesthetics.
  - Replacement of weathered awnings or signage.
  - Exterior business area revitalization to existing structure(s).



8. Eligible organizations:

- Businesses located in Aitkin County.

**Application Procedure:** Guidelines for applications are as follows:

1. Grant requests should be submitted by EMAIL to:  
[mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us), subject line: Revitalization Grant 2023 or  
by mail to:  
Mark Jeffers  
Aitkin County Government Center,  
307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, Room 316,  
Aitkin, MN 56431.
2. Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled monthly meetings of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee in 2023. Application deadline is **ongoing until all available funds are awarded**.
3. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

**Reporting Requirements**

1. Applicants that are awarded a Revitalization Grant are required to submit proof of fund use prior to the end of the one-year grant period. Reporting information documents and deadlines will be included in the award letter.
2. Economic Development staff will collaborate with grant award winners to verify qualified grant use.
3. Unused funds at the conclusion of the one-year 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@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us)