

Kansas Department of Commerce

Downtown Revive and Thrive

Ends on Tue, Mar 10, 2026, 5:00 PM

Downtown Revive & Thrive: Rehabilitation for Innovation and Incubator Spaces

PURPOSE

The Kansas Department of Commerce seeks proposals from businesses, non-profit, or local government organizations who are collaborating with business owners to revitalize underutilized or historic buildings by transforming them into accessible, modern and sustainable workspaces. These projects will attract entrepreneurs, freelancers and small businesses to rural areas in the state to drive economic growth and foster a resilient local innovation system.

Rural downtown corridors across Kansas face increasing numbers of vacant and underutilized properties, many of them historic buildings in need of rehabilitation. At the same time, demand is rising for flexible spaces that allow entrepreneurs to test products, develop commercial concepts, and pilot new retail or restaurant ventures.

This grant supports projects that repurpose existing downtown infrastructure to create spaces and provide equipment for pop-up retail and restaurants that contribute to livable, vibrant communities. This initiative aims to create high-quality workspaces that blend technology, collaboration and historic preservation. The goal is to repurpose existing downtown buildings to create spaces and provide equipment for pop-up retail, restaurants, workspaces, and innovation centers that contribute to livable, vibrant communities.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Strengthening local economy
- Strengthen local partnerships to ensure sustainability of new businesses
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs by creating flexible spaces that can be used to test products, develop commercial concepts, and pilot new retail or restaurant ventures.

- Increase downtown vibrancy and foot traffic
- Create incubator areas or facilities designed for temporary retail or restaurant operations

MATCH REQUIREMENT:

Encouraged but not required; in-kind match allowed

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

A private building owner must have an eligible local partnering support organization collaborate on the grant to complete the administration of the grant award. This organization will commit to supporting the project through the fiscal administration of the grant funds (distributing the payments to the building owner), tracking the quarterly financial reports, and ensuring that the building owner is on track with program deadlines. The applicant will also designate a primary point of contact that Commerce will be working with throughout the grant award, who will be responsible for managing communications between the building owners and Commerce as needed. A signed letter from the supporting organization must be included as a required attachment in order to be eligible.

Eligible supporting and applicant organizations include:

- For Profit Businesses
- Designated Kansas Main Street Programs
- Economic Development Corporations or Chambers of Commerce
- Cities
- Counties
- Schools
- 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 organizations
- Local Community Foundations
- Tribal Nations

ELIGIBLE USES:

- Buildings must be in the downtown or primary corridor of a rural community.
- Properties must be in cities with a population of less than 5,000.

- Renovates interior space to create a functional incubator or a facility that is designed for temporary retail, workspaces, innovation centers, or restaurant operations.
- Create a space that would increase downtown foot traffic
- Building must be currently under-utilized or vacant to be eligible.
- Buildings should be older than approximately 30 years. Buildings do not need to be on the historic registry. Buildings made of plain cinder block, metal or another modern building material lacking any significant architectural details will not be strong candidates for this grant.
- Projects must show potential for reuse and revitalization as economic drivers in the community.
- The awarded project can include funding from any local, state or federal source, as long as there is no duplication of benefit. Examples include: Community Development Block Grant, Community Service Tax Credit Program, USDA Rural Development, State Historic Preservation Office programs or Network Kansas programs.
- Projects must incorporate [Main Street Design](#) Guidelines and follow local ordinances and code for rehab/construction/façade improvements.
- Award recipients and building owners are required to sign a contract agreeing to the conditions of the program.
- Construction must be complete in **24 months** with a tenant in place in **30 Months**. Building must be occupied and pass any local occupancy permit or local permitting inspection requirements.
- A maximum of \$100,000 per city per year
- Work to stabilize the building from further damage or immediate risk of loss can count toward the match within 8 months of the application submission date.

BUSINESS AND BUILDING USE OVERVIEW

- The intent of this program is to bring this building into use by the end of the grant term, which is 30 months.
- The use of the building must be for one of the following: entrepreneurial flexible spacing, product prototyping or testing commercial concepts spaces, temporary retail, flexible workspaces, innovation centers, or restaurant operations.

- In the application, the final intent of use of the building must be identified, however, this is allowed to change based on community need.
- Building must be currently under utilized or vacant to be eligible.

Required Supporting Materials with the Application

- Written estimates by a licensed contractor are encouraged, but not required. Quotes that also demonstrate that the project will be completed by the grant deadline are also preferred.
- Budget justification
- A letter **signed by both the supporting organization and the building owner** that confirms commitment by both parties to the project. This is required, and projects that are submitted without this information will not be considered.

Eligible Building Grant Project Expenses Masonry, insulation, foundations, roofs and guttering, fire stairs, windows, doors, chimneys, walls, ceilings, floors, interior stairs, elevators, lighting and fixtures, electrical wiring, data and communication, wiring (not including equipment), HVAC systems and components, plumbing systems, fire suppression sprinkler systems, and ADA accessibility solutions. Architecture fees up to 15% project costs. Equipment that support the business use of the building.

This list is not exhaustive. Project expenses not listed here are at the discretion of the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce for eligibility under the grant. Up to 5% of the grant award may be retained by the support organization for project administration expenses.

Ineligible Building Grant Project Expenses Acquisition costs, or leasing contracts. This list is not exhaustive. Grant funds are to be utilized for the physical construction of the project or for equipment needed to make the space successful for the business.

Building Grant Award Amount Up to \$100,000 per project or per city

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