



**Winooski Finance Commission Meeting
Tuesday, July 12, 2022, at 5:30 PM**

- Attend online: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83862967919>
- Attend by phone: 1 646 558 8656
- Meeting ID: 838 6296 7919
- Attend in-person: Winooski City Hall ([27 West Allen St](#))

I. Call to Order

II. Public Comment

III. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

<https://winooskivt.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/06142022-957>

IV. Council Update

V. Approval: Elect Officer - Chair

VI. Discussion: COVID Business Recovery Grant Guidelines

Documents:

[COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Round 2 Guidelines.pdf](#)

VII. Approval: Reschedule August Meeting

VIII. Adjourn



COVID-19 Recovery Business Grants Program II Guidelines

SECTION 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Introduction

In January of 2022, the City of Winooski allocated one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from the municipal funds received through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) for the purpose of establishing a small business COVID-19 recovery grant program. As of May 2022, eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) of this allocation remains to be awarded.

B. Purpose

The purpose of the Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant program is to maintain the stability of Winooski's existing businesses. Businesses are facing years of sustained revenue losses on top of tremendous difficulties with hiring the staff necessary to their successful operations. In addition, business owners without substantial computer literacy are being left behind and rendered uncompetitive by their inability to transition to an online, curbside pickup model of business. This grant program has been designed to address these issues.

The intention is to promote the long-term viability of Winooski businesses, which in turn will:

1. stabilize employment opportunities;
2. prevent or reduce commercial vacancy rates in the City;
3. continue to provide necessary goods and services for our residents; and
4. contribute to the economic vitality of the City.

C. Funding Amount

The maximum grant per business from this program is \$10,000.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Geographic Area

The area served by the program is the geographical limits of the City of Winooski, VT.

B. Eligible Applicants

The Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant program is intended to assist businesses located in Winooski which have suffered sustained revenue losses due to the pandemic who have not previously received a COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant. Businesses must demonstrate revenue losses from 2019 to 2020 or 2021 in order to be eligible for grant assistance. Businesses must have applied or be in the process of applying for assistance from the State of Vermont Economic Recovery Bridge program: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/economic-recovery-bridge-program>. Exemptions for businesses not eligible for the Vermont Economic Recovery Bridge program will be granted if the reason for the ineligibility are provided during the application process.

C. Eligible Activities

1. Making business commercial lease payments
2. Competitive pay and/or bonuses to employees working in restaurants, retail and other front-line customer service work that puts them at higher risk of exposure to COVID
3. Technical support and assistance to modernize businesses' online presence, sales, social media marketing, etc.
4. Improvement of building or physical facilities/equipment to address code violations, especially those that improve conditions for employees.

D. Ineligible Activities

1. The acquisition of land, buildings and fixed equipment
2. Site preparation, façade improvement, installation of fixed equipment, construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation of buildings not related to code violations.
3. Clearance, demolition, or the removal of structures or signage
4. Acquisition of equipment, machinery or inventory that does not address a code violation.
5. Startup costs
6. Refinancing or consolidating existing debt
7. Reimbursement for expenditures prior to grant approval

SECTION 3: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria		Score
Business can demonstrate profit pre-COVID (2019 year-end)	0 – Does not meet criteria 2 – Profit Pre-COVID	
Retains jobs in Winooski (including owners)	0 – Does not meet criteria 1 – 1-5 jobs retained 2 – 5+ jobs retained	
Business employs Winooski residents (including owners)	0 – Does not meet criteria 1 – 1-3 residents employed 2 – 3+ residents employed	
Revenue loss percentage	0 – <1% Loss 1 – 1-5% Loss 2 – 5+ % Loss	
Retains business types currently under-represented or lacking in the City and desired/needed by the community	0 – Does not meet criteria 1 – Meets minimum level of criteria 2 – Meets high level of criteria	
Minority Owned Business, Women Owned Business or LGBTQIA+ Owned Business	0 – Does not meet criteria 1 – 1 Self-Reported 2 – Certified or 2+ self-reported	
	TOTAL SCORE	

SECTION 4: TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant program terms will follow the federal guidance for use of municipal ARPA funds.

- A. **Maximum Grant:** \$10,000 per eligible business

- B. **Mandatory Reporting Requirements:** Businesses will be required to document that grant funds were spent on the purpose designated in their application. Other documentation than listed below may be accepted upon written agreement by the City.
 - a. Making business commercial lease payments
 - Copy of lease agreement showing payment amount due and receipts showing payments made including amount and date and/or cancelled checks to the lessor.
 - b. Competitive pay and/or bonuses to employees working in restaurants, retail and other front-line customer service work that puts them at higher risk of exposure to COVID
 - Competitive Pay – payroll reports from before competitive pay was implemented and those including the competitive pay increases.
 - Bonuses – payroll reports showing bonuses paid to staff.
 - c. Technical support and assistance to modernize businesses' online presence, sales, social media marketing, etc.
 - Copy of signed contract for technical services and/or software and copies of paid invoices and cancelled checks.
 - d. Improvement of building or physical facilities/equipment to address code violations, especially those that improve conditions for employees.
 - Copy of bid/quote, copies of paid invoices, and cancelled checks.
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- C. **Authorization for Release of Information:** Application documents will require authorization from applicants to allow release of redacted application information to the Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Evaluation Committee.

- D. **Return of Grant Funds:** Grant funds should be expended within twelve (12) months of payment issuance. At the end of this period any unexpended grant funds must be returned to the City of Winooski unless a written request for an extension of time and/or expansion of uses of the funds has been approved by the Winooski City Council. Grant funds will be returned if the City determines that the Grantee has not performed in accordance with the terms of the award or met the conditions described in the grant eligibility criteria.

SECTION 5: APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A. Application Format

Applicants shall submit a grant application package consisting of the following information:

1. A completed Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Application.
 - a. A description of your business, how COVID-19 impacted your business, and why you are applying for the grant.
 - b. Certify that you have applied or are ineligible for the State Economic Bridge Program
 - c. Description of how you will use the money. Supporting documents may be attached.
2. Signed and dated copies of the 2019, 2020, and 2021 business tax returns.

B. Application Submittal

The completed application and all required attachments may be submitted through our online portal at <https://www.winooski.vt.gov/FormCenter/Administration-6/COVID19-Recovery-Business-Grant-Applicat-86>.

C. Application Deadline

Completed applications for the Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Program II must be received by July 24th, 2022 5:00 pm. Should further funds be allocated in the future, additional competitive funding round deadlines will be established.

D. Confidentiality

Each page or section of the application that contains confidential and proprietary material under 1 VSA, Chapter 5 shall be clearly marked by the applicant. Discussion of confidential materials that are deemed exempt under 1 VSA, Chapter 5 shall be discussed in executive session to maintain applicant's confidentiality. Confidential information will not be published in publicly accessible locations and only available for review to those responsible for grant award and management if needed.

SECTION 6: REVIEW PROCESS

A. Competitive Process

The funds allocated for the Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Program are limited, thus the application process will be a competitive process. Grant applicants will be asked to submit applications by a set date, and the applicants will receive funding awards based highest score rankings on the evaluation criteria. Should further funds be allocated in the future, additional rounds of competitive evaluation will be established.

B. Finance Commission as COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Program Evaluation Committee to Review Applications and Make Recommendations

The City of Winooski has established the Finance Commission as the COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Evaluation Committee for the Program. All Program applications shall be reviewed by the COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Program Evaluation Committee on a competitive basis.

1. The Committee shall meet at their first regular meeting following the deadline to submit applications to review and act on grant requests. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members.
2. During its review, the Committee may recommend adjustments to the grant amount being requested by the applicant and it shall clearly communicate the recommended terms to City Council.
3. The Committee will consider availability of funds and evaluation criteria score (Section 3) in making determinations.
4. Information that may identify the applicant will be redacted by City staff to the furthest extent possible prior to sharing the applications with the Evaluation Committee.
5. Committee members shall recuse themselves from deliberations in the case of conflict of interest per the Winooski City Council Conflict of Interest Policy.
6. For each grant application, the Evaluation Committee will make one of the following recommendations to City Council:
 - a. Approve grant
 - b. Approve reduced grant amount
 - c. Deny grant
 - d. Table grant: pending further information from the applicant, or pending further program funds becoming available.

7. Upon completion of its review, the Committee shall vote whether or not to approve the loan request or to table the loan pending further information or availability of funds. If the Committee votes to recommend approval or denial of the loan, the recommendation will be submitted to City Council for its action. If the loan is tabled, no recommendation will be forwarded to City Council.
8. In accordance with I V.S.A. § 313 review of loan applications containing any confidential financial information by the Committee will be conducted in executive session.

C. Winooski City Council Decision

1. A Committee recommendation regarding Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Program applications shall be considered at the next City Council meeting following the receipt of the Evaluation Committee's recommendation, subject to the discretion of Council.
2. In accordance with I V.S.A. § 313 review of any financial details of grant applicants by City Council, if necessary, will be conducted in executive session.
3. The Committee's role is that of an advisory body thus it has no authority to give permission on behalf of the City for outside action. Its vote is a recommendation only. The final disposition of any grant application will be decided by City Council.
4. All Winooski COVID-19 Recovery Business Grant Program award decisions made by City Council shall be final.