



Start-Scale-Sustain (S3) Grant

Grant for: Business District Organizations (BDO)

Charlotte, North Carolina

Issue Date: 05/06/2024

City of Charlotte Corridors of Opportunity Team

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

June 14, 2024

GRANT GUIDELINES

The Start-Scale-Sustain (S3) Grant seeks to advance the work of existing and emerging business district organizations across the Corridors of Opportunity in Charlotte. Funded through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), this program will support capacity building of eligible nonprofits through direct funding and technical assistance. Funds may be used for a range of activities that enhance organizational capacity and expand programming to lay the foundation for long-term sustainability and success.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the program, applicants must:

- Be a non-profit with an existing or pending 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 designation
- Serve a business district or commercial area in the Corridors of Opportunity geography (See map at the end of the document)
- Represent at least 10 businesses from the business district they serve
- Comply with federal requirements for receiving funding, have a SAM Certificate or a Fiscal Sponsor with a SAM Certificate, and a Certificate of Insurance

Available Funds

The total funding for this one-time grant opportunity is \$1,000,000 that will be granted to business district organizations (BDOs) in the six Corridors of Opportunity. Grants of varying amounts will be provided through a competitive selection process considering the needs of each organization and the strength of the application. While there is no minimum for the grant amounts, individual grants will not exceed \$250,000 per organization.

Eligible Activities

This grant will cover activities that target organizational capacity building of Business District organizations, as well as capacity building of businesses they serve and represent. Applicants can qualify for funding under the following two categories.

Category 1: Organizational capacity building support and technical assistance

Grant amounts will be determined by the number of applying organizations and their specific capacity building needs. Applicants will have the option to choose technical assistance tailored to enhance their organizational capacity, based on their unique requirements. Currently, the City is soliciting quotes from potential service providers and aims to establish a pre-qualified pool of vendors capable of offering this technical assistance. Funds can be used to support emerging or existing organizations based on their need for:

- **Strategic Work** – Business District Organizations (BDOs) will focus on developing or enhancing their vision for their district and formalizing their organizational structures. These tasks are designed to be completed in a progressive format to best support each organization.
 - **Organizational Development and Growth:**
 - Resources for New Organizations: Assist with establishing formal organizational documents, policies, and procedures.
 - Support for Established Organizations: Assist with reviewing and revising existing documents and procedures.Key areas include:
 - Board development and training
 - Development of governance documents
 - Program evaluation and data collection
 - Assistance with filing for non-profit status (e.g. 501c3 or 501c6)
 - Organizational management and transition planning
 - Fundraising and fund management
 - **Goal Development:**
 - The BDO board and/or leadership will develop or refine a collective set of goals for the organization. This will help determine the district’s top priorities and outline the annual program of activities.
 - **Strategic Planning:**
 - Following the establishment of specific goals, district leadership will identify pathways to achieve these goals.
 - **Annual work plan and budget:**
 - Hosting training sessions to develop or enhance annual work plans that align with the organization’s goals and strategic plan. This can then be translated into an operating budget.
- **Inventories**–This component is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the district’s current assets and identify any existing gaps.
 - **Boundary Development:**
 - Define the service area clearly to delineate where the business district’s activities and influence apply.
 - **Existing Spaces:**
 - Document the commercial spaces and buildings within the district. Details should include their size, features, ownership, and current vacancy status.

- **Additional Workshops**
 - Offer additional workshops as needed for existing and new businesses to help them thrive.

Category 2: Business support activities or programs

This category includes business support activities and programs specifically designed for individual businesses within the district and their employees. These services are provided through Business District Organizations (BDOs) with the aim of enhancing the organization’s offerings and increasing the value of membership for their business members.

Eligible activities focus on membership-driven programs that:

- Enhance the BDO’s Profile- Activities that raise the organization’s visibility and reputation, such as sponsorship of events and festivals.
- Support local commerce- Initiatives like Community Card programs, which encourage shopping locally and foster community engagement.
- Provide technical assistance- Programs that offer specialized support to businesses, aiding in areas such as technology adoption, compliance, and operational efficiency.

These activities can not only support the growth and development of businesses within the district but also help generate revenue for the BDOs, thereby increasing their impact and sustainability.

Funding for programming is based on the following Tiers.

Tier 1	Tier 2
Organizations with 1 or more salaried staff member up to \$75,000	Organizations with 0 full-time staff up to \$25,000

Ineligible Activities

The following expenditures are not eligible for this grant opportunity.

- Salaries or new salaried positions
- Any eligible expenditures that were made before grant award or contract-signing
- Disbursing funding to individual businesses
- Any activity that is not clear how it benefits an organization’s capacity building efforts or future sustainability
- Any project that will not result in funds being spent by December 31, 2026
- Any activities that are eligible for other city grants (e.g., Façade Improvement Program, Placemaking Grant, Neighborhood Matching Grants)
- Alcohol for events

Funding Requirements

Applicants must comply with all federal guidelines and requirements applicable, including:

- Grant recipients must have a SAM.gov Unique Entity ID (indicate in the application that you have applied for an UEI) or have a fiduciary or fiscal sponsor with an UEI
- Expend funds by December 31, 2026

Disbursement

Grants awarded to organizations will be disbursed in two payments per year. For the two-year grant term, there will be 4 disbursements at the rate of 25% of the total grant award. All funds must be expended by December 31, 2026.

Performance Measures

Each grant recipient will be held accountable to applicable performance measures that support the successful execution of the grant activity; these can include but are not limited to:

- Completion of all grant activities and technical assistance services included in final contract
- Total number of businesses participating in applicable activities
- Total amount of leveraged investment and funds raised to support BDO activities
- Public/Private dollars invested in the district
- Total number of new businesses in district
- Net new jobs created in the district
- Progress on strategy implementation

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will provide the City of Charlotte with a progress report every six months, reporting on the current progress toward the performance measures outlined above.

Grant Timeline

ITEM	DATE
Application Announcement	April 15, 2024
Q&A for RFQ of Vendor Pool	April 25
Application for Grants goes live	May 6, 2024
Application Closes	June 14, 2024
Grantees selected and announced	July 19, 2024
Grants under contract by	September 30, 2024
Grantees should spend funds by	December 31, 2026

Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and selected by a Review Committee comprised of City of Charlotte staff. A successful application will demonstrate:

- A distinct business or commercial district located within the Corridors of Opportunity with a minimum of 10 businesses (either established members or willingness to form a membership)
- Appropriate sequencing of capacity building efforts (i.e., strategic planning and inventory building before other activities)
- Reasonable timeline for execution
- Commitment to two years of programming
- A sustainability plan for continuing BDO activity after December 31, 2026
- Quantifiable outcomes for the grants (e.g., number of businesses supported, business promotion events, E-commerce platforms/business websites created, trainings provided, meetings convened, volunteer hours contributed)

Instructions for Application Submission

Applicants can apply online and will be required to answer a series of questions about their business district organizational structure and capacity. Applicants must submit all required information about the organization's capacity, communication and engagement, marketing, budget, and workplan. Additional documents may be requested after the application submittal.

To apply visit: [Grants Portal Log In](#)

To be considered for this opportunity, applications must be submitted by 5pm on June 14th, 2024.

Questions

All inquiries about the program should be directed to: corridorsofopportunity@charlottenc.gov

The map below shows Charlotte's Corridors of Opportunity Areas of Influence. To be eligible for program funds, BDOs must be located in, serve, and represent businesses within a specific commercial area in the areas of influence. You can also visit <https://explore.charlottenc.gov/> and select Corridors of Opportunity Areas of Influence on the Layer List to view the map.

