Summerside GROW

Small Business Activation Guidelines

Funding Overview

These guidelines are applicable to the **Professional Services**, **Vacant Space Activation**, and **Second Floor Residential Activation** funding of the GROW program. You are encouraged to review and consider these guidelines while developing your application.

The total allocation for this category is $375,000. Individual applicants must contribute 50% of the overall project costs. Depending on program demand and interest, there is possibility for some funding to be reallocated from one program to another as approved by the CAO.

Applying for a grant is a competitive process and we often receive more grant applications than there is funding available. Past funding commitments should not be interpreted as a guarantee that future requests will be approved.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include owners or tenants of commercial property in Downtown Summerside. Proof of ownership is required.

Eligible Expenses

All three of these programs require a *current* Building Conditions Assessment before another project is eligible. If you do not have an up-to-date Building Conditions Assessment, please first apply to the Professional Services program to complete the assessment.

Professional building condition assessments must be delivered by registered professionals in good standing with the Engineering Association of PEI or the Architects' Association of PEI. The assessment will evaluate the condition of the following:

1. Site and grounds: pavement, loading docks, landscaping, irrigation, signage, etc.
2. Structural systems: foundations, structural framing, intermediate floors/roofs, leaks, etc.
3. Building envelope: roofing systems, exterior finishes, stairs and steps, exterior doors and windows, etc.
4. Mechanical systems: electrical, heating ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing, fire suppression, etc.
5. Regulatory compliance
6. Other items as determined by the Registered Professional

The final report will outline what needs to be repaired, replaced, or upgraded immediately to conform to industry standards including estimated costs as applicable or able. The report will also indicate whether and when a new building permit will be required.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include:

1. debt retirement
2. retroactive payments for costs incurred before City support is approved

3. 100% of any activities or operational budget
4. Additional expenses as determined and communicated by the CAO.

Timelines

Application Deadline: December 18, 2026
Funding Decisions: Final decisions will be communicated in early 2027.
Final Report Deadline: 60 days from project completion or by the second Friday in January, unless otherwise communicated.

How to prepare an application

The Small Business Activation fund is available as a fillable pdf however applicants are allowed to submit an original format if it includes all information required on the fillable PDF. The following steps include an overview of application questions and evaluation criteria.

Step 1: Gather application materials

Give yourself enough time to review the grant guidelines and gather all the information needed to apply. The application requires the following information:

- Business information: name, registration number, address, website, social media, contact person & contact information.
- Confirmation of business or property ownership status.
    - If you do not own the land or property that you are applying for, please submit written permission from the landowner giving permission for you to carry out the project on behalf of the owner.
- Written portion:
    - Project summary (50-75 words max)
    - Project description (200 words max)
    - Description of the project impact
    - Information on the Registered Professional(s) or Contractor(s) providing service
- Letter of engagement and cost estimate supplied by Registered Professional of applicant's choice.
- Budget information

Step 2: Begin filling out the application

Visit https://www.bigpossibilities.ca/ to access the funding application. Looking for a paper form or additional accessibility assistance? Contact GROW@summerside.ca!

Step 3: Submit application

After you finish with your application, take some time to review before submitting it and all required materials by email to GROW@summerside.ca. Once submitted, you will not be able to edit your application. If you need to correct information or if you submitted too soon, please contact GROW@summerside.ca.

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Evaluation Criteria

We appreciate your interest in our funding program. While we would like to approve all applications, please note that this is a highly competitive program, and the number of submissions often exceeds the available funds. To ensure a fair and thorough review process, we rely on specific assessment criteria to evaluate each application. Below, you will find the criteria that will be used to review your submission.

- **Project merit**
  - Have you written a clear project description?
  - What are the goals or outcomes from your project?
  - Is your project unique or innovative in any way? Are you offering something that's otherwise unavailable downtown?
- **Impact**
  - Will the project attract residents and visitors to engage with downtown Summerside?
  - Is the business an active or passive type?
- **Feasibility**
  - Do you have a solid plan for the project?
  - Do your plans align with the completed building conditions assessment?
  - Do you have the resources and capacity (outside of what's being asked for in this application) to accomplish the project?
- **Need**
  - Could this project happen without support from the City of Summerside? Would it still be successful?
  - Do you have access to other resources or support for this project?

Adjudication Committee

All applications are compiled for review and evaluation by the Adjudication Committee who will submit their recommendations to the CAO for official approval. Results will be communicated on a rolling basis with feedback available on a case-by-case basis.

About the GROW Program

The Downtown Summerside GROW Program is a $1,000,000 co-investment framework from the City of Summerside, designed to reduce commercial vacancy and strengthen vibrancy within Downtown Summerside.

There are three streams of funding:

1. Transforming Our Build Environment - Total allocation $250,000
2. Small Business Activation - Total allocation $500,000
3. Special Projects - Total Allocation $250,000

Visit www.bigpossibilities.ca for more information and opportunities.