



North Carolina Law Life

Durham, NC Seeks Applicants for Retail and Professional Services Grant Program

By: Donna Ray Chmura. *Thursday, May 12th, 2011*

DURHAM, N.C. – Business owners interested in improving their prospects for doing business as retailers or providing professional services in downtown Durham should take note of another round of funding now available through the [City of Durham](#).

The City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) is now accepting applications for the Retail and Professional Services Grant Program, formerly known as the Merchandise-Based Incentive Grant Program. OEWD's Retail and Professional Services Grant, specifically targeted for the Downtown Development Tier, will provide economic development incentives to eligible projects that support the creation, retention, or expansion of businesses within this tier.

In order to be eligible for this grant, the project property must be a street-level retail business, restaurant, or a certain professional or personal services business including, but not limited to, law firms, architectural firms, financial services firms, childcare centers, or beauty salons. The applicant must be the owner of the property or have a fully signed lease and a letter of approval from the property owner supporting the proposed improvements. The business must be open at least five days a week, eight hours a day. Organizations that are not eligible to apply are religious organizations; government agencies or offices; businesses or private clubs that exclude minors as patrons; and residential projects.

Grant recipients are eligible to receive up to \$15,000 in matching funds from the City for a project that meets eligibility criteria and scores high enough in the competitive evaluation process. Only funds spent on work performed after City approval of the grant are eligible for reimbursement. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, security systems, telephone systems, point-of-sale equipment, kitchen equipment, millwork, built-in display furnishings and shelving, HVAC, coolers, plumbing, demolition, flooring, grease traps, sprinkler systems, electrical, installation of walls, package and labeling equipment, and similar items.

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To assist applicants with identifying whether proposed projects are located within the Downtown Development Tier, a state-of-the-art mapping application has been developed by the City's Geographic Information Systems' Division. The application is available on the City's [website](#).

The deadline to apply for the grant is Monday, June 13, 2011, by 12 p.m. All efforts will be made to evaluate and determine funding requests within 45 days of the submission deadline. The City anticipates notifying applicants of their award status by Monday, July 18, 2011.

For a complete description of the grant application guidelines, application process, and mapping application visit the City's website at www.DurhamEconomicDevelopment.org. Interested applicants for proposed projects within the Downtown Development Tier may also contact Joy Mickle-Walker, coordinator of Downtown Development & Marketing with the City's OEWD, via e-mail at Joy.Mickle-Walker@DurhamNC.gov or by phone at (919) 560-4965, ext. 15208.

About the Office of Economic and Workforce Development

The City of Durham's Office of Economic and Workforce Development ([OEWD](#)) implements a comprehensive and responsive business development strategy that supports business formation, retention, expansion, relocation, and employment opportunities created by the business development strategy. OEWD also works with community partners to ensure that Durham residents have opportunities to be placed and retained in these employment opportunities.

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