

# Activation & Beautification CARE (ABC) Grants

## Program Guidelines & Application

*The EDA and the City of Richmond reserve the right to update the program guidelines, and any other information related to the Commercial Area Revitalization Program without prior notice.*



## OVERVIEW

Activation and Beautification CARE (ABC) grants provide funds for interim activation and beautification projects that can be expediently implemented to improve and revitalize the environment for retail, service, and other businesses in Richmond's CARE Areas.

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- **Eligible Applicants:** Neighborhood, civic, and business associations, non-profits, foundations, and similar groups.
- **Eligible Projects:**
  - Must be located in [a designated CARE area](#)
  - Must beautify and/or activate a CARE area
  - Must improve and revitalize the environment for retail, service, and other businesses in Richmond's CARE Areas.
  - Must be visible from the public right-of-way
  - A project could include, but not be necessarily limited to, the following concepts:
    - Landscaping
    - Window displays in vacant buildings
    - Façade improvements
    - Building wraps
    - Murals
    - Decorative or pedestrian-scale lighting
    - Public-facing art and art installations
    - Exterior building cleaning
    - Pop-up concepts
  - Projects must have the support of the underlying property owner where the project will occur.
  - Projects must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the City's zoning ordinance. Projects must receive required regulatory permits and approvals. Projects that are not viable because they have not received necessary approvals, or will not likely receive such approvals within a reasonable timeframe, will not be funded (see additional details on "Conditional Concept Approval" in Application and Grant Process section.)
  - This program prioritizes near-term activation in CARE areas. Timelines associated with these projects will vary based on the proposed project. As a general guideline, projects should be positioned to commence after grant contract execution and should be feasibly executed within 12 months of commencing. Projects that are at idea stage only, do not have a realistic timeline with milestones, or do not have necessary partner buy-in are not well positioned for this current funding round.
- **Project Funding:**
  - Grant amount will be based on proposed, eligible project costs, up to the following maximums:
    - Up to \$25,000 (with no matching requirement)
    - Up to an additional \$25,000 if an applicant has a dollar-for-dollar matching source (whether that be their own funds or from a third-party source)
    - Maximum award is \$50,000



- Funds may not replace or supplant funding provided by the City of Richmond, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the federal government, or any of their respective agencies for the same or substantially similar use or purpose.
  - Funding must be used for direct project implementation costs, as described in the application budget. Organizational overhead and ongoing maintenance will not be funded by ABC grant funds.
  - Grant funding will not be provided until after required regulatory approvals are granted. Should an applicant not receive required approval, its project will not be funded.
  - Once regulatory approval is achieved, an awarded applicant can seek reimbursement for eligible direct project implementation costs that it incurred between receiving Conditional Concept Approval and receiving regulatory approval.
  - Funding is subject to availability
  - Match funding: For those projects requiring match funding, if match funding is not identified at the time of the application, the applicant should include letters of interest and other expressions of conditional funding support, or details on possible funding sources and associated processes for finalizing match funding. Match funding must be identified by the execution of the grant agreement; failure to secure match funding by that date could result in the loss of some or all of the awarded grant funds.
- **Additional Requirements:**
    - Applicants must be registered with the Virginia State Corporation Commission and must be current on all required City of Richmond licenses and taxes.
    - Selected applicants will be required to sign a Grant Agreement, which will include reporting requirements and repayment conditions should project funds not be used for its intended purpose, with the Richmond EDA prior to receiving funds.

## APPLICATION & GRANT PROCESS

### How to Apply

- Applications will open at **12 pm on Friday, May 1, 2026**, and close at **5:00 pm on Monday, June 1, 2026**.
  - There will be a virtual program information session held on **May 4<sup>th</sup> and May 13<sup>th</sup>**.
  - Economic development staff will be available to answer application questions during the application period on a one-on-one basis.
  - Applicants will apply online at [www.richmondeda.com](http://www.richmondeda.com).
- Application shall include:
  - Project concept description
  - Anticipated CARE area impact
  - Implementation timeline
  - Plan for ongoing maintenance of project (if relevant)
  - Project financials and budget
  - Information on the background, qualifications, and experience of the applicant and their partners
  - Letters of support from relevant business, neighborhood, civic, and community stakeholders
  - Support documentation from the owner of the property where the project would occur (for example a letter of support, project agreement, or lease approval if applicant is a tenant)
  - Proof that the applicant organization is in good standing with the Commonwealth of Virginia



and City of Richmond (current SCC registration, current business license).

### Application Review

- Submitted applicants will be evaluated by a cross-disciplinary selection team to review a project's alignment with the program's goal;<sup>1</sup> its financial, operational, and regulatory feasibility; project timeline; the project team's experience; the presence of community support; and project visibility and expected impact on the CARE area.
- The applicant will provide any additional information deemed necessary or helpful to the review team
- Project selection is subject to funding availability. The submission of an application does not guarantee a grant award.

### Conditional Concept Approval

- It is likely that many proposed projects will require regulatory approvals (safety, health, permitting, zoning, as examples). Prior to a grant award, selected applicants will receive "Conditional Concept Approval," indicating that their project's concept was selected for a grant, if it achieves all the necessary regulatory requirements. To support the applicant in moving forward, the EDA will facilitate a "Concept Path Meeting" between the applicant and the City, to map out necessary steps and processes. A project manager will continue to offer support through the process. Receipt of a Conditional Concept Approval does not guarantee final approval of a grant award.

### Grant Award

- Selected applicants that have received the necessary approvals, signed the grant agreement, and provided necessary banking information, will have funds transferred to them from the EDA.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

### Projects in Old and Historic Districts

Certain areas of Richmond are designated as Old and Historic Districts, which follow additional zoning laws for their property that may be relevant for the Activation and Beautification Grant. Murals are welcome within our city's Historic Districts, however historic brick is more porous and softer than modern brick, and therefore they must be thoughtfully reviewed to ensure it respects the integrity of our historic buildings.

We strongly encourage those interested in a mural project in a historic district to consult with the Commission of Architectural Review staff to discuss techniques and options: email Alex Dandridge at [Alex.Dandridge@rva.gov](mailto:Alex.Dandridge@rva.gov). Visit [richmondeda.com/activation-grants/](http://richmondeda.com/activation-grants/) for additional guidance on Old and Historic Districts.

- [Map of Historic Districts](#)
- [Quick Guide for Murals in Old and Historic Districts](#)
- [Commission of Architectural Review](#)

### Questions

The Richmond Economic Development team are here to support applicants during the application process. Please send questions to [RichmondEDA@rva.gov](mailto:RichmondEDA@rva.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> Projects must improve and revitalize the environment for retail, service, and other businesses in Richmond's CARE Areas. Projects must align with general standards of decency and respect for diverse beliefs and values.

PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES.  
APPLY VIA DIGITAL APPLICATION



APPLICATION

**Applicant Organization**

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Legal name of the Applicant Organization

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"Doing Business As (DBA)" name if  
different from above

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Taxpayer or Employer Identification  
Number

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Organization webpage

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Year founded

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Organization Address

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Organization: Street

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Organization: State

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Organization: Zip code

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Organization Mission

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SAMPLE



## Proposed Project Information

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Select the category that best describes your project

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Describe other

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Project street address

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Project zip code

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Have you confirmed that the project address is located in a CARE area?

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Project City Council district

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Is the project located in a Historic District?

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Has the property owner agreed to participate in the project?

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Total project cost

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Total grant request

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If grant request is above \$25,000, detail your matching source of funds (match funding must be identified by the execution date of the grant agreement. If match funding is not identified at the time application, include details on possible funding sources or conditional funding support.)

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Project description (additional narrative can be uploaded as an attachment)

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Detail project partners (additional details can be uploaded as an attachment)

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How will the project beautify and/or activate a CARE area. How will it improve the environment for retail, service, and other businesses in a CARE area.

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What does success look like for this project and how will you measure success?

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SAMPLE



Does the project have a funding source for ongoing project maintenance?

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Provide a description of the ongoing project maintenance needs of this project, including details on responsible parties.  
*Ongoing maintenance will not be funded with ABC Grant funds.*

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**Application Point of Contact**

Contact first name

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Contact last name

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Contact phone

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Contact email address

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SAMPLE



## UPLOADS

Once the document is signed and submitted, copies of the uploads will be at the end of the final document.

Proof of registration with Virginia State Corporation Commission

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City of Richmond Business License, if applicable.

*If your organization is not required to have a City of Richmond business license, upload an explanation in lieu of a business license.*

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Project implementation timeline (including total implementation duration, specific milestones, and responsible parties)

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Project budget (include information on matching funds, and other sources of project funds as relevant)

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Support documentation from the owner of the property where the project would occur (for example, a letter of support, letter of interest, or project agreement)

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Project support letters (from relevant neighborhood, business, community stakeholders, and match funders)

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Project renderings/photos/designs or other similar materials (as needed)

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Additional project narrative information and/or additional applicant organization and partner background information (as needed)



## Application Certification

I certify that I am authorized to apply on behalf of the Applicant Organization for the Activation and Beautification CARE (ABC) grant program. I certify that I understand the ABC grant guidelines. I certify that the information on this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and should information be found to be false, it could result in being ineligible for the award of a grant or could result in the repayment of any awarded funds.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE