



AMERICUS
MAIN STREET
Hometown. Forward Bound.



Georgia
Power



Bright Ideas Grant

101 W Lamar St | Americus, GA 31709

For questions, call (229) 924-4411 Ext. 247

DOWNTOWN AMERICUS "BRIGHT IDEAS!" GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Sponsored by:



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Americus Main Street has partnered with Georgia Power to create a new grant program "Bright Ideas!" intended to assist in the cost of upgrading a downtown building's electrical system. Many of the properties in Downtown Americus were built before the present building and code standards and therefore are not up to code. Georgia Power has agreed to sponsor this program in the amount of \$15,000 to assist in the progress of the downtown and help businesses open or expand. Americus Main Street's Economic Vitality Committee has agreed to administer the program that will be in the form of a grant that business and property owners can apply for. This program will be a first come first served process and will be allocated to building rehabilitation/renovation projects in the form of a 50/50 matching grant up to \$2,500 per building. Priority will be given to buildings that are considered new service or currently are not metered.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There is currently matching grant money to be awarded to potential projects in the Central Business District (map attached). Funding for the "Bright Ideas" Grant Program will be paid through a reimbursement process. Only after an applicant has paid for work to be done will the applicant be reimbursed for up to 50% of that amount. How much each applicant gets is determined by how the project is scored. Grant assistance is limited to the amount available to Americus Main Street and up to \$2,500 per building.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All improvements must comply with standards set forth in the City of Americus Planning and Inspections Department and all applicable Building and Maintenance Codes. Applicants must meet with an employee of the Planning and Inspections Department prior to submitting application. All exterior improvements must be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. More information on these standards can be obtained at the City of Americus Planning and Inspections Department (229-924-4411 ext. 239).

Applicants for participation in the program must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must be property owners, or be tenants with written permission from property owner
- Commercial properties must be up to date on all property taxes and other applicable fees to the City of Americus.
- Property must be in the Central Business District (map attached)**

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Removal and replacement of “knob and tube” wiring
- Removal and replacement of outdated and illegal wiring
- Basic lighting (not to exceed 20% of total project)

INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- IMPROVEMENTS MADE PRIOR TO GRANT APPROVAL
- Electrical Equipment (HVAC, appliances, motors, etc.)
- Sweat equity (payments for applicant’s own labor)
- Residential properties, excluding mixed use developments

How are projects selected for funding?

Applications will be ranked and selected based on a clear and documented set of evaluative criteria.

The evaluative criteria and their respective weights are as follows:

- **Impact (40%)**: – Overall impact of the project on the Central Business District. Will the project eliminate what was previously a liability for the building? Does the project fall into a priority-funding category? Is the project in a highly visible location that has significant impact on surrounding properties?
- **Financial Leverage (10%)**: –Projects that leverage more private investment will be graded higher than those seeking just the grant funding.
- **Sustainability/Permanence (30%)**: – How permanent are the improvements and is there a maintenance plan for improvements? Does the applicant own the building? If not, how much time remains on the lease?
- **Community Contribution (20%)**: – Is the applicant a good neighbor? Is the area around the business kept clean and free of debris on a consistent basis? Does the business participate in organized Americus Main Street promotions or other community-based activities?

PROCEDURE

The application process below shows how this will work:

1. All improvements in the Central Business District must be approved by the City of Americus Planning and Inspections Department before submitting application. For more information please contact the City of Americus Planning and Inspections Department (229-924-4411 ext. 239).
2. Applicant picks up an application from the Americus Main Street office located at 101 West Lamar Street.
3. Applicant mails an application to Americus Main Street along with color photographs that show existing building conditions, detailed sketches or drawings of the proposed improvements, two separate bids from two separate contractors on their letterhead and any other additional information that may be considered during the review process.

Mailing Address: 101 West Lamar Street, Americus, GA 31709

4. Americus Main Street will review all applicants and determine which projects get funded and at what amounts each will receive. Applications will be scored based on need, project, and impact to the downtown.
5. Americus Main Street will notify each recipient of the results by mail within 60 days after the grant deadline and require a signed contract (attached to letter) returned to them before work may begin. **APPLICANT MUST OBTAIN A BUILDING PERMIT PRIOR TO BEGINNING WORK.**
6. Once the Americus Main Street has received the signed contract the applicant may begin their work. (Applicant must start the work within three months of being notified of their grant status and work must be completed within twelve months from the start of construction.)
7. Once construction begins, a "Bright Ideas" sign should be installed at project location during construction. (This will be provided)
8. Applicant must submit copies of cost documentation (invoices, etc.) along with copies of all cleared checks to Americus Main Street for reimbursement. Proof of all closed permits issued for project must be included with copies of cleared checks. Reimbursement will be made to applicant within 30 days of receipt of project payment and closed permit documents.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Americus Main Street reserves the right to discontinue or modify funding for this program; however, all approved grants will be fulfilled as per contracted agreement.

APPLICATION AND INFORMATION

*****We strongly encourage all potential applicants to meet with either the Director of Americus Main Street or a committee member of the Economic Vitality Committee prior to filling out the application. To contact our director, Qaijuan Willis, call (229) 924-4411 ext. 247 or email qwillis@americusga.gov.**

Americus Main Street "Bright Ideas!" Grant Application

Checklist

Please assemble the application package in the sequence indicated below and label each item. Check off each item to ensure you are submitting:

- Completed Application
- Two color photographs that show existing building conditions (required)
- Detailed sketches or drawings of the proposed improvements (including placement, dimensions and materials)
- Two bids on contractor letterhead (required)
- Additional information attached (optional)

Prior to submitting an application, applicants should meet with the Americus Main Street Director, Economic Vitality Chair, or Economic Vitality Committee in regard to their project. They must also be given approval from the Planning and Inspections Department before submitting their grant. This is not voluntary. Also, the applicant must meet with the Planning and Inspections Department to check zoning and Building Fire Codes.

I have:

- Met and discussed my proposed project with
 - Americus Main Street Director (Qaijuan Willis)
 - Economic Vitality Committee Member
 - Date of Meeting: _____ Committee Member: _____
- Met with Planning and Inspection Department
 - Date of Meeting: _____ Commission Approval: _____

General Information

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Business (if applicable): _____

Project/Business Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Type of Business: _____

Applicant is the:

- Property Owner
- Business Owner
- Other: _____

How long has the business been at the current location? _____

When does your current lease expire? _____

Do you have the option to renew your lease? What are the terms?

Property owner's name (if different from applicant): _____

Property owner's address: _____

Property owner's phone number: _____

Note: If you are not the property owner, please have the property owner or an authorized representative co-sign this application where indicated in the General Condition

Project Details

Please describe below in detail the proposed improvement to the property. The following *must* accompany this application (attach additional pages if necessary):

- Two color photographs that show existing building conditions
- Detailed sketches or drawings of the proposed improvements (including placement, dimensions and materials)
- Two bids on contractor letterhead

Description of proposed improvement (e.g., new wiring, what's being removed, lighting, etc.):

Proposed Project Budget: _____

How much funding assistance are you requesting? _____

Proposed start date: _____

Estimated completion date: _____

In conjunction with this project, are you completing any other renovation/rehabilitation work to the property (interior or exterior)?

- No
- Yes

If answer is "yes" to above question, describe additional work: _____

Estimated cost of additional work to building: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

Americus Main Street use only:

Americus Main Street

| <u>Scoring For Project:</u> | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Impact (40%) | _____ |
| Financial Leverage (10%) | _____ |
| Sustainability/Permanence (30%) | _____ |
| Community Contribution (20%) | _____ |
| Total | _____ |

Received: _____ Date: _____

(Director)

Committee

Approved: _____ Date: _____

(Economic Vitality Chair)

Board

Approved: _____ Date: _____

(Board Chair)

General Conditions

- It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant shall be solely responsible for all safety conditions and compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, ordinances, and other applicable regulations.
- It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant shall hire a licensed electrical contractor and receive an electrical permit prior to any work on the building
- It is expressly understood and agreed that work completed prior to final approval is ineligible for funding.
- It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant will not seek to hold Americus Main Street the City of Americus, or Georgia Power, and/or its agents, employees, officers and/or directors liable for any property damage, personal injury, or other loss relating in any way to the "Bright Ideas" Grant.
- The applicant shall be responsible for maintaining valid and sufficient insurance coverage for property damage and personal injury liability relating to the "Bright Ideas" Grant.
- The applicant agrees to maintain the property and improvements, including, but not limited to, promptly removing graffiti, trash, and sweeping and shoveling in front and around the property.
- The applicant agrees to return a pro-rated amount of the grant money received if the improvement is removed within two years.
- The applicant must begin the project within three months of being notified that they have been awarded the grant and must complete the electrical project within twelve months of beginning the project.
- The applicant authorizes Americus Main Street, to promote an approved project, including but not limited to displaying a sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in Downtown Americus materials and press releases.
- The applicant has read and understands the 'Americus Main Street "Bright Ideas" Grant Overview' document outlining program guidelines and procedures.
- The applicant understands that Americus Main Street reserves the right to make changes in conditions of the "Bright Ideas" Grant as warranted.

Signature of applicant: _____

Date: _____

If applicant is not the property owner, please have the property owner or an authorized representative review and co-sign this application below.

Owner Authorization

As owner of the property (insert address) _____

I have reviewed the above application and authorize operator of _____ at said address to perform the electrical improvements described above as part of the Americus Main Street "Bright Ideas" Grant program.

Signature of property owner or authorized representative: _____

Date: _____



City of Americus, GA

Downtown Streets

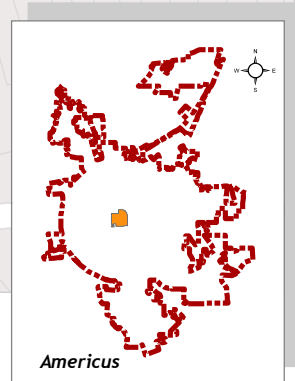


- Legend**
- Downtown Business District
 - Americus Limits

1 inch = 400 feet

This map is a product of Americus and Sumter County's Geographic Information System (GIS). Office: (229)-924-4411 Ext.241

Map designed by S. Neufeldt © Copyright 2015



Rev. 5/22/2015