

Business Improvement Grant Program

Program Guidelines and Application Packet

HOW TO GET STARTED

Step 1: Confirm the building is within the GCRA District.
Visit gainesvillecra.com/gcra-project-map/ and enter building address.

Step 2: If within the GCRA District complete the application.

Questions? Contact the GCRA at 352-393-8200 or info@gainesvillecra.com

As approved by the Gainesville City Commission
(Legistar #200275) on November 5, 2020



Gainesville
Community
Reinvestment
Area



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The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area ("GCRA") was created in 2019 through the adoption of Ordinance 181001. The goal of the GCRA is to encourage investment in underserved areas within the district.

Section 1. About the Business Improvement Grant Program

The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA), a Department of the City of Gainesville, is offering a 50% matching grant to businesses through the Business Improvement Grant program. The Business Improvement Grant program is designed to assist owners of buildings and businesses improve their building façades (a façade is defined as the exterior of a building facing a public way or space) and other associated elements. The Building must be located within the GCRA district. The purpose of the Business Improvement Grant Program is to use GCRA funds to encourage private investment in making significant improvements to building exteriors. Improvements made are expected to return public benefits such as enhanced corridor aesthetics, improved pedestrian comfort, and public safety. The Business Improvement Grant program meets reinvestment objectives identified within the GCRA 10 Year Reinvestment Plan.

Section 2. Eligibility Requirements

1. To be eligible the building must be located within the GCRA District. Address can be verified online at gainesvillecra.com/gcra-project-map/, or by calling (352) 393-8200.
2. Non-profits may apply but any residential and governmental facilities do not qualify for this program. Businesses are to provide proof they are current with their business tax payment with the City of Gainesville (a copy of which or proof of payment must be attached to the application). Application will be rejected if the property has any judgement liens, code violations, or delinquencies in mortgage or tax obligations.
3. If the Applicant (Applicant is defined as the entity that is completing the application) is not the building and property owner, the building and property owner must agree in writing to allow and support the application as part of the application process (per GCRA Owner Consent Form, page 12).
4. Buildings constructed within the last five years are not eligible.
5. Project must have proper City permits and GCRA approval prior to beginning work. Any Application where work has started prior to receiving permits and approvals will be rejected. Project as defined here refers to the work to be done by the Applicant.
6. An estimated amount of time in months to complete the Project must be provided on the application. The Project must be started within 60 days and completed within 12 months of the date the GCRA approves the application. Failure to do so, without an approved deviation by the GCRA, will result in termination of the grant. An example of an acceptable deviation request that would be granted would be a delay caused by a hurricane. Acceptance of a deviation request is solely at the discretion of the GCRA Director.

Section 3. Eligible Improvements

Eligible improvements are restricted to work done on the exterior of the building and associated elements that are visible from the Transit Corridor. A Transit Corridor can be a public road or public thoroughfare for pedestrian traffic. All work must be performed to applicable codes. Examples of eligible improvements are listed below; however, this list is not exhaustive:

1. Signs - including removing the old and the design, production, and installation of new signs or renovation of existing.
2. Awnings/Canopies - including the removal of old awnings and canopies and the design, production, and installation of new awnings and canopies.
3. Façade- includes work performed on the exterior storefront of a building such as cleaning masonry (high pressure water or steam - sandblasting is prohibited on masonry structures), painting, re-pointing (filling in or repair to joints), woodwork, window and/or door replacement, and other repairs (that are not maintenance related), or rebuilding historic storefronts. As used in this document a storefront is defined as the front side of a store or store building facing a transit corridor.
4. Walls, fencing, and landscaping - includes work that removes and replaces or adds appropriate fencing and landscaping to hide incompatible uses or negative site elements such as storage yards, outdoor fabrication, work area, or dumpsters.
5. Removing and disposing of old façade coverings - (i.e. vinyl and aluminum cladding, window boards).
6. Architectural fees - (not to exceed 10 percent of Project amount).
7. Outdated security features - removing rollup metal security doors and metal window grates.
8. Removing excessive window signage - reduce window signage to allow 95% window transparency.
9. Original building elements - restoring original decorative building elements.
10. Increasing glazing (window area) - increasing amount of glazing to attain a minimum of 50% of façade area.

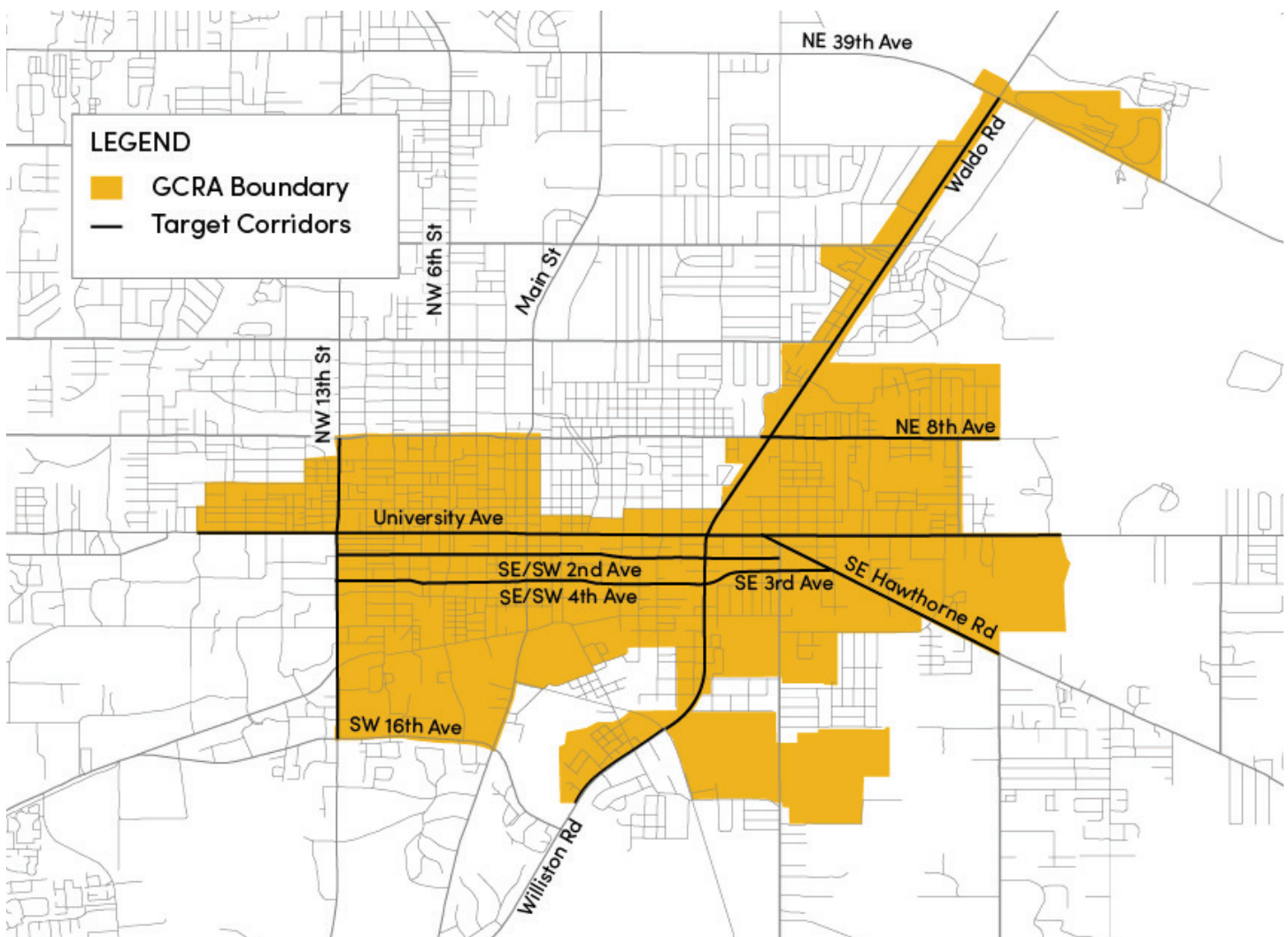
Section 4. Ineligible Improvements

The following items are not eligible for the grant: Interior improvements, exterior improvements visible less than 24 hours per day, features designed to be installed temporarily, features that do not meet the applicable provisions of the City of Gainesville Land Development Code including special area plans. Activities that are primarily for maintenance for example: painting, asphalt sealing, landscape maintenance, power washing (power-washing to maintain brick masonry is allowable per Section 3.3, the GCRA does not assume any liability for damage caused by Applicant's power-washing), and other maintenance-type activities are not eligible for reimbursement. This list is not exhaustive. If painting, power-washing, brick repair, or similar cosmetic work is proposed to take place in conjunction with significant exterior enhancements, then those activities will be eligible for the incentive.

Section 5. Target Corridors

The GCRA 10 Year Reinvestment Plan identified specific corridors within the GCRA that would benefit from additional assistance. These target corridors are shown below. Funding is available anywhere in the district and the Applicant may qualify for additional funding if their building is physically located on the following sections of road per the Target Corridor Map.

1. Waldo Road between NE 39th Avenue and East University Avenue
2. Williston Road between East University Avenue and SE 1st Street
3. SE Hawthorne Road between East University Avenue and SE 26th Street
4. University Avenue from NW 20th Terrace to Ellen West Boulevard
5. 2nd Avenue from SW 13th Street to SE 15th Street
6. 4th Avenue from SW 13th Street to SE 11th Street
7. SE 3rd Avenue from SE 11th Street to Hawthorne Road
8. 13th Street between NW 8th Avenue and SW 16th Avenue
9. NE 8th Avenue between NE 14th Street and NE 25th Street



Section 6. Available Funding Tiers

Funding is available in four tiers.

1. Tier 1 funding level- Located anywhere within the GCRA boundary. Provides for a matching grant of up to \$10,000.
2. Tier 2 funding level- Provides up to \$30,000 of matching grant funds if two of the four below are met:
 - a. Storefront is greater than 30 feet in width
 - b. Storefront is on a Target Corridor
 - c. Storefront is comprised of multiple stories
 - d. Business occupant/owner is registered with the City of Gainesville as a “Small, Local, or Diverse business”
3. Tier 3 funding level- Provides up to \$50,000 of matching grant funds if three of the six below are met:
 - a. 75% or more of storefronts within one building are being externally renovated (example a building with four storefronts would require three of them to be renovated). This requirement would entail a single entity applying for the multiple storefronts.
 - b. Business occupant/owner is registered with the City of Gainesville as a “Small, Local, or Diverse business”
 - c. Storefront is on a Target Corridor
 - d. Storefront has a second elevation visible from a primary Transit Corridor
 - e. Storefront is greater than 30 feet in width
 - f. Storefront is a grocery store (deriving at least 50% of yearly sales from groceries)
4. Tier 4 funding level- Provides up to \$150,000 of matching grant funds if the following is met:
 - a. Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places OR listed on the City of Gainesville’s Historic Local Register Listings as identified at www.cityofgainesville.org/PlanningDepartment/HistoricPreservation.aspx

Section 7. Matching Funds

Upon application and agreement approval, Applicants must expend their own funds to pay for the Project in its entirety prior to reimbursement from the GCRA. The GCRA reimbursement is a maximum of 50% of documented and eligible Project costs up to the approval cap. The only form of matching funds, by the Applicant, that will be accepted is the cash value of goods and services used for allowable improvements. Sweat equity by the recipient is not allowed for reimbursement. Upon reaching the reimbursement request stage the Applicant will submit a spreadsheet showing at a minimum the following: vendor name, invoice number, dollar amount paid, and date of payment. A sample spreadsheet will be made available to Applicants. All receipts are required to be submitted for staff review and the GCRA reserves the right to reject any deemed inappropriate expense.

Section 8. Application Requirements

1. Completed application form.
2. Proof of building ownership shown by either a copy of the deed or county tax records.
3. Copy of City of Gainesville business tax license or proof of current payment.
4. Evidence of agreement with Business Improvement Grant Program requirements by building owner, if different from the Applicant. This evidence must be in the form of GCRA Owner Consent documentation that has been properly notarized. GCRA Owner Consent documentation is not required, if the Applicant is the owner of said property.
5. Photographs of every external wall of the Project building showing existing conditions and their relationship (if any) to the transit corridor.
6. Sketches and/or digital illustrations of elevations of proposed improvements.
7. A minimum of two cost estimates from different sources. These cost estimates MUST be for the same improvements. Estimates should be broken out in detail, especially if any non-eligible improvements are being completed, as this allows the GCRA to compare based on only grant eligible improvements being performed. The Applicant can choose to use the more expensive quotation, but the GCRA matching grant funds will not exceed the lowest cost estimate.
8. Selected contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license.
9. Work schedule that shows when work is expected to start and be completed.

Section 9. Application Process

Applications are accepted and evaluated on a continuous, first come, first served evaluated basis, subject to funding availability. Applications will be available on the GCRA website or available at the GCRA office.

The Grant application process is as follows:

1. Application will be submitted by Applicant.
2. GCRA staff will initially review grant applications within 30 days of receipt for completeness.
 - a. Completed applications for up to \$50,000 of matching grant funds will be approved or denied by the GCRA Director or staff designee.
 - b. Applications for between \$50,000.01 to \$100,000 of matching grant funds will be reviewed by the GCRA Director prior to being submitted to the City Manager for approval or denial.
 - c. Applications for over \$100,000.00 in matching funds will be reviewed by the GCRA Director and City Manager, prior to being submitted to the City Commission for approval or denial.
4. The GCRA will notify Applicant of approval or denial in writing or by email.
5. If approved, Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) will be given a Business Improvement Grant Program Agreement that must be notarized and returned prior to commencement of work. The twelve-month period to complete the Project begins the date that the Agreement is countersigned by the GCRA/City of Gainesville.
6. Applicant completes work according to approved schedule. Once complete, Applicant provides required receipt/invoice documentation and Affidavit of Completion to the GCRA for approval and allows potential onsite visit by GCRA staff.
7. Facade Preservation Easement is filed on the property by the GCRA per terms of the Agreement.
8. Approved grant reimbursement is paid to Applicant within 30 days of Façade Preservation Easement being filed.

Section 10. Application Deadline

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, contingent upon availability of Business Improvement Grant Program funding. The Business Improvement Grant Program may be temporarily paused if funding for the fiscal year is exhausted or if the Business Improvement Grant Program is undergoing a revision. If the Business Improvement Grant Program is paused, a waiting list will be established and people on the waiting list will be notified when the Business Improvement Grant Program restarts. Submit completed applications to:

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area
Attn: Business Improvement Grant Program
2153 SE Hawthorne Road, Suite 223
Gainesville, FL 32641

Section 11. Evaluation of Applications

GCRA staff will review grant applications within 30 days of receipt for completeness. Incomplete applications will be returned to the Applicant to resolve issues. Only completed applications are eligible for consideration by the Business Improvement Grant Program.

Complete applications for up to \$50,000 of matching funds will be approved or denied by the GCRA Director or staff designee. Any application for between \$50,000 and \$100,000.00 of matching grant funds must be approved by the City Manager, and any application for over \$100,000 in matching grant funds must be approved by the City Commission.

Section 12. Program Guidelines

1. Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) agrees that any improvements made using grant funds awarded under this program will be maintained for a minimum of five years. If the improvements are replaced or not maintained for five years, the Applicant must repay a pro rata portion of the grant proceeds invested in the Project for the number of months remaining, as further described in the property Façade Preservation Easement that must be filed under this program, a copy of which is available upon request and can be found on the City's website.
2. The following exceptions apply to this requirement:
 - i. The improvement has been damaged beyond repair (i.e. broken awning), at no fault of the Applicant, and the Applicant has replaced the improvement.
 - ii. The improvement was replaced for the purpose of further renovation that will enhance the original Project, as determined in the sole discretion of the GCRA Director or designee.
3. Applicant must obtain all required building permits for the work undertaken and must keep current on any applicable requirements throughout the Project.
4. Time extensions may be granted by the GCRA, at the sole discretion of the GCRA, on a very limited, case-by-case basis, such as when the contractor is having difficulty meeting the deadline due to weather delay or proven supply issues.
5. The GCRA is not responsible for and will not be held liable for any workmanship, design, or construction related issues to the Project receiving grant funds under the Business Improvement Grant Program.
6. New grant applicants will have priority over Projects applying for additional funding.
7. Only completed applications will be considered for possible grant funding.
8. Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) agrees to allow the GCRA and City of Gainesville to photograph the Project for use in future publications.
9. Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) will allow the GCRA to place temporary signage on the property to advertise that work is being partially funded by the Business Improvement Grant Program.

Section 13. Nondiscrimination

The City of Gainesville/GCRA does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, or gender identity. The City of Gainesville/GCRA will not allow any such discrimination by or against its employees or citizens utilizing GCRA services, programs, and activities.

Section 14. Program Revisions

The City Manager may approve de minimis changes to this Business Improvement Grant Program that do not involve changes to grant dollar values or program geographical areas, including targeted corridors. Any changes to grant dollar values or program geographical areas must be approved by the City Commission.

SECTION A: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: _____ Business Name: _____

Business Federal ID#: _____ Year Established: _____ Legal Structure: _____

Is the business currently registered with the City of Gainesville to pay local business tax?: _____

Is the business registered with the City of Gainesville as (check all that apply):
 Small
 Local
 Diverse

Applicant Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____ Website: _____

Has the Applicant previously received CRA or GCRA business improvement grant funds?

Yes No If Yes, when? _____

SECTION B: PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (If different than applicant)

Property Owner Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

SECTION C: BUILDING INFORMATION

Project Building Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

SECTION D: DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Please describe the following, use additional paper if necessary:

What improvements are to be done?

If this is a historic building, what restoration work will be done?

Is this Project necessary to retain or attract new tenants? If to attract new tenants, how many new jobs are expected to be created?

Does the Project correct exterior code deficiencies? If so, please explain.

Explain what if any sustainable/environmental upgrades will be completed.

Describe in more detail the proposed improvements: the new primary colors, a description of materials to be used, what if any construction methods will be used for the improvement, the Applicant may provide pictures that illustrate examples of the final Project.

Estimated number of months from potential grant approval to project completion: _____months

Any other applicable information concerning this proposed improvement.

Check which Tier you qualify for and are applying to.

- Tier 1 (up to \$10,000)
- Tier 2 (up to \$30,000)
- Tier 3 (up to \$50,000)
- Tier 4 (up to \$150,000)

SECTION E: CONTRACTOR'S COST ESTIMATES

Applicant must develop and provide your scope of work to the GCRA as an attachment to this application. The scope of work must detail work to be performed and must separate out any non-grant applicable work from grant applicable work. You must attach at least two cost estimates from different contractors for the scope of work. (It is recommended that you have at least three price quotes). You must provide copies of the selected prime contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license.

The below is a synopsis of your received bids. The original bids must be included with the application. Please place in the #1 position the desired prime contractor selected for this Project. If multiple contractors are going to be used their work must have comparable bids and they are to be provided.

Name of Contractor #1: _____ Cost Estimate: \$ _____

Name of Contractor #2: _____ Cost Estimate: \$ _____

Name of Contractor #3: _____ Cost Estimate: \$ _____

SECTION F. OWNER CONSENT FORM

The undersigned acknowledges and represents the following to be true and correct statements and consents to be bound by the statements contained herein:

The Owner _____ is the fee simple title holder of the Property described in the Business Improvement Grant program Agreement dated _____ (the "Agreement") between the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area, a Department of the City of Gainesville ("GCRA") and _____ (the "Applicant"); and

The Owner agrees that the Property will be benefitted from the Project to be undertaken pursuant to the Agreement; and

In consideration of the benefit to the Property, the Owner agrees to be bound by Section 2.04 of the Agreement, agrees to execute and be bound by the Façade Preservation Easement attached as Exhibit "B" to the Agreement, and agrees to be bound by Article 4. Indemnification, Article 8. Dispute Resolution and Article 10. Miscellaneous of the Agreement.

This Consent and Acknowledgment is executed by the Owner on _____

Signed, sealed & delivered In the Presence of:

Name: _____

Owner: _____
Print name: _____
Print title (if applicable): _____

Name: _____

STATE OF _____

Name: _____

COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____,

20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has

produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public, State of _____

My commission expires _____

SECTION G: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGNATURES

By signing and submitting this application, the Applicant (and Building Owner if not Applicant) certifies, attests, and agrees to the following:

1. Applicant/Building Owner has been provided a copy of and has read, understands, and will comply with the Business Improvement Grant Program guidelines. Applicant's failure to comply with the Guidelines will result in ineligibility to participate in this Program.
2. Applicant/Building Owner certifies that all information in the application and furnished in support of this application is true and complete to the best of Applicant's knowledge and belief. Any false statement will be grounds for immediate termination of the Application and subject the Applicant to financial responsibility. Applicant has a continuing obligation to inform the GCRA (in writing) of any changes relative to the information provided in this application.
3. Applicant/Building Owner understands that the Business Improvement Grant Program will pay no more than 50 percent of GCRA approved Project costs, and the Applicant/Building Owner is responsible for any remaining costs or overages.
4. The Building has no existing code violations and the Applicant/Building Owner is not named in any outstanding code enforcement liens.
5. Applicant/Building Owner has chosen and approve of the contractors and the scope of work as listed in this application.
6. The GCRA/City's financial responsibility under this Program is solely limited to payment to the Applicant up to the approved reimbursement amount for work completed in accordance with the Business Improvement Grant Program. GCRA/City expressly disclaims any other liability, warranty, or guarantee, expressed or implied, for the work completed.
7. Upon completion of the Project and inspection by GCRA, and prior to disbursement of grant funds by the GCRA, the Applicant/Building Owner agrees to execute and deliver to the GCRA an Affidavit of Completion and a Façade Preservation Easement as provided by the GCRA to the Applicant. Additionally, the Applicant/Building Owner must provide to GCRA color photographs of the improved upon building showing all exterior sides of the building upon Project completion.
8. The required Façade Preservation Easement must ensure that the Applicant/Building Owner maintains the Project work in good condition and without material change for a period of five years after the completion of work under this Program. The GCRA will record the executed Easement.
9. Approval under this Program does not constitute a permit or approval of the City and the Applicant is responsible for obtaining such permits, if required, by the City or any other governmental entity.
10. The GCRA/City does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability (protected characteristics), and will not allow any such discrimination by or against its employees or citizens utilizing GCRA programs.
11. The Applicant/Building Owner shall not assign or attempt to assign, directly or indirectly, any rights under this Agreement or under any instrument referred to herein without the prior written consent of the City in each instance. Any assignee shall be bound by all the terms of this Agreement and associated documents.
12. The Applicant/Building Owner and the City each binds itself, its partners, successors, legal representatives, and assigns of such other party in respect to all covenants of this Agreement.
13. This Agreement and any associated documents will be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of Florida, without giving effect to its provisions regarding choice of laws.
14. This Agreement and payment of any Program funding is subject to the availability of funding.
15. All activities authorized by this Agreement are subject to and must be performed in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
16. The Applicant/Building Owner agrees to waive any right to, hold harmless, and indemnify the City (which includes the GCRA), its officials, agents, and employees from suits, actions, damages, liability, expenses, losses, and costs, including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees, in connection with this Agreement and any Program administration herein. This provision shall survive termination of this Agreement.
17. Nothing in this Agreement may be interpreted as a waiver of the City's sovereign immunity as granted under Section 768.28, Florida Statutes.
18. The Applicant/Building Owner acknowledges that the City has the right and responsibility to enforce this Agreement

Upon execution by the Applicant/Building Owner and the GCRA, this document constitutes a binding agreement between the GCRA and the Applicant/Building Owner.

Signature of Applicant

Date

STATE OF _____, COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____,

20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has

produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public, State of _____

My commission expires _____

Complete below only if the applicant is not the building owner.

Signature of Building Owner

Date

STATE OF _____, COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____,

20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has

produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public, State of _____

My commission expires _____

SECTION H: PROGRAM APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Completed application form.
- Proof of building ownership shown by either a copy of the deed or county tax records.
- Copy of current City of Gainesville business tax license or proof of recent payment.
- GCRA Owner Consent documentation signed by all applicable parties. Evidence of agreement with Business Improvement Grant Program requirements by building owner, if different from the Applicant. This evidence must be in the form of GCRA Owner Consent Form (page 12) that has been properly notarized.
- Photographs of every external wall of the Project building showing existing conditions and their relationship (if any) to the transit corridor.
- Sketches and/or digital illustrations of elevations of proposed improvements.
- A minimum of two cost estimates from different sources. These cost estimates MUST be for the same improvements. Estimates should be broken out in detail, especially if any interior work is being done as this allows the GCRA to compare based on only grant allowable work being performed.
- Selected contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license (The Applicant can choose to use the more expensive quotation, but the GCRA matching grant funds will not exceed the lowest cost estimate).

Submit completed applications by mail or in person to:

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area
Attn: Business Improvement Grant Program
2153 SE Hawthorne Road, Suite 223
Gainesville, FL 32641

FOR GCRA USE ONLY: DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION

Date & Time Complete Application Received: _____

Received by (print name): _____

Reviewed by (print name): _____

Documentation Received:

- Application
- Proof of building ownership
- Proof of current City of Gainesville business tax license
- Proof of Ownership or Owner Consent Form
- Photographs of existing conditions and their relationship to the transit corridor
- Sketches and/or digital illustrations of proposed improvements
- Cost estimates from two different sources. Low bid amount: _____
- Contractor's general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license
- Work schedule:

Start Date: _____ Expected Completion Date: _____

Grant Amount Requested: _____

Approvals:

- Up to \$50,000. GCRA Director or staff designee. Date approved: _____
- \$50,000.01 to \$100,000. City Manager. Date approved: _____
- Over \$100,000.00. City Commission. Legistar #: _____ Date approved: _____

Grant Amount Approved: _____

- Denied. Reason: _____

Date Applicant notified in writing of Approval/Denial: _____

AFFIDAVIT OF CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

Applicant Name: _____

Building Address: _____

OWNER'S AFFIDAVIT

I CERTIFY that the work under the above named project including all appurtenances thereto, has been satisfactorily completed as of _____ date; that all charges or bills for labor or services performed or materials furnished, and other charges against the subcontractors, have been paid in full and in accordance with the terms of the contract; that no liens have attached against the property and improvements of owner; that no notice of intention to claim liens is outstanding that no suits are pending by reason on the project under the contract; that all Worker's Compensation claims have been settled and no public liability claims are pending.

Affidavit is made for the purpose of requesting reimbursement under the GCRA Business Improvement Grant program.

Applicant Signature

Date

Name

Street Address

City, State & Zip

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____,

20_____, by _____, who is personally known to me or who has

produced _____ as identification.

Notary Public, State of _____

My commission expires _____