

DOWNTOWN RENEWABLE ENERGY & ENERGY EFFICIENCY MATCHING PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & APPLICATION

A 2024 VIRGINIA BUSINESS
DISTRICT RESURGENCE GRANT



Contact Information:
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VIRGINIA
MAIN
Street

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

Overview

Downtown Wytheville, Inc. works closely with small businesses throughout our district and a common challenge facing entrepreneurs since the pandemic has been the rising cost of doing business, in particular, the skyrocketing utility costs facing businesses. This challenge is even more pronounced in a Main Street district where most buildings are historic and not designed with modern materials to minimize energy costs.



To address these concerns, Downtown Wytheville, Inc. has received a 2024 Virginia Business District Resurgence Grant from Virginia Main Street for the explicit goals of stabilizing and reducing utility costs for tenants of these historic downtown buildings with the aim of making the district more business-friendly and capable of supporting a thriving small business ecosystem.

In the pursuit of these goals, this program is designed to accommodate different levels of projects addressing energy efficiency and utility costs allowing businesses to take advantage of both major investments significantly reducing these burdens and smaller investments that still can make tangible improvements to these costs. These three tiers of program support are outlined within this document.

This program runs from December 2023 through December 2024 and applications are accepted on a first-come-first-serve basis until funding is expended. This is structured as a pilot program and high interest in this program could result in similar programs supporting these goals continuing beyond this grant.

Eligible Area: B-2 DT General Business District – Downtown

Contact grant administrator to confirm your location qualifies.



Eligibility for this program is limited to commercial, restaurant, & retail space in the B-2 DT General Business District. This program is not eligible for residential properties and priority will be given to properties based on the number of businesses affected by a project.

Program Levels

There are three distinct levels of funding in this program depending on the size of the project and how large an impact the project will make on reducing and stabilizing utility costs. Priority is given to higher-level projects that make a larger impact. Applicants are not limited to only doing one level of project and can combine different project levels. All applicants will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to pass along energy savings to small business tenants occupying their buildings.

Level 1 – Major Renewable Energy Projects

The highest level of project with the largest impact on energy costs involves the addition of renewable energy infrastructure onto buildings. These projects are given priority for their outsized impact in addressing the goals of the program. Eligible projects can include solar or wind generation arrays and associated battery storage options. Eligible projects under Level 1 will receive a 1:1 match up to \$10,000. To qualify for reimbursement, applicants must obtain an energy assessment on their property and a quote from a solar/wind installer with a letter of support. Reimbursement is contingent upon adhering to the submitted project plans.

- Renewable energy projects can qualify for a 30% federal tax credit and additional federal and state incentives including USDA's Rural Energy for America Program grant. These incentives are not affiliated with Downtown Wytheville and would be up to the applicant to pursue.
- EnergySage is a great resource that can provide a solar energy assessment and connect you with verified local installers and potential additional incentive programs: <https://www.energysage.com/business-solutions/commercial-solar-benefits/>.

- There are a variety of models for renewable energy projects ranging from outright ownership of panels to long-term lease agreements with minimal up-front costs. These structures have benefits and drawbacks and are up to the applicant to decide between themselves and an installer. For more information on these models, talk to the grant administrator.



Level 2 - Large Energy Efficiency Upgrades

The second highest level of this program focuses on major upgrades to a historic building that may be prohibitively costly but still achieve significant energy efficiency upgrades. These upgrades can include weatherization improvements (including high-efficiency insulation, air sealing, and upgrades to doors and windows), high-efficiency air source or ground source heat pumps to replace aging HVAC equipment, high-efficiency heat pump water heaters, and other large-scale efficiency upgrades. This level is a 1:1 match up to \$5,000. Applicants must first undergo a third-party building energy assessment and adopt recommendations from the assessment or provide a signed letter detailing the significant impact of the proposed improvements on energy efficiency. Program funds will be reimbursed upon completion of the project and verification that the proposed upgrades were followed.

- Energy efficiency projects can qualify for tax credits, incentives, and rebates from utility companies like Appalachian Power (<https://takechargeva.com/programs/for-your-business>) or the state/federal governments; however, these additional incentives are not affiliated with Downtown Wytheville, Inc. and are up to the applicant to pursue.
- The non-profit, Virginia Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP), is a great resource for local energy assessments and weatherization upgrade advice (<https://leap-va.org/>).

- Rewiring America can also provide information on many energy efficiency upgrades to a building's electrical system and some of the available resources that can contribute to overall energy savings. They also have an online tool connecting you to additional funding sources and helping you make an energy efficiency improvement plan: (<https://www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator>).



Level 3 - Low-Level Energy Efficiency Improvements

The third and final level of this program focuses on low-level energy efficiency improvements that are affordable and installed relatively easier than the other levels but still provide energy savings. These upgrades can include LED lights and efficient light fixtures, automated dimmers, programmable thermostats, smart energy control devices, smart shades, motion sensors, and other small-scale efficiency upgrades. This level can also support electric vehicle charging stations that are open to public use.

This program level offers a 1:1 matching program up to \$2,500 and reimbursement is contingent on implementing recommendations from a building energy assessment or documented evidence of noticeable improvements in energy efficiency from the upgrades. Funds will be reimbursed upon completion of the project and inspection to ensure compliance with agreed-upon upgrades.

- Even low-level energy efficiency upgrades can qualify for additional incentives, tax credits, and rebates including from Appalachian Power's TakeCharge program (<https://takechargeva.com/programs/for-your-business>) or state/federal programs; however, these additional incentives are not affiliated with Downtown Wytheville, Inc. and are up to the applicant to pursue.

- The United States EPA's Energy Star program provides potential resources for attainable energy efficiency upgrades that may be no or low cost (https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/save_energy_commercial_buildings?s=mega).



General Program Provisions

- The proposed plans shall be approved by Downtown Wytheville prior to the start of work in order to remain eligible for this program.
- The applicant will enter into a contract with Downtown Wytheville, Inc. agreeing to follow the approved plans. This contract will also include a provision that energy savings must be passed along to tenants following the project. Any and all changes to the project must be approved by Downtown Wytheville, Inc.
- The applicant shall enter into a contract with a licensed contractor or installer for the project itself. This contract is between the owner and the contractor. Downtown Wytheville, Inc. is not responsible for the performance of the contractor nor for the payments to the contractor.
- It is up to the owner to ensure the contractor is legally licensed for the work and has provided proof of general liability insurance and workers compensation insurance.
- The owner shall take full responsibility for the selection and management of the contractor.
- The owner shall utilize the owner's financial resources to undertake 100% of the costs of the improvements.

- During the course of the project, representatives of Downtown Wytheville shall have the right to inspect the property and the work during reasonable hours for the purpose of determining compliance with the work write-up and approved plans. The owner and contractor will follow the complete write-up and plan. Any deviation from the agreed-upon plan will need written approval. Any deviation without approval will result in disqualification from the program, and any funds spent up to that time period will not be reimbursed.

Reimbursement Procedure

- Following the final inspection and approval of the work by Downtown Wytheville representatives, a single lump-sum payment will be made to the owner based on the provisions of this document.
- All costs submitted for the reimbursement shall be in accord with the work write-up and approved changes. Reimbursements will only be made for the materials and labor necessary to complete the agreed-upon work. Owners will not be reimbursed for tools, superfluous materials, restocking fees, improperly ordered or damaged material, or work outside the approved plans.
- Downtown Wytheville will make the payment within 30 days of the inspection and approval noted above.
- For reporting purposes, all applicants must make sure to have their energy audit, details showing their portion of the 1:1 match requirement estimate & final statement from contractors of improvement costs, and a detailed list from the contractor/installer of expenses on file with Downtown Wytheville before the closeout of the program.
 - Additionally, applicants must report how many tenants have been served, the anticipated energy savings of the project (if available) and must consent to images and descriptions of their project being used in Downtown Wytheville and Virginia Main Street promotions of this overall grant program.

How to Apply

1. The owner of the building shall fill out the application and provide a short statement about how they would like to see the program implemented for the purpose of improving energy efficiency and reducing utility costs for your property and tenants.
2. The owner of the building shall conduct or commission an energy assessment of their property to determine problem areas and potential remedies.
3. The owner of the building will then find a contractor or installer to provide a detailed plan for implementing the noted improvements. This plan must be submitted to Downtown Wytheville and approved.
4. Owners will proceed upon approval with the project between themselves and their contractor/installer as detailed in the earlier conditions.
5. Upon completion of the project, final approval by representatives of Downtown Wytheville, and compliance with the earlier conditions, funds will be reimbursed.

Any questions about the Downtown Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Matching Program should be directed to the following:

Todd Wolford

Executive Director

Downtown Wytheville Inc

276-223-3343

exedir@downtownwytheville.org

Charlie Jones

Program Administrator

Downtown Wytheville Inc 276-223-

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DOWNTOWN RENEWABLE ENERGY & ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Personal Information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Business or Property Information:

Business address: _____

Mailing Address (other than Physical Address): _____

Business Phone: _____

Business Email: _____

Tax ID #: _____

I hereby certify that the above information is true and accurate. I understand that additional information may be requested by Downtown Wytheville to complete the review of this application.

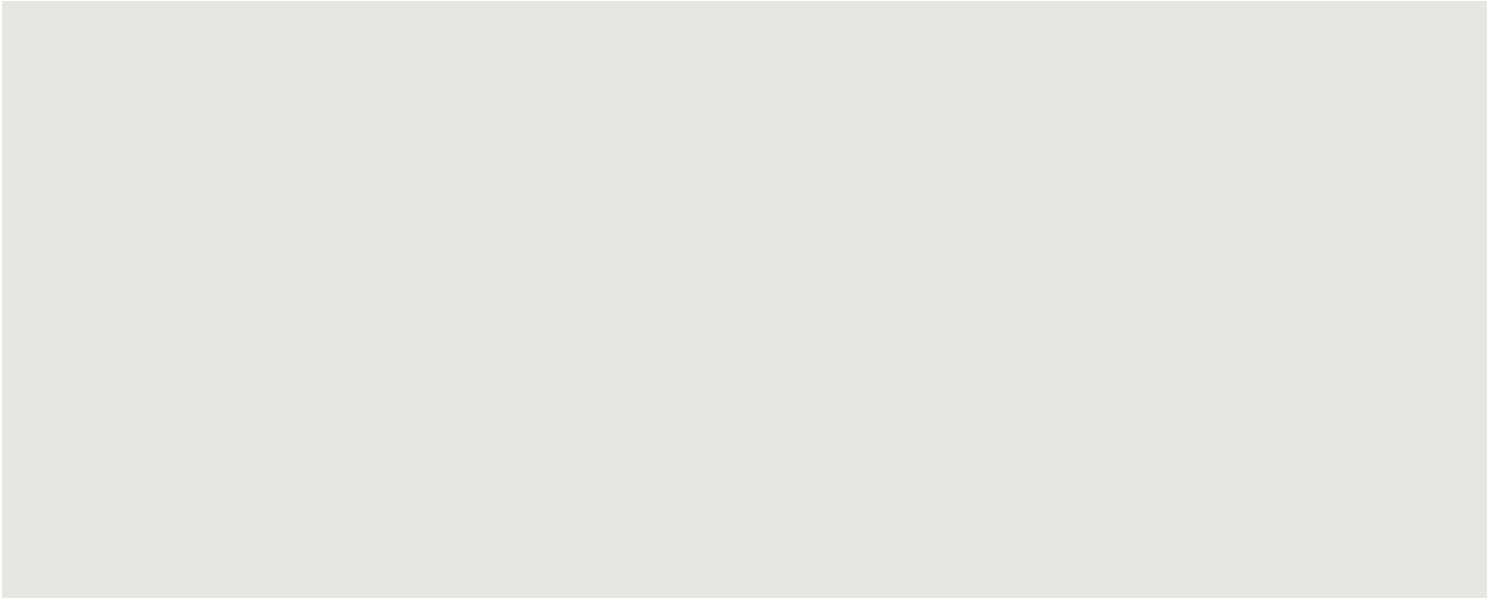
Applicant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please include this signed page along with the Project Description/Project Level Form in order for the application to be complete for review.

Project Description:



Program Tier (Select All That Apply)

Level 1 _____

Level 2 _____

Level 3 _____