

Questions related to eligible applicants:

Does a city/county/municipality have to be the lead applicant?

- a. No, the government office does not need to be the lead applicant, it can also be a non-profit organization. They can collaborate on an application and select one to be the lead.

Can a town that has a few different nonprofits all apply? Or do they have to agree on who can apply for their project?

- a. Yes, they can all collaborate on a single application for the community. One must be selected to be the lead applicant.

Can the project have a regional scope with multiple cities or non-profit organizations?

- a. An application can have projects involving multiple parties, however they must all be within the same community. One of the organizations must take the lead role to serve as the grant recipient.

I am in an unincorporated community; how do we apply?

- a. An application would need to be submitted by a non-profit organization or city/county office on behalf of the town.

Questions related to applicant eligibility:

If we have applied for a CBDG grant will this effect that process or can we even apply for this. Most communities who have received CBDG funding in that window are listed as eligible on the website.

- a. Communities that received CBDG CV (COVID-related) would be eligible for the Towns grant, any other CBDG grant recipients would not be eligible. The list has been revised to reflect this.

We had someone ask us to apply for the HEAL grant. As the grant windows are semi-concurrent, would having that application in affect our eligibility for this grant? I checked, and we are currently on your list of eligible cities.

- a. The application for HEAL does not make you ineligible, however only one of the grants will be awarded. Since HEAL will be announced prior to Towns announcements, if HEAL is awarded you would be removed from Towns.

We were awarded a Spaces to Places Grant from Kansas Commerce, but there was no money involved. It was just to brainstorm with our community to get started on ways we can improve our town. Are we still eligible to apply for this grant?

- a. If no grant funding was provided, you would still be eligible for Towns grant.

What if the small city has been awarded a Principal Forgiveness Loan?

- a. No, a Principal Forgiveness Loan does not impact eligibility.

Our community received a BASE grant. Are we still eligible for Towns?

- a. No, a grant that benefited the community would make the community ineligible.

FAQs for Towns Grant

Updated 2/24/25

We are awaiting award notification on another Commerce grant application that has been submitted.

Are we still eligible to apply for Towns grant?

- a. You are eligible to apply for Towns, but if you are awarded a Commerce grant during the Towns application period you will no longer be eligible for Towns. If the other application is not awarded, you will still be eligible for Towns funding.

Our community received an award of Community Service Tax Credits, are we still eligible?

- a. Yes, the community is eligible. Tax credits are different from grants, so that is not a disqualifier.

Questions related to grant funding:

Did you say that 50% of the Grant funds will be awarded at the 1/2 point of the project and the remainder of the grant funds at the conclusion of the project?

- a. The first payment of 50% of the award will be provided upon execution of the award agreement, the second 50% payment will be made with the project is at 50% completion.
- b. A site visit may be required for the second payment, which will be determined based on the project during the award notification.

What is total amount of grants being awarded?

- a. There is a total of \$100,000 available for funding.

Is there a maximum cost of a project for consideration? There is a maximum award of \$10,000. For instance, project total is \$50,000 "Towns" grant completes the fundraising for the project.

- a. The maximum per community is \$10,000. The total cost for the project does not impact the grant. There is a requirement for 10% match.

When do the matching funds need to be obtained? Do we have to have it all before we even apply?

- a. Matching funds do not need to be received prior to application, but letters of commitment to show the source of match will need to be included in the application.

Can grant funds be used to be reimbursed for project purchase expenses made during the application and review period?

- a. No, purchases cannot be reimbursed for any expenses prior to an award being made and an agreement has been signed.

Can you tell us more about what "in kind" means for our 10% match-specifically, if volunteer labor is used to plant flower boxes, put up brackets for banners or construct flower boxes- how do we calculate an hourly rate?

- a. Here is a resource we received that K-State Extension uses for volunteer time.
<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>
- b. If anyone provides equipment to complete the project at no charge would also count towards in-kind. Such as if a business donates a lift to put up brackets, paint, or any lumber or supplies, they will provide a statement of the items that will be contributed to the project and values.

Can we apply for funding project expenses to maintain long-term, such as sustaining new flowers for 2 years?

- a. No, Towns grant funds can only be used for the initial purchases for the project, ongoing maintenance would not be an eligible expense. The Community needs to document commitment to fund the project after the initial Towns grant.

Questions related to eligible activities:

Do the projects have to be specific to downtown or beautification anywhere in a city?

- a. Yes, beautification in the community is eligible, for example park benches or improvement.

What if we partner with the school that is looking at having the students building the new community entrance sign? The city has been looking at options.

- a. A new community welcome/entrance sign would be an eligible activity.

Can we apply for a project that is not on the eligible list on the webpage?

- a. Yes, this is not an exhaustive list. If there is a tangible project that the community feels would have a positive impact, you can email us the project idea and we will give you feedback.

Our city is in desperate need of a pool repair. We already have the pool, but we have not been able to open for 2 seasons. Would this be eligible?

- a. This would depend on the scope of the project. If it is a minor repair that the community has identified as a priority, it may be a fit. If it is a major repair issue, \$10,000 may not be enough to complete a project, so a significant amount of match would need to be in place or committed to achieve the 12-month completion timeline.

The community has a 2-block, gravel, main street and has filled pot holes and added gravel to one block and would like to complete the second block. Would this be eligible for Towns funding?

- a. If it is just for filling pot holes and new gravel, and is not a full streetscape, it would fit as a small downtown infrastructure need.

Can the grant be used to purchase shelving, appliances, etc., to a small kitchenette in a community building so they can have food at their events and expand on what they can host at the building?

- a. Yes, as community vibrancy, appliances can be purchased and minor improvements for installation to expand the uses of the building for events.

Our building on main street has large plate glass windows that are cracked and have a large hole in one corner. The wood framing is rotten and needs to be replaced. We are looking to replace the windows with smaller, energy-efficient ones. We would then paint the front of the building. Would this be eligible?

- a. Yes, as downtown beautification. Since this is not a 'building renovation' and is enhancement of a building this would be eligible. Minor façade repairs needed to be able to paint and the painting are eligible.

Is the building on main street required to be vacant to be eligible to paint?

- a. No, this was provided as an example of projects. Any building in need of minor repairs and paint in the downtown is eligible.

Questions related to ineligible activities:

Would this grant help with demolition of properties to allow for new house and growth?

- a. No, demolition would not be an eligible activity.

Would building repairs to the “city hall” qualify? It needs a new roof.

- a. No, a roof would not be an eligible activity as building renovations.

What about doing a project with revitalizing our community jail be eligible? It is a tin sided and roofed building and it needs new tin for the outside, and windows and door.

- a. Building renovations would not be an eligible activity.

What about purchasing a new heater/ac for our city building?

- a. Building renovations would not be an eligible activity.

Can the grant used to purchase books for a library project?

- a. This does not sound like it would fit the purpose of the grant. This would be more for community projects, for example, if the library needed cleaning up to be more attractive.

Our community would like to purchase a commercial lawn mower, they currently do not have one. We would also like to replace dead trees with new ones. Would these be eligible activities?

- a. Yes, if these items are needed for beautification of downtown and/or the park, both would be eligible.

Questions related to application requirements

Is the community self-assessment required in the same way a housing assessment is required for housing/development grants?

- a. No, the community assessment is being provided as a resource to assist community in identifying potential projects and is not required with the application.

Is a SAM registration required?

- a. No, SAM registration is not required. A W9 will be required for the lead applicant with the application.

Who should we get letters of support from?

- a. A letter from the city and any organizations or individuals that would partner on the project, can speak to the impact, or would benefit from the project.

Questions related to general topics:

Will the list be updated to show who is eligible?

- a. Yes, the list of eligible communities will be revised and posted on the webpage.

On the "Commerce Grants at a Glance" what is this grant called? I'm sure I'm just missing it.

- a. It has been added as "Towns Grant" to the most recent 'Grants at a Glance.'

Could we have a hard copy of your power point?

- a. Yes, slides will be added to the webpage along with the presentation recording

Can I get help with my application?

- a. Yes, we are happy to respond to questions. Please email towns@ks.gov with your question. All questions will be added to this FAQ and updated regularly.
- b. Office hours will also be offered every Thursday, from 10:00 – 11:00 am, during the application period, except December 26th. A registration link is on the webpage at <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/towns/>

We would like to apply for this grant but are not sure what to apply for, what should we do?

- a. Reach out! There is a community assessment process that has been developed to assist in identifying needs.
- b. We also have team members that will come to the community to have a conversation with those interested in considering opportunities.