



City of Cornelia Downtown Development Authority Sign Grant Program

Program Goal

The purpose of creating the Sign Grant program is to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Cornelia commercial properties. Attractive building signs have a significant impact on the overall attractiveness and marketability of downtown Cornelia and the surrounding areas. This grant is being offered to business owners and property owners to encourage reinvestment in our downtown. It is intended to assist with new signage guided by historic preservation in keeping with the period of the original design and based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

Eligibility

- Project must be located within the downtown central business district (from traffic light at Wyly St. to traffic light at Wayside St. on map). Other areas in Cornelia will be considered if funding is available.
- Reimbursement will only be made for expenses incurred after grant approval is given by the Downtown Development Authority, work has been completed in required timeframe, a final inspection has been done by the Sign Grant Committee (SCG) and ALL paid invoices have been turned in and reviewed.
- Signs grants are **ONLY** available for exterior signs. (sign changes, paint, signage, sign improvements, that face a public street or parking area. Improvements funded by the grant must be maintained in the same condition for a minimum of five years or for the duration of tenancy.
- All design must comply with design guidelines created by the DDA Design Committee and all other City of Cornelia zoning ordinances. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all necessary governmental permits and authorizations.
- Property owners and tenants are eligible to apply. If a tenant applies, a notarized letter of consent must be signed by the property owner. Government buildings and national franchises are not eligible for the grant.
- One grant per building storefront, unless availability of funds allows for more or if deemed necessary by the DDA.
- Reimbursement of up to **50%** of total project cost is available with a **maximum grant contribution of \$500**. The amount awarded will be determined by the SGC based on the funds available and the number of requests under consideration.
- Projects must begin within 30 days of grant approval and be completed within 4 months of start date. **NO WORK** may be started prior to the date of the grant award or the applicant will be disqualified for payment of grant. Special circumstances may apply and board may approve variances at time of review.

**Cornelia DDA
Sign Grant Application**

Property Address: _____

Current Business: _____

Date building was built: _____ Property Taxes: Paid Not Paid Do Not Know

Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Building Owner: Yes No If no, name of owner _____

Owner's Address: _____ Phone No: _____

Description of Project: _____

Total Estimated Costs _____

Amount Requested: _____

Projected Completion Date _____

Include with application:

- Current photo(s) of building
- Design plans, sketches or enhanced photos
- All color swatches for paint
- Itemized contractor's estimate that includes cost of labor and materials
- Copies of all permits necessary for work to be started/completed
- Notarized letter of consent from owner if applicant is not property owner

I understand that the Sign Grant monies are to be used exclusively for the project described in the application. Failure to abide by the information in this application may result in loss of the funding. Upon completion of the project, the Sign Grant/Design Committee of the Cornelia DDA will inspect the project and review final receipts. Payment is contingent on the project outcome being consistent with the project submitted with the application. I understand that payment of the grant is contingent upon me providing proof of the expenditures and payment thereof.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Office of Downtown Development Use Only:

Application reviewed on : _____

Approved on: _____

Specific Recommendations: _____

Reasons for Denial: _____

Amount Granted: _____

Date Project Started: _____

Date Project Completed: _____

Guidelines for Sign Improvements

1. Cornelia DDA uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings as a guide when making recommendations.
2. Planned improvements must preserve the architectural integrity of the building and restore, when possible, the historic appearance of the sign.
3. Historic paint colors should be used to maintain the historical character of downtown.
4. The surface cleaning of structures must rely on the gentlest methods available. Inappropriate chemical cleaners should be avoided due to possible damage of aged building components.
5. Sandblasting is NOT an approved method of cleaning and can destroy brick facades.
6. The size, color and shape of a sign should compliment the building and add to the historic flavor of the area. All signage must comply with the City of Cornelia sign ordinances and the Historic Preservation Commission (if applicable).

Eligible Improvements:

- Repair of original architectural detail
- New signage or removal and replacement of inappropriate and outdated signage (following all City of Cornelia sign ordinances)

Grant Process

- ❑ Meet with City of Cornelia, DDA Manager to review application process, intended plans, the historic significance of the property, any city ordinances that apply and timeline of application review once it is turned in to the Sign Grant Committee (SCG).
- ❑ Turn in completed application, an architectural rendering, sketch or enhanced photograph of the work to be completed along with a full color “before” photo to the DDA office. (Design assistance is available through the Office of Downtown Development in Athens starting at \$50 for Main Street/DDA Program Areas, but can vary depending on the size and scope of the project.)
- ❑ The SCG will evaluate each application and make a recommendation to the City of Cornelia Downtown Development Authority for a final decision. Funding is limited for this program therefore; applicant selection may be a competitive process.
- ❑ The DDA Manager will contact the applicant in writing with the DDA’s final decision. There is no appeal of a denial, but any applicant denied may reapply the following year. Once an applicant is approved, they must display the sign provided by the DDA on site indicating “Financing provided in part by the City of Cornelia Downtown Development Authority Sign Grant Program.”
- ❑ The project must be completed according to the original design submitted, including materials, colors, awnings, etc. in accordance with the Building Permit or Certificate of Appropriateness that was received prior to demolition, repair or construction.
- ❑ The approved project must be started within 30 days of approval and completed within four months from the project start date. Failure to complete projects within the specified time may result in a loss of approved funds. Extensions to the time period may be granted for inclement weather or the ordering of special building materials. The applicant must request an extension in writing. The DDA will notify the applicant in writing of its approval or denial.
- ❑ Once the project is completed and prior to reimbursement, a final inspection will be made by a member of the SGC/DDA Manager. Submit an “after” photo, along with proof of ALL expenses paid (receipts, front and back of cancelled checks, statements, etc.) to the DDA Manager. The SGC will review all documentation and issue the grant funds within 14 business days.

For more information, contact Jessie Owensby, Community Development Manager at 706-778-8585, ext 280 or at dmanager@corneliageorgia.org