

February 1, 2024

## Vacant Spaces Grant Q&A

The City of Red Deer's Vacant Spaces Grant is a pilot subsidy program designed to incentivize the development of a unique, well-invested downtown where people and businesses thrive. Up to \$10,000 in rent is available for entrepreneurs to activate vacant street-level commercial spaces for retail, pop-ups and events.

**1. When can I apply for a Vacant Spaces Grant?**

Application intake begins February 15, 2024 and will continue until the end of the year or until the funds are depleted, whichever occurs first.

**2. Who can apply?**

Business owners who plan to rent space to operate in a vacant downtown Red Deer location are eligible to apply for funding.

**3. How do I apply?**

To apply, register at [reddeer.smartsimple.ca](https://reddeer.smartsimple.ca), then navigate to the "Grant Opportunities" section to access an online application form. Details on all current grant opportunities through The City of Red Deer can be found at [reddeer.ca/whats-happening/grants](https://reddeer.ca/whats-happening/grants).

**4. When will I know if my application has been approved?**

Applications will undergo adjudication in April, July, and October. Applicants will be notified within two weeks following the adjudication date.

**5. What things do I need to consider to apply and how long will it take?**

Ensure your business is registered with the government before applying for the Vacant Spaces Grant. While a business plan is encouraged, it is not mandatory. If approved, you must provide a copy of your lease agreement and [business license](#). When all contract requirements have been met, funds will be released as soon as practicable.

**6. Do I need a vacant space secured before I apply?**

While applicants are encouraged and will score higher points by having a pre-selected vacant space in mind, it is not a mandatory requirement for application.

**7. What can I spend the money on?**

Eligible expenses cover up to 50% of the rent cost for a downtown street-level, store-front commercial space for the initial 3-6 months up to \$10,000.

**8. If I am a property owner, can I still apply?**

No. The grant is a rent subsidy therefore property owners are not eligible.

**9. Can I apply next year?**

Funding is available in 2024 with no assurance of extension into subsequent years.

**10. Are there any resources available to help me open my business?**

Business coaching and assistance creating a business plan may be available through the following resources:

- Community Futures: <https://albertacf.com>

- Business Works: <https://se.ethoscmg.com/bwca>
- Downtown Business Association: [www.downtownreddeer.com](http://www.downtownreddeer.com)
- City of Red Deer [Land & Economic Development](#)

**More information**

For more information on this funding program, contact:

Community Development  
403-406-8820  
[culturemailbox@reddeer.ca](mailto:culturemailbox@reddeer.ca)