

SA Climate Ready Community Action Fund Business Grants

2024 Grant Guidelines and Application Information

Managed by the City of San Antonio Office of Sustainability and funded by
The Resiliency, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability (REES) Fund.



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Business Grants Overview

For projects that enhance sustainability and climate resiliency while fostering equity and community partnerships in San Antonio.

Overview

The Business Grant Program aims to support projects that enhance community sustainability efforts and foster community partnerships that create a more sustainable and resilient San Antonio.

Annual funding of the grant is not guaranteed and is subject to availability. Grant applications are accepted once per year during the application period and reviewed by the Office of Sustainability Scoring Committee. [Please apply here](#)

The Business Grant Program can help launch or expand existing sustainability projects. Successful projects will further [SA Climate Ready](#) goals, reduce building and/or transportation energy consumption, leverage local and federal funding, and/or create community partnerships

Local businesses whose projects are within San Antonio city limits are eligible for awards up to \$20,000.

Grant projects should fall into one of the following 5 categories:

1. *Reduce Building Energy Consumption,*
2. *Reduce Transportation Energy Consumption,*
3. *Advance the Circular Economy & Promote Waste Reduction*
4. *Promote Biodiversity and Healthy Ecosystems,*
5. *Increase Climate Resilience and Community Adaptation*

The Business Grant Program is funded through the Resiliency, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability (REES) Fund and managed by the Office of Sustainability.

Grants Available

In 2024, grants up to \$20,000 per applicant are available. Projects with multiple funding sources are encouraged.

Business Grant Guidelines

Eligible Applicants:

1. Owners and/or tenants of commercial properties located within the San Antonio city limits.
 - a. Tenant must receive approval in writing from property owner (to be submitted with application documents)
 - b. Property must currently be in compliance with all Zoning and Unified Development Code requirements or commit to complying prior to completion of the proposed project.
 - c. Applicant and/or property owners must be current on all City property taxes
 - d. No City liens against applicant and/or property owner
2. Applicants are eligible for a maximum of one award per cycle under this program. Applicants are eligible for other City awards in the same year.
3. Applicants must disclose any conflicts of interest.
4. Applicants are required to abide by all local, State, and Federal laws and regulations.

Grants will NOT be awarded to:

1. Applicants that discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, age, citizenship, non-disqualifying disability, national origin, or sexual identification
2. Owners and/or tenants located outside of the San Antonio city limits

Eligible Projects:

1. Projects should align with one or more of the following overarching goals of the Business Grant Program:
 - a. Leverage local and/or federal funding
 - b. Support SWMB-owned businesses
 - c. Reduce building and/or transportation energy consumption
2. Applicants must choose a project category and clearly demonstrate how their project aligns with the Category Goals.
3. Projects should aim to exist beyond the life of the grant

Grant funding CAN NOT be used for the following (*Exceptions to this policy may be made solely at the discretion of the Sustainability Commission*):

- To pay compensation, salaries, commissions, fees, prizes, premiums, or similar expenses with more than 50% of funds awarded
- To purchase land or buildings
- To retroactively pay for activities completed before the award is received

Grant Project Goals and Category Specific Goals

Overarching Goals of the Business Grant projects:

All projects should align with at least 2 of the following 3 overarching goals of the grant program, which focus on emissions reduction and community. The best projects will align with all 3 goals. In the applications, applicants will be asked how their project meets the following overarching goals:

- Leverage local and/or federal funding
- Support SWMB-owned businesses
- Reduce Building and/or Transportation Emissions

Grant Project Categories

All projects must also address one primary sustainability project category:

1. *Reduce Building Energy Consumption*
2. *Reduce Transportation Energy Consumption,*
3. *Advance the Circular Economy & Promote Waste Reduction*
4. *Promote Biodiversity and Healthy Ecosystems,*
5. *Increase Climate Resilience and Community Adaptation*

Category-Specific Goals:

Each of the project categories listed above has specific goals. In addition to the overarching grant project goals, each project should align with the specific goals of their chosen project category. Applicants must describe how the project activities relate to their project's category-specific goals. Sample projects demonstrate the range of appropriate projects; however these lists are not exhaustive. Please see resource page for links to other sources of project examples.

- **Reduce Building Energy Consumption:** Reducing the energy consumption of our buildings will reduce the need for energy generated by high carbon sources. This strategy goes hand-in-hand with transitioning to carbon-free energy
 - **Sample Project Ideas:**
 - Upgrade lighting/appliances/equipment to reduce energy use, water use, and/or improve air quality,
 - Install motion sensor lighting
 - Weatherize a building to use less heating or cooling
 - Implement building-related water conservation projects
 - Install solar panels on roof or parking canopies
 - Purchase solar powered generators or batteries

- Replace gas powered appliances or tools with electric ones
- **Reduce Transportation Energy Consumption:** More than one-third of San Antonio's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from our transportation systems. To reduce GHG emissions from our transportation system, San Antonio will need to design smart initiatives, including promotion of cleaner vehicles and reducing vehicle miles traveled, to transform how we develop our communities and how people get around
 - **Sample Project Ideas:**
 - Create bike/scooter storage for staff
 - Install lockers and shower facilities for staff commuting in various modes
 - Implement a VIA bus pass program for employees
 - Improve signage and markings to fill gaps in alternative transportation options
 - Replace internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles with eBikes or electric vehicles (EVs)
 - Install EV charging stations
- **Advance The Circular Economy:** The waste that goes to the landfill today continues to release GHG emissions for decades as it breaks down. In recognition of these emissions, San Antonio has identified measures that reduce consumption, minimize waste, and encourage material reuse. Together these strategies will work to reduce the GHGs emitted by the waste stream and landfills
 - **Sample Project Ideas:**
 - Implement a food donation program
 - Implement a recycling and/or organics collection program,
 - Implement a recycling education program, install bins, and signage,
 - Conduct waste characterization studies within a facility
 - Develop a recycled material manufacturing business
 - Digitize processes to reduce paper usage (incorporate a print-on-demand system)
- **Promote Biodiversity and Healthy Ecosystems:** Healthy, properly functioning natural ecosystems can absorb emissions. In addition to protecting and preserving existing natural ecosystems, these strategies promote the development of solutions to mimic natural responses
 - **Sample Project Ideas:**
 - Develop food recovery initiatives,
 - Construct a pollinator habitat,
 - Purchase from local farmers
 - Increase the tree canopy
 - Implement outdoor irrigation improvements/consider xeriscaping
 - Collect rainwater and/or greywater (e.g., condensate)
 - Low Impact Development/Green Infrastructure BMPs – refer to the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) LID Design Manual

- **Increase Climate Resilience and Community Adaptation:** Not all community members are contributing equally to climate change, and not all community members have the same resources or capabilities to protect themselves from its negative effects. When planning for climate change it is important to prioritize the communities most impacted. We do this by actively seeking, including, and prioritizing direction from these communities, prioritizing benefits to these communities, and reducing existing burdens to these communities
 - **Sample Project Ideas**
 - Install misters or cooling stations for employees and/or customers
 - Install air purifiers to help people who are disproportionately impacted by air pollution
 - Implement workforce development project that promotes training and/or funding for green jobs
 - Implement Employee/Leadership education or training around climate change
 - Develop Intern/apprenticeship program that promotes training and employment for green jobs

Application Submission and Review

How to submit your application:

1. Complete applications must be submitted by the closing date and time: Late applications will not be accepted without prior approval from Office of Sustainability.
2. Applications are to be submitted via link available on the [SA Climate Ready Dashboard](#)
3. Paper or Word Doc submissions may be arranged on a case-by-case basis by contacting the Office of Sustainability at Sustainability@sanantonio.gov or 210-207-0604 in advance of the submission deadline.
4. **We strongly recommend that you review the required application materials in this packet and complete and save a copy of all questions / organize all additional documents to upload before beginning the Microsoft Forms application.** You may copy and paste your responses into the required fields. This will avoid the potential for lost information due to connectivity issues.

Application Review Process:

1. The Scoring Committee will evaluate each proposal.
2. If the Scoring Committee has any clarifying questions, you will be notified.
3. The Scoring Committee reviews all grant applications for the Business Grants and determines awards
4. The Scoring Committee makes every effort to award a minimum of one project per category. However, awards are competitive as a whole; it is not guaranteed that all categories will have projects that receive funding.
5. The Office of Sustainability and the City reserve the right, solely at its discretion, to:
 - a. Refuse any application or any grant, in whole or in part, for any reason.
 - b. Require additional information from the applicant prior to making a decision.

Review and Funding Process

1. If your project is selected for funding, you will meet with the Office of Sustainability staff to complete paperwork for processing.
2. Awardee must register with the city as a vendor to receive funding. The form is located [here](#). Please send an email to Sustainability@sanantonio.gov once you have received notification of being an approved vendor.
3. Processing may take at least 6 weeks.
4. After the paperwork is processed, any activities you pursue can be reimbursed. Applicants may not request reimbursement for activities completed prior to award notification.

Grant Recipient Requirements and Reporting

1. Attend a post-award meeting with Office of Sustainability staff within the first month of the project start date to review the project timeline and goals
2. Finish the project within a year of receipt of grant funds
3. Provide project milestones and metrics in consultation with the Office of Sustainability staff
4. Provide a final report 30 days following project completion, including photo or video documentation of the project (a final report template will be provided). This report requires documentation of expenses (Example: scanned copies of all expense receipts.)
5. If the completed work does not meet the intent of the original project application and award of funds, the applicant will be required to return any funds disbursed.
6. Register with [ReworksSA](#) for certification within in 30 days of project completion
7. Register your business with [Energy Star Portfolio Manager](#)
8. Attend and present at a celebratory round-robin presentation and networking event. This event will take place after project completion and is slated for Fall 2025. Further details will be provided to grant awardees

Support for Grant Writing

The Office of Sustainability provides the following opportunities for support in the grant writing process. We strive for equity and inclusion.

Application Materials Information and Checklist

- The final pages of this application packet include detailed information about the application materials required for submission. This includes the optional budget template in Appendix C.
- Appendix A includes Grant Writing Tips for Success.
- Appendix B includes an application checklist – applicants should use the checklist to make sure their application is complete before submission.

Grant Evaluation Criteria

The Office of Sustainability will evaluate each grant using a scoring rubric.

The following criteria are included in the rubric:

1. Application Completion and Clarity
2. Budget / Feasibility / Schedule
3. Conformity with Overarching Grant Goals: Does the project meet a minimum of 2 of the 3 overarching Goals of the program as described in this packet?
4. Conformity with Category -Specific Goals
5. Project Rationale
6. Project Longevity
7. Alignment with SA Climate Ready Plan

Grant Information and Application Information Sessions & Office Hours

The Office of Sustainability will host one virtual information session, two in person information and application support sessions, and will host grant office hours where a staff member is available to help answer questions and assist in the grant process. Details for upcoming information sessions and office hours can be found on the [SA Climate Ready dashboard](#)

Questions about your application?

We welcome all questions about your application and the process. Please email sustainability@sanantonio.gov or call 210-207-0604 with your questions.

Business Grant Application

All application materials are described in detail here. **We strongly recommend that you complete this application in an offline program and save a copy for yourself.** You can then copy/paste your responses into the Microsoft Forms application link found on the grant website.

Summary of Project Information:

Q1: Project Title:

Q2: Contact Person (Name and Title)

Q3: Business Name

Q4: Brief Description of Business Activities:

Q5: Contact Address:

Q6: Contact Email Address:

Q7: Contact Telephone Number:

Q8: Physical Address:

Q9: Tax ID# (required to be a vendor with the City of San Antonio):

Q10: Please select your primary project category. This is the category of sustainability that your project is most closely designed to align with. The available categories are:

1 - Reduce Building Energy Emissions 2- Reduce Transportation Emissions 3- Advance the Circular Economy & Promote Waste Reduction 4- Promote Biodiversity and Healthy Ecosystems 5 – Increase Climate Resilience and Community Adaptation

**Note: It may be helpful to refer to the “Category Objectives” information in the grant application packet (pages 5-7) to determine which category best fits your project*

Q11: Project Summary: Please describe the project in one to three sentences.

Q12. Funds Requested (not to exceed \$20,000 total). Requests below this amount are perfectly acceptable)

Project Narrative:

Q13: Briefly describe the project and the positive impact it will have on the San Antonio community. Include a statement and/or evidence for why the project is needed. Include in

appropriate detail how the project aligns with the vision of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Include the geographic area/neighborhoods/communities affected.

Overarching Goals:

Q14: All neighborhood sustainability grant applications are scored on their alignment with the overarching goals of the grant program. These goals include:

- Leverage local and/or federal funding
- Create community partnerships
- Reduce Building and/or Transportation Emissions

Describe how your project aligns with these goals. The highest-scoring projects will include activities to meet all three of these goals, but a minimum of two should be met.

Category-specific Objectives:

Q15. In question 10, a primary project category was selected. Each project category has its own objectives, which are listed on pages 4-6 in this Grant Guidelines Packet and on the Neighborhood Sustainability Grant website.

- Describe how your project aligns with the objectives of the category selected

Project Milestones and Timeline

Q16: Provide a list of project milestones with an approximate timeline (not to exceed 12 months). Include details necessary to accomplish each milestone.

Project Metrics

Q17: Describe metrics you will use to measure success. Link any tools you will use to measure success and/or track metrics.

Project Longevity

Q18: Describe how your project and/or its impact might continue beyond the grant term. Will the project have a lasting impact on the community?

Leveraging funds

Q19: If you are leveraging any local, state, and/or federal rebates or incentives on this project please identify the funds and how they will be used in the project.

Other Project Details:

Q20: If appropriate, describe the site's current use and relevant ownership details.

Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative:

Q21: Provide the total project budget in detail, specifying which aspects of the project are to be funded by the Business Grant and include any additional funding sources.

- The budget narrative should provide a general overview of how the grant funds would be used (funds cannot be used retroactively).

- Applicants should provide specific dollar amounts or when appropriate, dollar estimates for materials needed.
- Budget items will be evaluated based on necessity/appropriateness for the project; items should clearly relate to project needs and align with project objectives.

Community References:

Q22: Include at least two independent references with the following information for each:

- Name
- Affiliation
- Occupation
- Phone
- Email

Optional: Letter(s) of Support:

Q23: Letters of support are optional. If your application includes letters of support, please compile your letters into one PDF and upload (file size limited to 16MB). Use the following file name: Your Name_Your Project Title Abbreviated_Sustainability Grant_Month Year.

The online application will ask you to read the following statement and provide an electronic signature:

I have read and understood the information regarding my application for a Business Grant, and I understand that the grant money is not a prize for personal profit or gain and is strictly for the project described. I further understand that the City of San Antonio has the right to allocate and supervise the spending of the grant money and when projects do not proceed within the stated timetable, the City of San Antonio reserves the right to request that the grant be refunded. I understand that recipients of these grants may be invited by the City of San Antonio to participate in the promotion and publicity of the project.

Appendix A: Tips for Success and Resources

- Read and follow the grant proposal directions carefully and give yourself time for questions. Many applicants need assistance but do not leave themselves enough time.
- Review the Evaluation Criteria (this is how you will be scored) and Grant Application Checklist (this lists all your application materials) before submission.
- Apply early and plan your project accordingly. The grant and project processes may take time, especially if you are proposing a project on city property. For example, a contract may be needed for some projects.
- Ensure your included budget is clear and follows allowable items. For example, ensure that no more than half of your proposed grant is used for artist fees/contractors.
- Be concise and organized. Commissioners read many applications.
- Contact the Office of Sustainability (sustainability@sanantnio.gov) with questions.

Need Ideas for Projects?

- [ReWorksSA](#) for a consultation or download their [Certification Guide](#)
- [Build SA Green](#) for information on their building energy, solar, and EV support.
- [Alamo Commutes](#) for employee commute programs
- [CPS Energy Incentives and Rebates](#)
- [SAWS Water Saver Programs for Businesses](#)
- [Green Events Guide](#)
- [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator | US EPA](#)
- [Food Carbon Emissions Calculator - CleanMetrics \(foodemissions.com\)](#)
- [Drawdown Solutions Library | Project Drawdown](#)
- [Climat Equity Screening Tool](#)
- [Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](#)
- Contact the grant coordinator with any questions to talk through how your project may/may not support the SA Climate Ready Plan: sustainability@sanantonio.gov

Appendix B: Checklist of Required Application Materials

All application materials are described in detail above. Review this checklist below before you submit it. If you cannot check off the item, take a few notes about what needs to be added.

- Summary of Project Information

Notes: _____

- Project Narrative

Notes: _____

- Overarching Grant Goals

Notes: _____

- Alignment with SA Climate Ready Specific Category-Specific Objectives

Notes: _____

- Community Partners

Notes: _____

- Project Milestones and Timeline

Notes: _____

- Project Metrics

Notes: _____

- Project Longevity

Notes: _____

- Other Project Details

Notes: _____

- Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative

Notes: _____

- Community References and Optional Letters of Support

Notes: _____

Appendix C: Optional Budget Table

Copy/fill out and save as a separate document. Upload to your online application.

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	\$/Unit	Quantity		
Supplies/Materials and Justification				
Equipment				
Administration/Other				
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED				
List additional funding sources below.				
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS				