

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

“Comeback Colchester” Grant Program

Program Description

The *Comeback Colchester Grant Program* helps small businesses and non-profit organizations complete improvement projects to improve the appearance and/or function of real property and enhance business personal property or to improve employee expenses. “Real Property” is defined as the physical structure and permanent exterior assets occupied by a business or non-profit. “Capital improvements” are defined as projects which:

- Substantially add to the value of real property, or appreciably prolong the useful life of the real property.
- Projects that become part of the real property or permanently affixed to the real property so that removal would cause material damage to the property or article itself.
- Projects intended to become a permanent installation.

Eligible projects may include but are not limited to:

Interior Improvements

- The upgrade of flooring, ceiling, wall systems, and similar aesthetic upgrades.
- Construction of permanent walls, office space, production space, retail displays, restrooms, and similar construction work.
- Plumbing and electrical upgrades.
- The purchase and installation of certain “fixed assets” which, if removed, would cause material damage to the space. This may include restaurant/food preparation equipment and certain manufacturing equipment.

Exterior Improvements

- Door, window, permanent lighting, awning, roofing, signage infrastructure, and other façade improvement projects.
- The paving/repaving of driveways and parking areas.
- Construction of outdoor dining areas, including permanent decks and patios.

“Personal Property” is defined as any item used to conduct business that is movable and may be taken when moving locations, not affixed, or associated with the land, such as and not limited to inventory, furniture, supplies, materials, tools, and equipment. Eligible projects may include and not be limited to:

- Avoiding supply chain delays to accommodate customers and clients with supply and material purchases.
- Retention of employees by providing furniture, equipment, and supplies to improve productivity.

- Tools and equipment purchase to enhance services business conducts.

Employer Expenses

Eligible employee expenses may include but are not limited to:

- Marketing
- Start-Up Costs (Established before March 3rd, 2021)
- Employee retention
- Adding additional employees
- Paying down debt or loans

Applicants pursuing projects that don't align with the guidelines above are encouraged to contact the Town's ARPA consultant, UHY Advisors, at 860-221-7609 to determine eligibility.

Funding Information

Award Amounts

The *Comeback Colchester Grant Program* may award a business applicant a maximum grant award of up to \$25,000. If the cost of the project exceeds the allotted amount or the total costs increase during the project the applicant is responsible for costs above the original total project amount.

Project Period

All projects must be complete by December 31, 2023, to meet the program requirements. In the event awardees do not demonstrate progress to ensure project completion by the project period deadline, the ARPA Consultant, on the advice of the Town will cancel the grant contract and pursue any ARPA funding provided for the project to that point.

Release of Grant Funding

It is the Town's intent to award grant funds that have been approved by the Town's Board of Selectmen. The amount should be released in a timely manner upon receipt of the applicant's attestation agreement.

Additional Grant Requirements

Requirements include and are not limited to the following:

- All businesses must be identified to ensure they are a business located in Colchester
- All businesses must provide an EIN number or evidence of incorporation
- All businesses must be in good standing with the Town of Colchester and Connecticut Secretary of State
- All businesses must show UHY alone that they have been negatively impacted by COVID between the following dates of March 3, 2021, and April 1, 2022. This economic recovery grant does not apply to the pandemic period prior to March 3, 2021, per regulations of the US Treasury and losses prior to March 3, 2021 cannot be considered in this application.
- Non-profits must demonstrate proof of their 501(3) status by supplying the organization's CT-990 form or IRS Tax Exempt Status Determination Letter.

Attestation Agreement

Applicants receiving funds must sign an attestation agreement with the following terms and conditions:

- Any funds received from the Town of Colchester will be used for the primary purpose as requested in your ARPA application (as approved by the Board of Selectmen).
- If there are remaining funds after the primary project(s) is (are) completed, you may use the additional funds for other capital improvements or to support employee compensation costs at the primary business stated on your ARPA Application. If you have unutilized funds, you may request approval for a secondary project(s) by providing additional documentation to the Town for additional qualifying expenses.
- Upon receipt and spending of the funds, you will maintain records of the purchases (copies of invoices and receipts) in order for the Town of Colchester, or its designee, to review such documentation. Failure to provide these documents upon request may result in the Town of Colchester requesting the funds be returned.
- Grant award contracts will include a “clawback” provision requiring grantees to repay all or a portion of the grant award in the event the organization relocates from Colchester. If a business is sold during the “clawback” period (May 1st, 2022 - December 31, 2023), grant award obligations will be formally transferred to the new business owner via an updated grant contract.
- The Town of Colchester expects that the funds received are spent no later than December 31, 2023.

Applicant Eligibility

Businesses and non-profit organizations with operations in Colchester, registered by the State of Connecticut to conduct business prior to March 3rd, 2021, in good standing with the Town of Colchester, and **employing not more than 500 employees.**

Applicants must explain that their organization has been negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic. This explanation can take on many forms, such as but not limited to:

- Income loss during the pandemic
- Reduction in employees during the pandemic
- Reduction in service hours or number of customers served
- Increased demand for services without a similar increase in the ability to provide services

Applicants may be the owner of real property or the lessee. Lessees must provide a copy of their lease and demonstrate project approval by the building owner/landlord. Also, lessees must demonstrate that projects for which funding is sought are the sole financial responsibility of the tenant and not work funded by the property owner.

Approval Process

All applications for funding will be completed by the business/non-profit organization with assistance from the Town's ARPA Consultant and the Town's ARPA Ad-Hoc Committee. Grant awards are to be formally approved by the Town's Board of Selectmen. The deadline for all applications is April 30th, 2022.