



For Immediate Release  
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## **BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANT INITIATIVE ANNOUNCED FOR QUALIFIED OPELOUSAS BUSINESS OWNERS**

(Opelousas, LA) – Qualified business and/or commercial property owners in Opelousas can now apply for grant funds for building rehabilitation work through the Building Improvement Grant (BIG). The BIG program is a new initiative designed to assist property and business owners in rehabilitating and improving commercial buildings for the purpose of creating a positive visual impact, stimulating local investment, complementing other community development efforts and preserving the city’s historic identity and cultural assets. The grant program is made possible through a partnership by the City of Opelousas, Opelousas Downtown Development District and Opelousas Main Street.

"This is truly a win for our local small business owners, who are a major component of our city," said Opelousas Mayor Julius Alsandor. "We hope that the success of this new initiative will grow and we will be able to assist even more business owners in the future."

BIG is a reimbursement grant and award amounts must be matched dollar for dollar by the recipient. An applicant may apply for a grant from \$500 to up to \$2500, but the business and/or property owner must spend an equal amount or more on the project. Funding for BIG is being made possible by the Opelousas Downtown Development District, which has set \$10,000 in funds aside for grant projects in 2021. "One of the ODDD small business keys is business retention," said Lena Charles, Chairman of the Downtown District. "Small businesses in Opelousas have been struggling. This grant is the right size to assist their needs, as well as potential new businesses."

Earlier this year, Opelousas Main Street proposed the program to board members of the Downtown Development District. "We are excited to collaborate on this new program that will provide some relief to local business and property owners wanting to improve and enhance their property in the district," said Melanie Lebouef, Main Street Director. "The program will also help to improve the outward appearance of our community as a whole."

Some of the work that property owners can apply for includes, but is not limited to, restoration of building features such as windows, installation of awnings, (without signage), masonry work, lighting and electrical work, interior work related to walls, flooring and ceiling repair and plumbing.

Grant applications are due by July 1, 2021. To view the guidelines and application for the Building Improvement Grant, [Click Here](#).