

GPLC Build & Investment Grant Program - FAQ

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE, REQUIREMENTS & ELIGIBILITY

What constitutes a "GPLC Partner CDO" and how do we verify status?

A GPLC Partner CDO is a community development organization that has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Greater Peoria Leadership Council. These partners are community development organizations long supported by the area's business community with their board presidents sitting on the GPLC governance board. You can verify this by reviewing your current MOU documentation with the GPLC.

How many CDOs are considered "multiple" for Investment Grants?

Investment Grant applications require participation from at least two Partner CDOs, additional CDOs and partners are eligible to partner along with at least two GPLC Partner CDOs.

Can multiple CDOs serve as co-leads?

No, one CDO must be named as the lead and act as fiscal agent for the project. Other CDOs should be listed as supporting partners.

What if partners cover the same service areas?

That's fine. Just make sure each partner's role and responsibilities are clearly defined in your application.

How do we involve municipal partners?

Municipal departments and agencies, as well as other eligible organizations, can join as project partners. Include their specific roles in your documentation and reflect their commitments in your grant budget.

What roles can 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) organizations play?

These organizations can partner with GPLC Partner CDOs on Build and Investment Grants, but only GPLC Partner CDOs may serve as a lead organization in a Build or Investment proposal. All partners should demonstrate how their involvement will enhance regional impact.

How do we effectively show cross-river collaboration?

Include specific activities that link Peoria and East Peoria and highlight shared benefits and how your project improves regional connectivity.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & BUDGET DETAILS

Can "Partnership & Coordination" cover travel between partners?

Yes, travel that directly supports collaboration between partners is allowed in this budget cost category.

Are consultant fees for partnership support allowed?

Yes. Consultant fees for helping facilitate partnerships fall under allowable professional services costs.

What about shared office space or joint staffing?

Yes, if these are directly tied to the project and costs are clearly allocated among partners.

How do we manage payroll and funds across multiple organizations?

The lead CDO acts as the fiscal agent and distributes funds to partners. Each partner must follow accounting procedures that meet audit requirements as grant funds are restricted.

PRE-APPROVAL PROCESS

When does the \$10,000 competitive procurement rule apply?

When purchasing equipment or capital items over \$10,000, you must use the GPLC template to gain pre-approval before purchasing. The GPLC is serving as a steward of our GPLC investor donations and, as such, would like to ensure due diligence is exercised when making large purchases.

How soon will we hear back on pre-approvals?

GPLC typically responds within two weeks. For urgent needs, expedited reviews may be possible. Reach out to Kristin Zika at kzika@greater-peoria.org.

Can we request pre-approval during the application phase?

Yes. If you know of a major purchase in advance, you can submit it with your application. It will be reviewed alongside your proposal.

What qualifies as a “major” change needing pre-approval?

Any change over 10% in a budget cost category, the addition of new project components, or timeline shifts affecting costs.

BUDGET MANAGEMENT

How do we move funds between budget categories?

Use a new GPLC budget template to highlight the requested changes. Only changes above 10% require pre-approval.

What if we need to adjust the budget during implementation?

Submit a written request with justification. If the change is over 10% in any category, it requires pre-approval.

What documents are required for equipment purchases?

Keep receipts, invoices, and payment records. For items over \$10,000, include documentation for competitive procurement and pre-approval.

MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

What if we don't have baseline data?

Use available sources like observations, local reports, community feedback, and simple counts. Focus on what's accessible. Use local data and choose the outcomes which will provide quality measurements for your project as well as future projects. Set a baseline as best as you can and develop a measurement plan to track those outcomes. Baseline, measurement plan, and desired outcomes are all part of the required RFP responses.

Do we need to hire outside evaluators?

No. Internal staff and basic tools are fine. You're not expected to hire external evaluators. However, Investment grants include Evaluation & Documentation as an allowable cost category. If you need help or tools to measure the results of your project, plan your budget accordingly.

How advanced do our measurement tools need to be?

They should be realistic and manageable using your current resources. Or consider budgeting measurement tools into your Investment Grant proposal as an allowable Evaluation & Documentation cost category item.

What if outside factors affect our results?

Note these factors in your reporting and explain how they may have impacted your project.

Who defines terms like "increased activity" and "economic impact"?

You do. Once you define your baseline and measurable outcomes, you can show growth and tie it to regional economic impact.

Do we need to meet regional benchmarks?

No formal benchmarks are set. The goal is to increase activity and growth in the regional core.

How can we show improved connectivity in a short period?

Look at results like reduced vacancy, completed infrastructure projects, or more foot traffic between areas.

IMPLEMENTATION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

What if permits take longer than expected?

Submit a request for a timeline change and notify Kristin Zika at kzika@greater-peoria.org.

Can we begin work before the grant officially starts?

Yes. Once approved, GPLC aims to have grant terms and memorandums of understanding developed and signed promptly so you can move forward.

What if delays come up due to weather or other surprises?

Keep GPLC Grant Operations informed and submit a request to modify your timeline if needed.

What if we go beyond our performance goals?

That's great—just make sure you document it in your reporting.

Can we expand our project once it's underway?

You'll need pre-approval. Submit a request and include your rationale for the new activities.

What if our scope changes affect partners?

Update all partners and submit a modification request, including documentation showing they're on board.

What's the difference between “transformational” and “foundational” change?

Transformational change has long-term, systemic impact (think *Investment* grants). Foundational change supports the core and builds momentum (like *Build* grants).

STRATEGIC APPLICATION APPROACH

Should we coordinate our application with others?

Collaboration and grant portfolio alignment is encouraged, but each application should stand on its own. If a grant is dependent upon the execution of another grant, please highlight that in the grant overview narrative.

What are our chances of receiving a grant?

GPLC has allocated \$775,000 for the pilot grant initiative in 2025 and hopes to award the following:

- Sprint: approximately 4–6 grants totaling \$151,000
- Build: approximately 2–3 grants totaling \$290,000
- Investment: approximately 1–2 grants totaling \$334,000

Focus on building a strong, impactful proposal rather than trying to gauge competition.

What qualifies as “innovation” for bonus points?

It could be something brand new or a proven approach adapted to our region. Show evidence that it works.

How do we show “exceptional” community engagement?

Include hard numbers, volunteer involvement, and clear commitments from local partners – mobilization can build momentum in the regional core.

Can we apply for more than one grant?

Yes. You can submit multiple applications across grant types. Think about how they can complement and align with each other.

If we don’t get funded this year, when’s the next opportunity?

The next grant cycle is expected to be announced in December 2025.

How do *Build* and *Investment* grants work together?

Think of *Build* grants as the foundation and *Investment* grants as the scale-up phase. Plan for long-term impact.

MUNICIPAL & REGIONAL COORDINATION

What kind of municipal support is expected?

Municipal commitments should show up in your budget and be supported with letters. GPLC encourages alignment with municipal direction and priorities.

How do we sync with city infrastructure work?

Include this coordination in your proposal and show alignment with city plans or city commitments. GPLC appreciates an alignment of effort with existing municipality work.

What major events should we keep in mind?

Consider tying into riverfront festivals, downtown revitalization, business initiatives, or major infrastructure projects.

How do we align with other development efforts?

Do your homework. Find opportunities to collaborate. Show how your project adds to or supports what’s already underway or show how your project will be a catalyst for future collaborations.

POST-AWARD SUPPORT & MANAGEMENT

How detailed should our quarterly reports be?

GPLC will provide a reporting template. Focus on what you've accomplished toward your goals. Highlight your measurable outcomes and how you are tracking those outcomes. Your quarterly reports will be aligned to your measurable outcomes and your measurement plan which you submit with your RFP.

What should we expect for site visits?

GPLC may visit to check in on progress and finances. Keep organized records and be ready to share updates. All visits will be coordinated and scheduled ahead of time.

What's the process for modifying our timeline or budget?

Submit a written request with justification. GPLC Grant Operations will review and respond.

What should our sustainability plans include?

Be specific about how your project will continue after the grant ends—mention funding, partnerships, or other resources. We understand that sustainability planning is predicting the future; be realistic in your expectations.

How will this pilot year shape future funding?

The GPLC is evaluating how this year goes. The program will evolve based on what works.

What if a partnership falls through after the grant is awarded?

All funded grants will require signed grant terms and partnership memorandums of understanding which clearly define how problems or changes will be handled within the partnership. Changes will be addressed according to these MOUs. If necessary, contact GPLC Grant Operations to talk through next steps.

Who should we contact with questions?

All questions should be directed to Kristin Zika, Director of Operations & Grant Management at kzika@greater-peoria.org.