Arts & Culture District Information

Town of Ashland

Office of Economic Development
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Ashland, Virginia 23005

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Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District
Incentives and Application Process

What are the business incentives in the Ashland Arts and Cultural District?

The following chart outlines the incentives, which are granted over a three-year period.

Incentive	**Three Years**
BPOL (Business License Fee) Rebate	100%
Zoning and Building Fee Exemption	100%, except cost to cover necessary advertising.

Steps to Qualify

1. Review the Arts and Cultural District qualification criteria to see if your business qualifies. (Appendix A)

2. Complete an Arts and Cultural District Business Qualification Application. (Appendix B)

   A. Include a five-year business plan with financial projections, a copy of the lease for the building in which you locate, and other application requirements.

   B. If opening your business after July 1st, decide whether you will use the remainder of that calendar year for your first year of benefits or defer your first year of benefits to the next calendar year.

3. Town Staff reviews application within 10 business days.

4. If approved, your business qualifies for the following benefits:

   A. Business, professional and occupational license ("BPOL") taxes and fees. Qualified arts organizations shall be reimbursed for the payment of the BPOL taxes and fees imposed by Chapter 1 of Title 12 of the Ashland Town Code for the first three (3) full years following the actual occupation and/or certification of the qualified arts organization with the arts and cultural district.

B. Permit fees other than those to cover required public notice advertising shall be waived for qualified arts organizations. Fees will be pro-rated for projects with non-qualified art organizations included based on the floor space used for the qualified arts organization.

C. Qualified arts organizations may have regulatory flexibility on all temporary signage as defined in Sec 21-207.1(c)(10) of the Town Code, temporary signage used to advertise art openings, events, and exhibits shall be permitted to be displayed for up to 60 days per year.

D. Qualified arts organizations may use the Rt. 54 Banner Board to advertise art related events as regulated in the Banner Board guidelines.

Timeframe to Receive Incentives

BPOL Tax Rebate: By May 1st, you pay your BPOL Taxes to the treasurer for the previous calendar year. Once treasurer receives, reviews and reconciles your BPOL payment for the previous calendar year, a BPOL rebate check will be sent to you to reimburse your BPOL payment based on the Arts and Cultural District incentive schedule.

Waiver of Zoning Fees: Once you receive approval as a Qualified Arts and Cultural District Business, the Ashland Department of Planning and Community Development will not charge you fees for zoning applications, except for any cost incurred by public notification required by State Code.

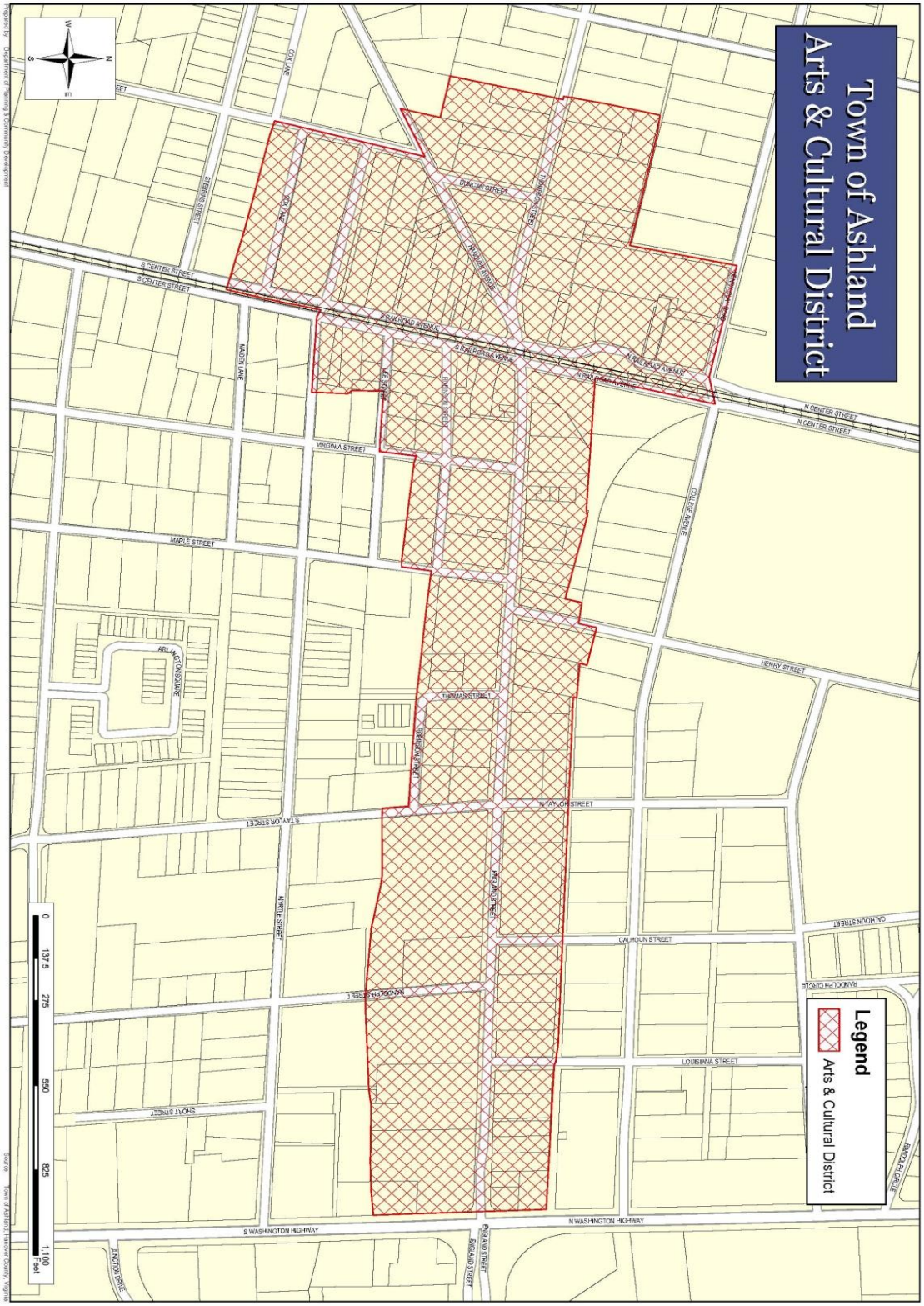
Appendix A – Definition of Qualified Arts Business

A. *Qualified arts organization* shall mean a business for profit or not-for-profit organization physically located within the district which, by the determination of the administrator, positively contributes to the spectrum of arts and cultural activities and venues available to the public by presenting live performances of theatre, dance, music, or other imaginative work and/or producing or exhibiting physical works created by, or under the direction of one or more artists, which are intended for unique production or limited reproduction. Museums or historic sites, the primary mission of which is education, history, or historic preservation, may also qualify as qualified arts organizations. Theaters, including movie theaters, art galleries, dance studios, music venues, performance spaces, art schools and academies, including culinary arts schools and academies, are examples of qualified arts organizations.

In no case shall a restaurant, hair or nail salon, or an office use such as an architect, advertising agency, bank, real estate office, medical office, attorney's office or any other general office use qualify as a qualified arts organization for the purposes of this chapter. Additionally, in no case shall a retail shop qualify as a qualified arts organization for the purposes of this chapter unless the retail shop creates or exhibits some visual or performing art such as painting, sculpture, textiles, dance, photography or music which is intended for unique production or limited reproduction, and the retail shop derives 50 percent or more of its income from these creative activities.

When applying for any benefit afforded under this chapter, the applicant shall have the burden of providing qualification as a qualified arts organization. The incentives in this chapter shall not extend beyond the time limits set forth in this chapter unless the district administrator determines that a successor organization or assignee to an original qualified arts organization is owned and operated by a wholly separate and different entity from the original qualified arts organization. In such case, the new entity shall submit a separate application under this chapter.

Appendix B – Map of the Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District



Appendix C – Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District Application

New Businesses

1. Name of Business:

2. Owner Name:

3. Owner Type:
   a. ☐LLC
   b. ☐Sole Proprietor
   c. ☐Corporation
   d. ☐Other: _____

4. Has the business operated under any other names? ☐Yes ☐No
   a. If "yes,' list all names under which the business has operated or is operating:

5. Contact Person and Registered Agent:

6. Physical and Mailing Address:

7. Email:

8. Phone(s):

9. Business Web Site:

10. Location within Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District, including street address:

11. Provide a detailed description of the business and business activities to be conducted at the site located within the Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District.

12. Explain why this business should qualify as a Qualified Arts Business as defined by Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District Ordinance?

13. This business is a:
    a. ☐Start up
    b. ☐Relocation
        i. If so, from where, including street address and jurisdiction?

    c. ☐New additional location
        i. If so, where are other locations, including street address and jurisdiction?

        ii. How long have other locations been operating?

    d. ☐Existing (Only applicable through October 2012)
    e. ☐ Expansion:
        i. Please describe expansion:

        ii. Dollar amount invested:

    f. ☐Other: _____

14. If an existing business, please describe current and past business activities, including past locations of the business.

15. Proposed start date of business or date proposed to open in the Town of Ashland Arts and Cultural District:

16. If opening the business after July 1, do you wish to elect to designate the following calendar year as the first year for incentives? ☐Yes ☐No

17. This business:
    a. ☐Owns property in the Arts District.
    b. ☐Leases property in the Arts District. If so, attach a copy of the lease.
    c. ☐Other: _____

18. Attach a five-year business plan, including revenue and expense projections, for the business. (If this document does not currently exist, you will need to seek assistance from the Town of Ashland Business Retention & Expansion Manager to assist you by providing resources to create one.)

19. Based on your business plan projections, what is your anticipated Gross Receipt revenue for each of your first three calendar years in the Arts District?

Year	Anticipated Gross Receipt Revenue

20. List all principals of the business with addresses.

21. If business is other than a sole proprietor, please attach documentation showing that signatory below is authorized to sign the application and any subsequent agreement on behalf of business.

I hereby certify that all the information provided in and attached to this application is true and correct.

_____ _____

Date Owner or Principal

_____

Title

Confidential proprietary records provided by a business as part of this application, including financial information and business plan, shall be maintained as confidential by the Town of Ashland and are not subject to disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.6(a)(3).

Questions?

Contact Business Retention & Expansion Manager, Joe Topham, 804-798-1073.
Return application to:

Ashland Economic Development Office
ATTN: Joe Topham
101 Thompson Street
P.O. Box 1600
Ashland, VA 23005