



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, FL

**FULL SERVICE GROCERY STORE GRANT
DEBS STORE – EAST JAX BY
LIFT JAX, INC.
SUMMARY
December 7, 2021**

Entity:

Debs Store owned by LIFT JAX, Inc. – 1478 Florida Avenue (redevelopment location)

Background: LIFT JAX is an initiative supported by numerous business and community leaders (including Florida Blue, Brightway Insurance, FIS Global, Jacksonville Jaguars, Wells Fargo, VyStar Credit Union, Baptist Health, Bank of America). The main purpose is to work to eradicate generational poverty in Jacksonville. LIFT JAX's goal is to break the cycle of concentrated poverty, through coordinated implementation of strategies within four areas:

- **Mixed-Income Housing:** ensure high-quality housing that elevates quality of life for low-income residents and offers quality amenities to attract new residents
- **Cradle-to-Career Education:** provide education opportunities that ensure student growth, learning, and achievement
- **Community Wellness:** enhance quality of life and increase healthy life expectancy for all,
- **Long-Term Financial Vitality:** stimulate the neighborhood economy, increase the average household income for existing residents, and create meaningful job pathways.

The Project: LIFT JAX is proposing to restore and expand an existing historic building at 1478 Florida Avenue. This iconic Eastside structure was built in 1913 and operated as Debs Store for over 90 years. The specific improvements include:

1. The build out of the bottom floor of the complex to reintroduce fresh foods into the area through a not-for-profit neighborhood market that would employ Eastside residents. The market would be operated by Goodwill Inc.
2. The build out of the top floor of the complex to bring in workforce development and career services for those seeking employment;
3. Providing high-quality meeting space for community leaders to address residents' needs in a safe, welcoming environment.

Goodwill Industries has been identified as the lead implementing partner. Goodwill would operate both the not-for-profit neighborhood market and the GoodCareers Center in a combined model.

On the bottom floor, Goodwill would operate a not-for-profit neighborhood market. Goodwill, which has an 80-year history of successfully operating social enterprises, has done extensive research in Jacksonville about how to run and operate a market. The team is prepared to operate the market and bring fresh, healthy food into the neighborhood.

On the top floor of the building, Goodwill would bring workforce development and career services through its GoodCareers Center. GoodCareers Centers are a no cost, full-service career center for people who want to find a job and develop the skills they need to be successful. Goodwill's GoodCareers Centers create a positive and supportive environment where anyone looking for work can access resources and learn skills to conduct an independent job search.

VyStar Credit Union will also have a presence in the facility, offering a walk-up ATM as well as access to financial services and counseling. Between VyStars's access to financial services, Goodwill's career and workforce development activities, and access to healthy food, the goal is to turn 5th and Florida into a healthy, vibrant street corner and a community hub for all Eastside families.

City of Jacksonville funding	LIFT JAX funding	Goals
Up to a \$650,000 grant to redevelop a portion of an existing structure, as well as build and outfit the existing ground floor as a neighborhood market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall property improvements of approx. \$2.4 million. to renovate, expand and outfit the overall project. • \$1,625,000 million of the overall project is attributed to the grocery store component of the project. 	Provide direct and healthy food options for the community. Furthermore, the building will support a career counseling and development center. All will be led by Goodwill.

Project Rationale & Benefits:

In order to redevelop an existing decaying building and provide fresh food options to the residents in the community, the Office of Economic Development is proposing to provide a 40% matching grant for the Neighborhood Grocery Store. Furthermore, the renovations to the overall property are significant and the proposed upgrades needed to be made on the overall structure will be impactful to the surrounding community. The relationship with Goodwill Enterprises and its array of services will benefit the community through its employment services and established track record of success.

Full Service Grocery Store Program Requirements:

1. The Store must be located within Northwest Jacksonville and must be immediately adjacent to or within a census tract designated a "Food Desert". – **The store's location is within 4 blocks of a census tract designated as a Food Desert and therefore "Qualifies".**
2. The maximum amount of the funding from this program is limited to 40 percent of the overall capital costs (exclusive of land cost) up to \$1.5 million necessary to open and operate a Full Service Grocery Store. The amount of program funding is determined by the impact to the area and the financial needs of the project. – **The Grant amount is up to \$650,000 (40% of the overall cost of the improvements associated with the Store. The Store will immediately have a visual and recognizable impact to the East Jax neighborhood since there has not been a new grocery store option in the area in the recent past. At this time, the property is not owned by LIFT JAX, Inc. They intend to purchase the property and have included it in the reimbursement amount request. Therefore, a "Waiver" to include the acquisition cost will be required.**
3. The distance of the proposed Full Service Grocery Store project to an existing store or location providing fresh and healthy food options will be a consideration. – **The store exceeds 1.5 miles to the nearest existing store mapped.**
4. The minimum size of the store shall be 10,000 square feet. – **The store will be approximately 2,500 square feet and therefore will require a "Waiver".**
5. Funds may be used for the construction of a new building; renovation of existing building; leasehold improvements; tangible personal property (TPP); infrastructure costs; and other costs that are incidental to the opening of a Full Service Grocery Store. – **The Grant will be a reimbursement Grant of the eligible expenses as listed.**

The City of Jacksonville proposes to provide:

A grant in the amount of up to \$650,000 from the Northwest Jacksonville Food Desert Fund to redevelop the property at 1478 Florida Avenue in the East Jax neighborhood. The redevelopment will include the neighborhood grocery store by renovating an existing building and constructing a new attached structure. Specifically, this grant will include a reimbursement of 40 percent of the cost associated with the development and buildout of the neighborhood grocery store component of the project.