



City of West Chicago

DOWNTOWN RETAIL & RESTAURANT GRANT PROGRAM

I. PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Downtown Retail and Restaurant Grant Program (“Program”) provides grant funding to strengthen retail business activity in the Downtown by attracting new retail and restaurant businesses as well as assisting existing retailers and restaurants.

II. GRANT ELIGIBILITY

1. **Location.**

- A. Businesses must be locating within [Downtown TIF District No. 2](#) in order to apply for this Program.
- B. Existing businesses may apply if they are located within the district or are located outside the district with plans to open an additional location within the TIF District.
- C. All businesses applying for a grant under the Program must occupy a first-floor space on a public street to operate a retail or restaurant business. If leased, the eligible business must have a remaining lease term of not less than three (3) years to apply for funding.



2. **Operations.**

- A. To be eligible for this Program, a business must offer merchandise and/or food to the public, the sale or providing of which is subject to sales tax (“Retail Sales”), and from which the revenue derived constitutes the majority of the revenue of the business. Professional and medical offices, salons and other service businesses are not eligible. Businesses that include Retail and/or Food & Beverage Sales as a complementary use to a primary use other than a Retail or Restaurant business may be considered for a grant under the Program, at the City’s discretion, if the Retail or Restaurant use is demonstrated to be a significant financial component of the overall business.
- B. All businesses applying for this Program must submit an application, obtain approval, and enter into a Grant Agreement prior to incurring expenses for which grant funding is requested.

III. **FUNDING QUALIFICATIONS**

1. **Eligible Expenses.** The Program provides reimbursement for eligible expenses (“Project”) provided by a legitimate third-party business, which includes:
 - A. Retail consulting services;
 - B. Visual merchandising services;
 - C. Online sales platforms;
 - D. Website development; and
 - E. Marketing and advertising.
2. **Ineligible Expenses.** Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:
 - A. Expenses incurred prior to approval and execution of a Grant Agreement, which establishes the approved grant award, by and between the City and the Applicant;
 - B. Services performed by the Applicant are not eligible to be monetized and reimbursed;
 - C. Expenses not specifically listed as eligible, including but not limited to:
 - 1) Physical improvements to the property (see Downtown Investment Program);
 - 2) Rent;
 - 3) Payroll; and
 - 4) Inventory.
3. **Grant Funding.**
 - A. Grants will be awarded for reimbursement of up to 50% of the Project cost with:
 - 1) A maximum of \$10,000 for new eligible businesses or eligible business expansions.
 - 2) A maximum of \$5,000 for existing eligible businesses.
 - B. Only one grant will be awarded per business for each location and/or expansion project.

IV. **APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS**

1. **Pre-Application Meeting.** Interested parties should schedule a pre-application meeting with staff at (630) 818-3331 or kchrisse@westchicago.org. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the business, Program details and eligibility.
2. **Request for Funding.** A formal application for funding is required, which must be accompanied by the following items:
 - A. [Business Plan](#);
 - B. Copy of the lease, as applicable, with a remaining term of at least three (3) years on a first-floor commercial space on a public street in the Downtown TIF No. 2;
 - C. Narrative that describes:
 - 1) The Project scope (intended use of the grant funding); and
 - 2) How the business will contribute to or enhance the activity in the downtown, which may include:
 1. Anticipated sales tax revenue;
 2. Expected job creation; and
 3. Overall business activity that will contribute to the mix of businesses in the downtown.
3. **Review and Approval.**
 - A. Any outstanding items required to complete the review and process the funding request will be coordinated with the Applicant. A complete application will be reviewed for eligibility and compliance with the terms of this Program.
 - B. The determination of Program eligibility is at the discretion of the City. The City retains the right to approve an entire request, to approve portions of a request, suggest and/or ask for changes/additions to a request before approving, or to deny any request or a portion thereof.

- C. The application will be forwarded to the City Council, together with a recommendation, at the next available meeting (first and third Mondays of each month). The City Council shall determine whether, and the extent to which, the City will provide grant funding for the proposed project, subject to funding availability. The City Council has the right to amend or waive program terms and conditions to accommodate special circumstances. If approved, the Mayor will execute the Grant Agreement on behalf of the City.
- D. The Applicant must execute the Grant Agreement before any portion of the Project may commence.

V. **PROJECT CONDITIONS**

- 1. **Project Timeline.** All new and expanding businesses approved for a grant must obtain occupancy, register the business, open for business, and complete the Project within six (6) months of grant approval by the City. Exceptions may be considered at the time of approval if the Applicant is concurrently completing property improvements that would delay the opening or other extenuating circumstances exist. Existing businesses awarded a grant must complete the Project within six (6) months of grant approval by the City.
- 2. **Compliance Required.** Strict compliance with the Grant Agreement is required throughout and upon completion of the Project. Failure to abide by the terms of the Grant Agreement will result in forfeiture of funding, at the discretion of the City.

VI. **REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

- 1. **Reimbursement Amount.** The Applicant shall be responsible for paying all expenses for the Project and will only be reimbursed based on the actual costs incurred in accordance with the Grant Agreement.
- 2. **Reimbursement Process.**
 - A. To request reimbursement, the Applicant shall submit the following, as applicable, within sixty (60) days of Project completion:
 - 1) Proof of work performed;
 - 2) Invoice itemizing service(s) provided;
 - 3) Proof of payment (e.g. copies of canceled checks and/or credit card receipts);
 - 4) Final waiver(s) of lien from each consultant/contractor, as applicable; and
 - 5) [IRS Form W-9](#).
 - B. Upon receipt of all required documentation and verification of compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement, the reimbursement request will be presented for City Council authorization at the next available meeting.