



Vibrant Places Grant Program Guidelines

**Department of Community Investment
c/o Vibrant Places Grant
227 W. Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 1400S
South Bend, IN 46601**

Program Contacts

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Vibrant Places Grant Pilot Program

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The City of South Bend is pleased to award matching grants for projects that add to the vibrancy of locally owned¹, street-level businesses located throughout the city. The program will assist in funding well-designed qualifying exterior enhancements that contain visual improvements. Enhance your storefront, upgrade signage and lighting, expand outdoor seating, activate your sidewalk and more.

Purpose

The intent of the Vibrant Places Grant is to:

- Improve the public and pedestrian environment throughout the City of South Bend by promoting a walkable and urban development pattern
- Encourage private investment by commercial property owners and tenants
- Adopt unique spaces and businesses to create one-of-a-kind experiences
- Encourage and support economic development

Grant Terms

Grant Share (of total project cost)	50%
Maximum Grant Amount	\$30,000 (50% of a \$60,000+ project)
Minimum Grant Amount	\$1,500 (50% of a \$3,000 project)
Minimum Private Investment	\$1,500

The grant is structured as a reimbursement program; you must complete the project and contribute your private match before grant funds are issued to you.

Architectural Services

Basic architectural services, such as conceptual drawing and recommendations on materials, are provided free of charge to applicants as part of this program. Architectural services will be provided following submission of the pre-application. If you require complete architectural services, such as full construction sets, you should hire your own architect. If you choose your own architect, the program architect will review your proposed project for consistency with these program guidelines.

¹ Locally owned means a company owned or operated by a community member that provides goods and services.

Projects may be comprised of one eligible item or any combination of eligible items

Eligible Projects

The Vibrant Places Grant Pilot Program is available to property owners or tenants with street-level businesses within City limits. Eligible projects must result in a visible improvement to the property and add vibrancy to the street. This program is not intended to fund deferred maintenance.

The following types of improvements are eligible for funding on commercial and mixed-use buildings:

- Installation of new, pedestrian level commercial façades appropriate to the architectural style, age and character of individual buildings
- Enhancements that activate the sidewalk such as outdoor dining areas, merchandise displays or planters
- Open storefronts and active rooftops that encourage interaction between the street and business
- Exceptional signage that identifies the business and adds to the vicinity
- Architectural lighting including lighting which enhances the building's façade and enhances the pedestrian environment, lighting of window display areas and lighting of architectural details
- New canopies or awnings that contribute to a well-designed and inviting storefront
- Unique signage that adds to the character of the streetscape
- Murals and public art
- Permanent installation of bike racks, outdoor tables and chairs, heaters, benches, or tents and areas for commercial purposes
- Outdoor sound systems
- Windows or doors, using clear glass
- Decorative fencing, barriers or railings (wrought iron or decorative aluminum with 4' maximum height)

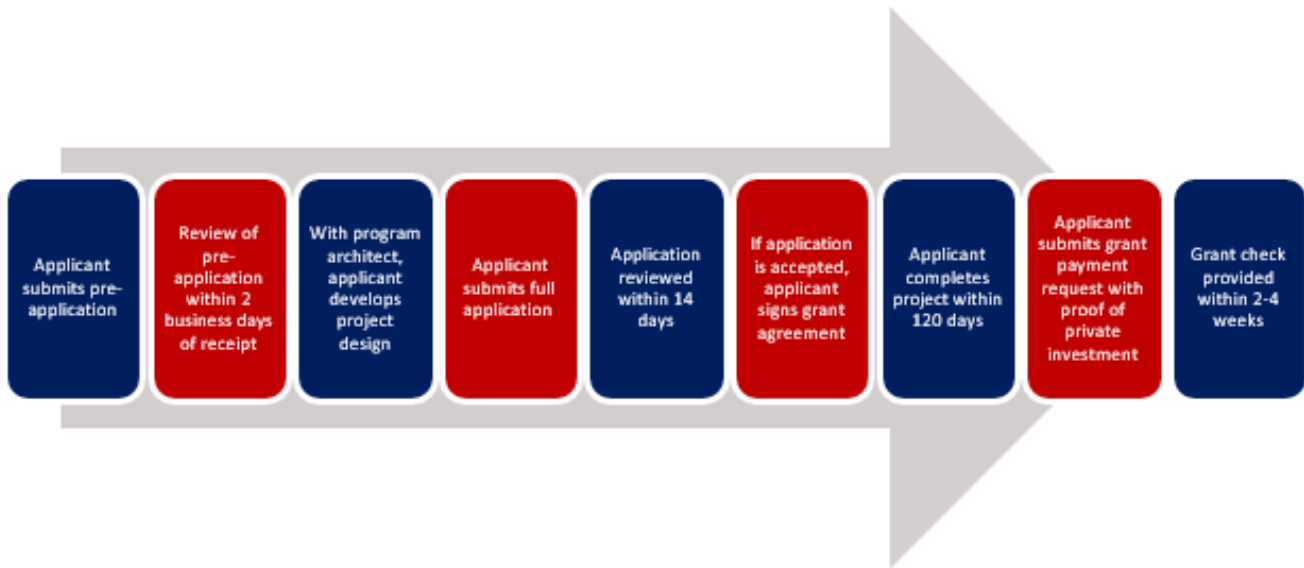
Ineligible Projects

- Interior improvements or improvements to single-use residential buildings
- Improvements not visible from the street (unless activation of side patio/back patio)
- Regular and deferred maintenance items
- Removal or enclosure of architecturally important features
- Roof replacement or repairs, except when serving as an architectural element
- HVAC systems
- Freestanding signs
- Parking lot paving
- Chain link fencing
- Security systems, window or door bars, security gates, and driveway gates
- Demolition of structures
- Environmental consulting, hazardous material testing services, or abatement costs
- Property acquisition
- Improvements in progress or completed prior to grant approval
- Rented items
- Consumer grade umbrellas, portable patio heaters, pop-up tents that are not water-resistant

Grant Process

1. Review the Vibrant Places Grant Program Guidelines
2. Submit the matching grant pre-application form. Pre-applications may be submitted at any time, but the first 15 applicants will be given primary consideration. The Department of Community Investment (DCI) will review the pre-application to verify qualification.
3. Meet with DCI and the program architect at the project site to discuss the proposed improvements. The DCI will then provide you with an application form.
4. Using the design concepts, contact at least two (2) licensed contractors to obtain detailed written estimates for your project. You must call the Building Department at (574)235-9554 to verify that your contractors are licensed. Estimates should be provided by local contractors when possible. At least two itemized estimates for an identical scope of work for each project component are required with the application. All labor, sales taxes, and permit fees should be included in the estimates. When appropriate, provide color and material samples with the application.
5. Submit the application. Applications will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. A completed application must include the following:
 - a. Completed application form
 - b. At least two (2) estimates from licensed contractors that detail the scope of work with itemized prices. Estimates should include all labor, sales taxes, and permit fees; and
 - c. Color and material samples for the work to be completed (when applicable).
6. The DCI will review applications for completeness and scope of work and then approve or reject the application. You will receive notice of this decision. Any grant award will be determined based on the cost of the lower of the two estimates
7. If your application is accepted by the DCI, sign the grant agreement. Grant payment will not be made if work begins prior to the grant agreement signing.
8. Provide the DCI with a copy of any required building or sign permits prior to beginning the project
9. Complete the project as approved. Projects must be completed within 120 days of approval; extensions can be granted under special circumstances.
10. Notify the DCI when your project is completed. Provide your grant payment request with proof of private investment, such as paid invoices or receipts, to the DCI. Payment will not be distributed until proof of your private investment is submitted and the project is completed as determined and is approved by the DCI. The grant check will be made payable to you. You are responsible for providing full payment to your contractor(s). Payment processing may take 2-4 weeks following final project acceptance.

Grant Process at a Glance



Additional Information

- All work on approved projects is subject to the City building and zoning codes and must follow all permit and inspection procedures as outlined by the City of South Bend Building Department
- Grantee is responsible for all project costs until the project is completed as approved and the grant payment is made.
- A maximum of one grant may be received per address per year
- The City of South Bend reserves the right to reject any and all applications up to the time of the grant agreement signing. The specific program guidelines detailed herein are subject to revision or amendment by the City of South Bend. Subject to availability of funding, the program may be discontinued at any time.

LIGHTING



SIGNAGE



UNIQUE DESIGN ELEMENTS



LANDSCAPING



Planters



Window Boxes



String Lights

INDOOR / OUTDOOR



SHADE STRUCTURES

NOT THIS



Popup Tents

...BUT ANY OF THESE



Sunshade



Installed large umbrellas



Consumer Umbrellas



Pergolas



Installed canopies

FENCING & BARRIERS

NOT THIS



Water-filled barriers



Temporary fencing

...BUT ANY OF THESE



Decorative fencing



Planters as barriers



HEATING ELEMENTS

NOT THIS



Portable heaters
with propane tanks

...BUT ANY OF THESE



Heaters built-in to overhang



Heaters installed as part of
awning or pergola structure



Built in heaters
with plumbed gas



Built in heaters,
attached to building

Pictures are for illustrative purposes only. The concept involves permanently installed (including power/fuel) heating systems.



VIBRANT PLACES GRANT 2022 PRE-APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant's Name:

Business Name:

Applicant's Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Applicant's Phone (daytime):

Email:

PROJECT INFORMATION

Building Address:

Are you the building owner? Yes No

Are the property taxes current? Yes No

Do you plan on consulting an architect? Yes No

List all sources of public funds (including City incentive programs) being used for this project:

Describe in detail the improvements that you would like to make:

Please provide a ballpark estimate for cost of these improvements (itemize if possible):

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Once your pre-application has been received, we will call you within 2 weeks to discuss next steps. If you have any questions about this pre-application, please contact Jacob Alexander at (574)-235-9278 or Amy Paul at (574)235-7628.

For Office Use

Date Received: _____ Received by: _____