



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) SMALL BUSINESS REHABILITATION GRANT PROGRAM
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

May 2023

Applications will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis beginning May 1, 2023

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) into law. The \$1.9 trillion Fiscal Recovery Funds package is intended to support the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including public health and economic impacts. The City of Bloomington received \$13.4 million of these COVID-19 relief funds. In July of 2022, these funds were allocated by City Council into three buckets: Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Socioeconomic Development. The funding amounts were \$9 million, \$2.2 million, and \$2.2 million respectively. Of the \$2.2 million allocated to Economic Development, \$750,000 were spent on the downtown Bloomington streetscape design, leaving \$1.4 million for the Small Business Rehabilitation Grant Program.

The Small Business Rehabilitation Grant Program was created to support small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as defined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. This grant program will provide grants of up to \$45,000 to qualifying small businesses to financially assist in the rehabilitation of brick & mortar stores in support of increased safety and accessibility.

II. FUNDING

i. REGULATIONS

This grant program is funded by the U.S. Department of Treasury via the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds allocated to Economic Development by the City of Bloomington's City Council on December 5, 2022 (2022-119). The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2) (ARPA) authorized this funding for grants to assist in the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant program was designed following guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury in its Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule.

ii. AVAILABILITY

Rehabilitation projects will be awarded up to \$45,000 of the eligible project costs. Funding availability is based on a first come, first serve basis until the funds are depleted. Applicants may only submit one (1) grant application per address.

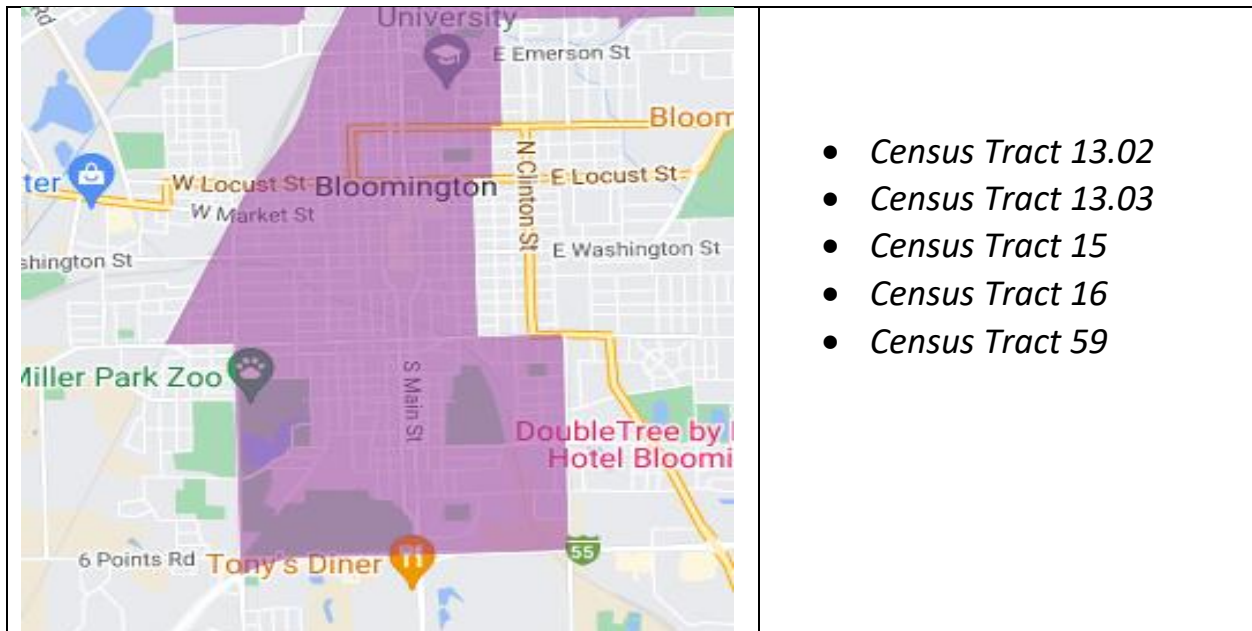
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III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility requirements for this grant follow the requirements as outlined in the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule.

Businesses must meet **ALL** of the following criteria to qualify for grant award consideration:

- ❖ Must have a commercial business location with Bloomington city limits.
- ❖ Must have a commercial business location within the Qualified Census Tracts:



- ❖ Must be a for-profit business.
- ❖ Must qualify as a small business as defined in Section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 623).(helpful link – [SBA Table of Size Standards.](#))
- ❖ Must have no more than 500 employees, or if applicable, the size standard in number of employees established by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration for the industry in which the business concern or organization operates.
- ❖ Must be independently owned and operated.
- ❖ Must be structured as a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, S corporation (S subchapter), or limited liability company (LLC). Individuals who are self-employed are also eligible to apply.
- ❖ Must have been in operation in the Qualified Census Tracts within the City of Bloomington on or before January 1, 2020.
- ❖ Must be currently in compliance with all state and local regulations and requirements.

IV. EXPENSES

i. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Businesses may receive reimbursement under this program for only the following business expenses:

- ✓ Rehabilitation of commercial properties.
 - a. Bringing a building into updated code requirement compliance

- i. Elevators
 - ii. Fire suppression
 - iii. ADA accessibility
 - iv. HVAC System improvements
 - v. Etc.
- ✓ Storefront Improvements.
 - a. ADA accessibility that does not encroach on the Right of Way.
 - b. Awning improvements
 - c. Brickwork
 - d. If a historical building that is a S4 designated historic district or landmark, then the storefront improvements must be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
- ✓ Façade Improvements.
 - a. ADA accessibility that does not encroach on the Right of Way.
 - b. Awning improvements
 - c. Brickwork
 - d. If a historical building that is a S4 designated historic district or landmark, then the façade improvements must be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Any projects (interior alterations) which result in either life safety or structural changes of the building will be required to provide building plans prepared by or under the direct supervision of an Illinois Licensed Architect, with the plans stamped by that architect, at the time of application for building permits. Building plans are not necessary for grant application.

ii. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses specifically include, but are not limited to, the following expense categories:

- ✗ Employee wages and benefits (including fringe benefits associated with employment, such as health insurance).
- ✗ Utility payments (Electric, Natural Gas, Water, Internet, Telephone, etc.).
- ✗ Reimbursement for invoices, receipts, or expenditures incurred prior to the receipt of grant funds.
- ✗ Accounts Payable.
- ✗ Financial Reserves.
- ✗ Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt interest.
- ✗ Inventory/Merchandising.
- ✗ Rent/Mortgage Payments.

V. GRANTMAKING

Applicants meeting the above requirements shall be considered eligible for a \$45,000 maximum grant award to assist with costs associated with the rehabilitation of commercial properties, storefront improvements, and façade improvements. Applicants may only submit one (1) grant application per address.

The grant fund amount will be solely used for eligible expenses. City staff will verify eligibility of fund use and total fund amount based on quotes from verified contractors submitted to the City by the Applicant.

The City will disperse the fund award payments directly to the Applicant. Applicant must be registered as a vendor with the City of Bloomington to receive payment.

How To Register as a Vendor:

Applicants must complete the vendor registration process through Vendor Self-Service Portal (VSS). The Applicant must also provide a completed and signed W-9 in VSS.

The registration process creates a new record in VSS. Upon review and validation of the information you provide, the Procurement Office will set the record status to Active in VSS. Until this process is complete, the City is unable to create Purchase Orders, process payments, etc.

VSS gives Applicants web-based access to their business information and records. Purchase orders, invoices and accounts payable checks information are all available to view online. Applicants will also have the ability to update their profile, including address, contact information, and commodity code information.

The City of Bloomington is pleased to offer Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payment method to our vendors. If Applicants are interested this environmentally friendly payment method, simply fill out the EFT form and include it with your submittal of your W-9. The form must be attached in the City's Vendor Self Service Portal.

Vendor registration can be found here:

<https://www.bloomingtonil.gov/departments/legal/procurement-services/vendor-self-service>

The City will award as many qualified applicants as possible until the depletion of funds or until the close of the grant. Applications will be accepted and processed on a first come, first serve basis beginning May 1, 2023. Applicants will have up to eighteen (18) months after the disbursement of grant funds to complete the project.

VI. HOW TO APPLY

Business owners may apply for the City of Bloomington's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Small Business Rehabilitation Grant Program at the following web address: [Bloomingtonil.gov](https://www.bloomingtonil.gov)

- Application questions will include, but are not limited to:
 - Contact Information
 - Demographic Information
 - Business Information
 - Proof of business address – lease or deed
 - Landlord permission sheet, if applicable
 - Business Eligibility
 - Start of Business operations on or prior to January 1, 2020
 - Proof of small business designation
 - Number of Employees
 - Revenue – Tax Returns
 - Project Description
 - Total Project Cost

- Itemized Budget – includes all professional services and construction costs
 - Must provide itemized quotes from three (3) verified contractors
- Additional documentation

Applicants may be contacted by City staff with a request to submit additional documentation prior to the issuance of the grant award.

Applications will be reviewed by City of Bloomington staff. If an application is incomplete and requires additional documentation, applicants will be notified and given seven (7) days to respond or submit necessary documentation. If the applicant is unable to complete the application within the seven (7) day response period, it will be denied. Applicants with incomplete applications can reapply after denial.

Any projects (interior alterations) which result in either life safety or structural changes of the building will be required to provide building plans prepared by or under the direct supervision of an Illinois Licensed Architect, with the plans stamped by that architect, at the time of application for building permits. Building plans are not necessary for grant application.

VII. SELECTION AND DISPURSEMENT PROCESS

i. APPLICATION REVIEW

a. REVIEW FOR COMPLETENESS: City Staff will review all applications for completeness. Applicants who turned in incomplete applications will be notified of the incomplete status and given seven (7) days to complete the application in full. If the application is still incomplete after the seven (7) days, then the application will be deemed incomplete and will be denied. Applicants with incomplete applications can reapply after denial.

b. REVIEW FOR ELIGIBILITY: Once an application has been deemed complete, City Staff will review the application for eligibility based on allowable costs as outlined in the grant policy and procedures and the U.S. Department of Treasury in its Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule. Grants will be awarded to eligible applicants on a first come first serve basis until funds are exhausted as further defined and detailed in the program regulations. Applications requiring Historic Preservation Review will be placed on hold in the application queue until Historical Preservation Review is completed.

c. REVIEW FOR HISTORICAL PRESERVATION: Eligible applications that qualify for Historical Preservation Review will be subject to review by the Historical Preservation Commission. If an application fails to acquire a Certificate of Appropriateness from the review process, the application will be given sixty (60) days to submit an updated application in accordance with the recommendations of the reviewing party. If an application is denied by the HPC a second time, the application for the rehabilitation grant will be denied. Applications that fail to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness a second time can reapply after denial. If an application is granted a Certificate of Appropriateness, applicants will have fourteen (14) days to provide updated quotes to the City, if necessary.

i. Projects making changes or updates to the exterior or interior as seen from the exterior of buildings that are S4 designated historic districts or landmarks must be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

ii. **DISBURSEMENT PROCESS:** After full approval of the application, Applicant will be notified.

a. PAYMENT TO DEVELOPER: The City will disperse the fund award payments directly to the Applicant after the approval of the Grant Agreement by the City Manager. In order to receive funds, Applicant must be registered as a vendor with the City. *See Section V for instructions on registering as a vendor.*

i. The Applicant must provide proof of eligible costs to the City. This needs to be done by providing three (3) verified quotes from contractors. The City will accept quotes stating the contractor does not have the capacity to perform the work. **The Applicant is responsible for notifying the City of Bloomington's Economic and Community Development Department of the completion of the project.**

After completion of the project, the Applicant may be requested to provide photographic documentation of the before and after.

VIII. GRANT TIMELINE

Online applications will be accepted starting at 7:30am on Monday, May 1, 2023.

Applications will continue to be accepted until funds are exhausted or notice is earlier provided.

The application, review, and award process will generally follow these steps:

1. Applicant submits online application.
2. City staff reviews the submitted application to confirm completeness.
 - a. If found to be complete, City staff will review full applications.
 - b. Incomplete applicants are given a seven (7) day opportunity to provide additional documentation.
3. City staff will review full applications for eligibility.
 - a. If necessary, Historical Preservation review.
 - i. Applicants have sixty (60) days to resubmit the necessary materials if Historical Preservation review is not approved.
 - ii. If applicant obtains the Certificate of Appropriateness, the applicant has fourteen (14) days to provide updated quotes to the City if the quotes have expired in the interim review period.
4. City staff will notify applicants of the approval or denial of the application.
5. City staff sends the Grant Agreement to the Applicant for review and signature.
6. Upon receipt of the applicant's signed Grant Agreement, the City Manager will execute the agreement on behalf of the City of Bloomington.
7. Applicant can begin work on the project as soon as the Grant Agreement is executed.
 - a. Funds will be disbursed to the Applicant after the execution of the Grant Agreement.
8. Project must be completed at most eighteen (18) months after the disbursement of funds. The Applicant is responsible for notifying the City of Bloomington's Economic and Community Development Department of the completion of the project.

IX. CONTACT INFORMATION

Economic & Community Development Department
City of Bloomington, Illinois
P: (309) 434-2295

E: econdev@cityblm.org
bloomingtonil.gov

X. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. PROGRAM MARKETING: Program marketing will be conducted by the City. Examples of marketing include a press release posted to the City's website and social media platforms, distribution of information about the program to the McLean County Chamber of Commerce, and Small Business Development Center at Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council, and other local small business focused organizations.

B. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMPLIANCE: The program will be implemented in ways consistent with the City's commitment to State and Federal equal opportunity laws. No person or business shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with program funds on the basis of his or her religion, religious affiliation, age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status (number or ages of children), physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or other arbitrary cause.

C. TITLE VI COMPLIANCE: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq.) and Treasury's implementing regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 22, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

D. APPLICANT CONFIDENTIALITY: All personal and business financial information will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Files submitted by applicants with personal and business confidential information will be securely stored.

E. DISPUTE RESOLUTION/APPEALS PROCEDURE: Applicants whose applications are not selected or not deemed eligible have the right to appeal the decision of the City, limited to procedural errors in the selection process. In the event that no such procedural errors are found to have occurred, the decision of the City shall be final. An applicant may, within seven (7) business days after the denial, appeal in writing to the Director of Economic & Community Development or their designee. The appeal must state all facts and arguments upon which the appeal is based. The Director, or the appointed Designee, will review the content of the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Small Business Rehabilitation Grant Program Policy & Procedures, the applicant's application, and the facts which form the basis for the appeal. The Director, or the appointed Designee, will render a written decision within thirty (30) business days of the receipt of the appeal.

F. EXCEPTIONS / SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: The City, however, reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to deviate from City-imposed policies and procedures in extenuating circumstances. A request for exception to program guidelines shall be submitted to staff in writing by applicant. Exceptions are defined as any action which would depart from policy and procedures stated in this document.

G. PREVAILING WAGE: Davis-Bacon Act requirements (prevailing wage rates) do not apply to projects funded solely with award funds from the SLFRF program. However, if Davis-Bacon Act requirements are not adhered to, a project employment and local impact report is required ([see Page 31 of the SLFRF Compliance and Reporting Guidance](#)).

H. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Applicant understands and agrees it must maintain a conflict-of-interest policy consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c) and that such conflict-of-interest policy is applicable to each activity funded under this award. Applicant and sub-applicants must disclose in writing to Treasury or the pass-through entity, as appropriate, any potential conflict of interest affecting the awarded funds in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.112.

I. CLAWBACK PROVISION: If the Applicant fails to complete the project within the time period and as approved in the Grant Agreement, the Applicant may be responsible to repay the full amount of the Grant to the City of Bloomington.

J. Applicant agrees to comply with the requirements of section 603 of the Act, regulations adopted by Treasury pursuant to section 603(f) of the Act, and guidance issued by Treasury regarding the foregoing. Applicant also agrees to comply with all other applicable federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders, and Applicant shall provide for such compliance by other parties in any agreements it enters into with other parties relating to this award.

K. Applicant covenants and agrees, throughout the term of the project, to maintain the Subject Property and operate the Business in conformance with all applicable City Codes and laws of the State of Illinois.

Individuals with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations and wish to apply or have questions can contact the City of Bloomington's Economic & Community Development Department at (309) 434-2226 or by emailing comdev@cityblm.org.