



Date posted: April 9, 2025
Proposals due: May 7, 2025



Business District Support (BDS) - Uptown-specific Programming for 2025 (One-time funding) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact Judy Moses in Business Development at 612-673-5283 or judy.moses@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850. Para ayuda, llame al 311. Rau kev pab, hu 311. Hadii aad caawimaad u baahantahay, wac 311.

Introduction

The City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is seeking proposals in response to this competitive grant funding solicitation. Eligible proposals will be focused on activities that enhance business district vitality, benefit existing businesses, diversify an area's client base, or increase the diversity of goods and services provided, focused in the defined geography of Uptown, as defined in this document.

Healthy neighborhood business districts play a crucial role in the vibrancy of Minneapolis and are critical to the overall health of the local economy. Neighborhood businesses are at the core of urban living and contribute significantly to residents' quality of life. Residents visit them for daily goods and services, and they provide opportunities for small business ownership and employment. These locations form community gathering places, and together the buildings and businesses provide an identity for the surrounding community. Often that identity is a cultural identity that supports the social networks of the community. The cultural identity of these districts and corridors are often cultivated by the people, businesses, and institutions that make up these destinations. Economic growth in these areas should not only mean an opportunity to attract new businesses and investment, but to be inclusive in a way that supports the identity of these places for years to come. These places bring vital energy and diversity to the city and region, and they should be supported.

The 2025 City budget includes a one-time allocation of \$100,000 for Great Streets Business District Support activities for Uptown-specific projects, to focus revitalization efforts in this economically challenged area of Minneapolis. This funding is in addition to the regular annual Business District Support funding.

Eligible Applicants

Not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply. This includes:

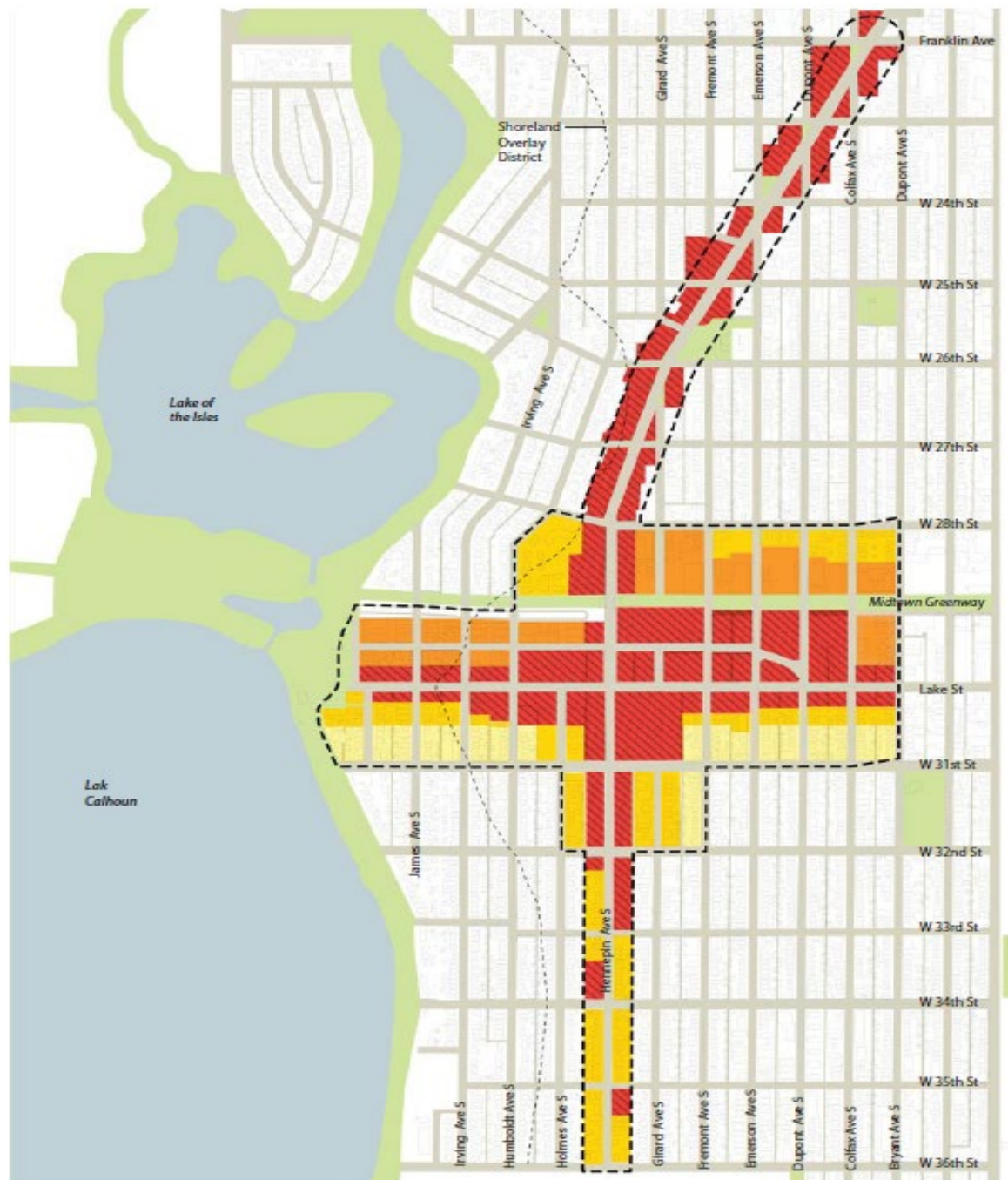
- business associations,
 - community development corporations,
 - cultural organizations,
 - arts organizations,
 - neighborhood organizations, and
 - other organizations that have the demonstrated capacity to perform the proposed work or subcontract with an entity that does.
-
- Organizations can have a maximum of \$50,000 of BDS grant funding in one calendar year. For organizations that were awarded funding for the 2024-2025 regular BDS award cycle, the total of that award plus this award cannot exceed \$50,000.

Organizations lacking the experience and capacity are encouraged to submit a proposal in partnership with an organization that does have capacity.

Eligible Areas

For this one-time BDS award cycle, proposed activities must be focused in the area defined as Uptown by the City's adopted Uptown Small Area Plan, as shown on this map.

Uptown Geographic Boundaries



Source: Uptown Small Area Plan, 2008

<https://minneapolis2040.com/small-area-plans/uptown-small-area-plan/>

Grant Contract Terms

Grant contracts awarded through this NOFA are performance-based contracts. City staff, in collaboration with selected organizations, develop a Scope of Services based on the contents of their proposal after grants are awarded by the City. Activities awarded funding may commence on the date of the final City Council action. Grant contract payments are only made after organizations submit invoices and documented deliverables to the City for reimbursement. Deliverables will be materials that demonstrate the impact of the activities, such as, copies of marketing materials, written report summarizing outcomes and lessons learned, analytics of social media impact, event summary form including, marketing materials, photos, attendance numbers and testimonials from participating businesses.

If the City awards your proposal a contract, the contents of your proposal, and any clarification to the contents, may be incorporated by reference into the contract with the City. Only include activities in your proposal that your organization is committed to completing within the 1-year contract period. The contract period is expected to run from June 2025 through June 2026. There is no minimum contract amount, but contracts to a single organization cannot exceed \$50,000 cumulative in one calendar year for BDS-related contracts.

Eligible Activities

Proposed activities must focus on promoting, advertising, improving, or developing business districts in the City, and examples are listed below. Activities must benefit a business district and the businesses within the district, not just a single or small number of businesses within a district. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, the following DISTRICT-WIDE strategies:

Business/Economic Development

- Strategies to minimize the displacement of businesses.
- Strategies to fill vacant commercial properties.
- Activities that inject new or additional energy, resources, activity, people, or enthusiasm into the local economy.
- Activities that connect communities, people, places to economic opportunity via physical spaces or new relationships.
- Efforts that bring new businesses into a district.
- Technical assistance for organizations to improve their strategic thinking and planning for district vitality and their partnership building with cultural organizations.
- Activities that improve relationships between businesses and stakeholders, residents, organizations, etc.
- Marketing and branding campaigns or events that drive traffic to business districts for the long-term.
- Strategies to mitigate disruption during road construction.

Culture and Arts

- Collaborative art or cultural activities that improve the economic vitality of business districts.
- Programming that celebrates or promotes the rich, diverse character and identity of a business district, while attracting local visitors and tourists to the area

- Capital expenditures for placemaking efforts on public or private property when maintenance cost funding is in place. This includes public art and physical placemaking that enhances the pedestrian realm and attracts local visitors and tourists to the area. Such efforts should involve community members in the process of developing, selecting, or executing the work. Funded proposals must be consistent with Minneapolis Public Works requirements. Learn more about the City's right of way permit requirements by clicking [here](#). Information about City requirements for public art on City property can be found by clicking [here](#).

CPED is particularly interested in receiving proposals that include the following:

- Proposals that support the work of Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) businesses.
- Activities led by local ethnic, racial, and cultural organizations that protect the racial diversity and uplift the cultural identity of districts where a significant portion of the population is comprised of people of color, Indigenous people, or immigrant communities.

It is not the intention of the BDS program to fund an annual line item in an organization's budget, but rather to fund activities that respond to the changing needs, economic conditions, and character of each business district.

If you have a question about whether the activity you would like to propose is eligible, email Judy Moses at Judy.Moses@minneapolismn.gov.

Ineligible Activities

- Financing commercial real estate development projects, physical improvements to a single property, or loans to businesses are ineligible activities because the City offers such assistance through other programs.
- Technical assistance to businesses is an ineligible activity because the City supports technical assistance to businesses through the [Business Technical Assistance Program \(B-TAP\)](#).
- Arts and cultural activities that were awarded funds from the [Arts & Cultural Affairs](#) department in 2024 or 2025.
- General operating expenses are not eligible for the program. However, staff time associated with a proposed activity is an eligible use.

Ineligible Expenses

- Political, religious, or lobbying activities
- Gift cards or cash incentives
- Free items given away to individuals (e.g. gifts, gift bags, prizes, swag, donations)
- Food and beverage expenses.

Evaluation Criteria

A committee of City staff and outside partners in commercial district revitalization will review proposals by considering the criteria listed below, as well as whether the applicant and proposal meet all

eligibility criteria and satisfy all NOFA requirements. Staff will make a recommendation to the City Council for funding. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or parts of proposals and to negotiate modifications to an entire proposals or specific components of the scope of work within a proposal to create Activities of lesser or greater magnitude than described in this NOFA or the submitted proposal.

The maximum score a proposal can receive is 30 points.

- Proven Need, Clear Outcomes, and Significant Impact to the Economic Resources of the City
 - *15 points max*
- Capacity of Organization, Connections to Engaged Partners (especially business owners in the district), and Readiness to Proceed
 - *10 points max*
- Leverage and Budget
 - *5 points max*

Proposal Submission

Applicants must email the Proposal Form and a Budget as an Excel file to Judy.Moses@minneapolismn.gov **by Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 4:00pm**. Proposals will not be accepted after the deadline. The City will acknowledge receipt of proposals by emailing the contacts listed with a courtesy email within 24 hours of receiving the proposal or by 4:30pm on May 7. It is the responders' responsibility to ensure they submit their proposal on time.

NOFA Inquiries

Prospective applicants should direct questions **in writing** to the department contact person, Judy Moses, at Judy.Moses@minneapolismn.gov. All questions are due no later than April 21, 2025. Questions will be answered in writing and posted on the [Community Planning & Development RFPs website](#) on April 25, 2025. The department contact cannot vary the terms of the NOFA.

Timeline

NOFA Issued	April 9, 2025
Deadline for Written Questions	April 21, 2025
Q&A Posted Online	April 25, 2025
Submission Deadline	May 7, 2025, at 4:00 pm
Proposal Review and Evaluation	May 2025
Contract Dates (may vary)	June 2025 – June 2026

Grant Contract Requirements

Additional City requirements vary. The following list **is not** exhaustive.

1. **Data Practices** – Grantee agrees to comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (the “Act”) and all other applicable state and federal laws relating to data privacy or confidentiality. The Grantee and any of Grantee’s sub-grantees or sub-contractors retained to provide services under this Contract shall comply with the Act and be subject to penalty for non-compliance as though they were a governmental entity. The Grantee will immediately report to the City any requests from third parties for information relating to this Agreement. The City agrees to promptly respond to inquiries from the Grantee concerning data requests. The Grantee agrees to hold the City, its officers, and employees harmless from any claims resulting from the Grantee’s unlawful disclosure or use of data protected under state and federal laws, regardless of the limits of insurance coverage.
2. **Intellectual Property** – The recipient must agree to provide the City with the right to royalty-free, non-exclusive license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use and to authorize others to use any intellectual property created using the grant funds. Work covered by this provision shall include inventions, improvements, discoveries, databases, computer programs, reports, notes, studies, photographs, negatives, designs, drawings, electronic files, specifications, materials, tapes or other media.
3. **Billboard Advertising** – Through Ordinance 109.470, City and City-derived funds are prohibited from use to pay for billboard advertising as a part of a City project or undertaking.
4. **Conflict of Interest/Code of Ethics** – Grantee covenants that it presently has no interest and shall not acquire any interest, direct or indirect, which would conflict in any manner or degree with the performance of services required under this Agreement. The Grantee further covenants that in the performance of this Agreement no person having such an interest shall be employed by the Grantee hereunder. The City acknowledges that Grantee, as part of its nonprofit community and economic development mission, will purchase buildings to be renovated and leased to a variety of businesses. Grantee understands that using proceeds of the grant for the benefit of a property in which Grantee has a financial interest is considered a conflict of interest, unless:
 - Any technical assistance shall be made available to all businesses in the community who meet Program requirements through a fair, open and competitive process, as approved by CPED staff; and
 - The assistance provided does not relate to improvements that directly benefit Grantee’s building, e.g. assistance regarding building improvements such as window replacement would not be acceptable; assistance for marketing or procurement would not be a conflict.
5. **Hold Harmless** – The recipient shall agree to defend, indemnify and hold the City harmless from any and all claims or lawsuits that may arise from the recipient’s activities under the provisions of the Contract, that are attributable to the negligent acts or omissions, including breach of specific contractual duties of the recipient or the recipient’s independent contractors, agents, employees or officers.
6. **Insurance** - Prior to starting the services described herein, Grantee shall provide evidence of and continually maintain throughout the term of this Agreement, workers’ compensation insurance in accordance with statutory requirements. The Grantee shall also provide evidence of and continually maintain: (i) commercial general liability insurance which shall include contractual liability coverage, (ii) automobile insurance for any vehicles owned by the Grantee, and (iii) hired/non-owned automobile insurance (if Grantee or Grantee’s independent contractors will be driving automobiles while performing services under this Agreement) in amounts sufficient to indemnify the City, but in no event less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence with aggregate coverage of \$1,000,000. Said insurance policy(ies) shall name the City as an additional insured. Grantee shall immediately forward to the City any notices it receives of cancellation or revocation of the foregoing policies.
7. **Compliance with the Law** – Grantee agrees to abide by the requirements and regulations of The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Minnesota Human Rights Act (Minn. Stat. C.363A), the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance (Ch. 139), and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These laws deal with discrimination based on race, gender, disability, religion and with sexual harassment. In the event the Grantee has questions concerning these requirements, the City agrees to promptly supply all necessary clarifications. Violation of any of the above laws can lead to termination of this Contract.
8. **Advances** - Organizations awarded contracts may elect to receive an advance of up to 10% of the total contract amount. The advance will be tied to specific contract deliverables and the organization will be required to demonstrate successful completion of the deliverable(s) tied to the advance.