

# Cultural Market Small Business Support Program

## Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

### 2026-2027 One-time Funding as part of Minneapolis Small Business Resiliency Fund

## Introduction

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The City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is seeking applications in response to this competitive grant funding solicitation. The Cultural Market Small Business Support program will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to cultural mall operators to assist in maintaining the vibrancy, security, and commerce of cultural malls located in the city of Minneapolis. These malls were significantly impacted by Operation Metro Surge and provide important, culturally unique goods and services to the community, facilitate participation in the economy for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and are accessible to the public. The City has a total of \$500,000 in one-time funding for this program, allocated as part of the Minneapolis Small Business Resiliency Fund, a \$7 million fund to support businesses recovering from the negative impacts of Operation Metro Surge.

## Grant Funding

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Grant amounts of up to \$50,000, depending on number of eligible applicants and funding requested. Only one grant per mall location will be approved.

Applicants should consult their own tax advisers concerning the implications of receiving a grant.

## Timeline

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NOFA Issued	April 14, 2026
Deadline for Written Questions	April 27, 2026
Q&A Posted Online	April 30, 2026
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	<b>May 13, 2026</b>
Staff Review and Evaluation	May 2026
Contract Dates (may vary)	June 2026 – June 2027

## Eligible Applicants

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Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a cultural mall operator (as opposed to tenants directly) of a mall located in an “Eligible Location” as follows:
  - Applicant’s mall must be located within Minneapolis city limits, **excluding** buildings located in DT1 Downtown Center and DT2 Downtown Destination zoning districts, as indicated on the [Minneapolis Primary Zoning District Map](#)
- Facility must be open and currently operating.
- The facility must be a privately owned permanent indoor retail space that meets the definition of "Covered Mall Building" under [Minnesota Building Code, Minnesota Rules 1305, Chapter 2](#). This definition does not include facilities that exclusively offer space to tenants for private commercial office space, education facilities, or religious establishments.
- The facility must lease space to 12 or more current tenants.
- Be a facility in which 50% or more of the tenant businesses are any of the following types of businesses: retail stores, drinking and dining establishments, entertainment and/or amusement facilities.

- The facility must be owned by a resident(s) of Minnesota.
- The facility/property must be in good regulatory standing with the City or will cure any outstanding issues and be current on property taxes.

## Eligible Expenses

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Costs must be forward looking, not a recouping of past losses or expenses, and may include the following activities:

- Activities that provide a common benefit to mall tenants and customers overall.
- Third-party costs such as mall security, marketing, and advertising to attract customers to the mall generally, programming occurring in common areas of the mall.
- Physical improvement or repairs to common spaces or systems, such as the exterior facade, interior customer common areas, energy efficiency for the facility overall, site improvements.
- Tenant space improvements available to all tenants, such as merchandising fixtures, interior signage, and wayfinding, etc.

If you have a question about whether the activity you would like to propose is eligible, please see the NOFA Inquiries section below.

## Ineligible Activities

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The following costs and activities are ineligible for funding under this grant:

- Activities that benefit only a specific tenant business
- Utility bills, property taxes, insurance
- Refinancing of debt
- Billboard advertising
- Political activities
- Sectarian, religious, or anti-religious activities
- Lobbying
- Unionization or anti-unionization activities
- Technical assistance to businesses is an ineligible activity because the City supports technical assistance to businesses through the [Business Technical Assistance Program \(B-TAP\)](#).

## Application Process

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Fill out and submit the [online application form](#) and upload required documentation by 4:00 p.m. CDT on Wednesday, May 13, 2026.

Applications will not be accepted after the deadline. It is the responders' responsibility to ensure they submit their application on time, including uploading their materials. It is neither CPED's responsibility nor practice to acknowledge receipt of any application. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

Applicants who own more than one cultural mall will need to submit multiple applications - one application for each mall location. There is a limit of one grant per mall location.

## NOFA Inquiries

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Prospective applicants should direct questions **in writing** to the department contact person, Gisela Fiedorow, at [Gisela.Fiedorow@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Gisela.Fiedorow@minneapolismn.gov). All questions are due no later than April 27, 2026. Questions will be answered in writing and posted on the “Development” tab on the [CPED RFP website](#) on April 30, 2026. The department contact person cannot vary the terms of the NOFA.

## Evaluation Criteria

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Applicants must submit a completed application and provide required documentation during the application period noted above. City staff will review the applications received, determine eligibility of applicants and proposed activities, and approve grant requests in accordance with the following evaluation criteria. The City may, in its sole discretion, expand or reduce the criteria upon which it bases its final decisions:

- Whether the applicant and application meet all eligibility criteria and satisfy all NOFA requirements.
- Whether Program funds are available.
- Expressed need and clear outcomes of proposed activities
- Feasibility of proposed activities and ability of applicant and described partners to complete proposed activities

The City reserves the right to reject any or all applications or parts of applications, and to negotiate modifications to an entire application or specific components of the proposed activities within an application to create a project of lesser or greater magnitude than described in this NOFA or the submitted application.

## Grant Contract Terms

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Selected applicants will be required to enter into grant agreements with the City. The terms of the agreements will be finalized by the City and the selected applicants following selection.

Grant contracts awarded through this NOFA will be performance-based reimbursement contracts. Grant contract payments will only be made after a contract is executed and organizations submit invoices and documented deliverables to the City for reimbursement.

If the City awards your application a contract, the contents of your application, and any clarification to the contents, may be incorporated by reference into the contract with the City. Only include activities in your application that your organization is committed to completing. Applicants should be able to complete the activities within the contract period, expected to run from the start date of the contract through June 2027.

## No Applicant Recourse

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The City shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any applicant in connection with this NOFA. Applicants shall bear all costs associated with application preparation and submission, and any other

activity associated with this NOFA. This NOFA does not commit the City to award a contract. Submission of an application shall neither obligate nor entitle any applicant to enter into a contract with the City.