

Building Business Grant Program

An initiative of Winnipeg's Downtown Recovery Strategy



Contents

- Program Summary and Objectives 1
- Program Streams 2
- Grant Program Process 3
- Project Options 4
- General Eligibility Criteria 6
- Required Documentation 7
- Other Important Information 7

Our downtown is on Treaty No. 1 territory
and the traditional Homeland of the Red River Métis.

Over the last decade, downtown's districts experienced an exciting growth in business confidence that coincided with new construction projects and creative retail and hospitality concepts. Cost barriers to downtown development were being addressed through innovative tax credit and gap financing programs. Downtown was moving in a visionary direction, becoming a more viable and attractive place to invest in and grow businesses.

During the pandemic many downtown businesses have experienced significant revenue losses, and in some cases, closures. Welcoming workers back downtown and reactivating retail storefronts and underutilized buildings or sites will be essential to building back business investment and momentum.

Funding assistance provided by the Manitoba government.

Program Summary and Objectives

The Building Business Grant Program (the "Grant Program") has been developed to support businesses and begin to address these issues, with the following objectives:

- Create and maintain jobs in downtown Winnipeg.
- Create and fill visually appealing storefronts, offices, and workspaces, making downtown an attractive destination for individuals and businesses.
- Support existing businesses and attract new businesses committed to growing our downtown economy.
- Increase the resilience of downtown businesses by helping them build their skills and capacity.
- Make downtown a safer and more vibrant place by increasing the number of people visiting and working here.



Program Streams

This program includes three streams which aim to provide something for both new and existing downtown businesses that are committed to downtown as a part of their long-term plans. This Grant Program will reimburse a portion of project costs, up to the maximums outlined below. The grant will be provided when the project is completed. For details on reimbursement calculations, see pages 4 & 5 of this Program Guide.

Grow the ground floor

Grants of up to \$50,000 for outdoor storefronts or \$30,000 for indoor storefronts

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- A business that is ready to open a new downtown storefront
- An existing business that wants to expand a downtown storefront

Outdoor storefront: facing the sidewalk and street

Indoor storefront: facing into the interior of a building, like the lobby of a building or in a shopping mall

Boost your bottom line

Grants of up to \$30,000

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- An existing business looking to renovate their downtown storefront, office, or workspace
- An existing downtown business looking for business development services

Elevate your workspace

Grants of up to \$30,000

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- A business that is ready to open a new downtown office or workspace
- An existing business looking to expand a downtown office or workspace

Grant Program Process



1

Review this program guide and come up with a plan to improve your business. If you need assistance developing a plan or finding service providers, we can help with that.

3

Wait to hear back from us about the status of your application within thirty (30) days of your application being received.

5

If approved, begin your project. Approved eligible expenses can include work started on or after September 1, 2022.

7

Receive your grant funds!

Submit your application.

2

Work with us to determine the portion of eligible expenses in your project that can be covered by this Grant Program.

4

Once your project is complete, submit receipts and required proof of completion.

6

Project Options

This Grant Program is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of businesses. Depending on your grant stream, choose how you would like to improve your business from one or more of the following project options:

Space Improvement

Tell us how these upgrades to your space will increase your revenue, enhance the customer and/or employee experience or other ways it will add value to your business and the downtown. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

Exterior Improvements

Up to 50% of eligible expenses totalling \$50,000 or less, and up to 33% of any additional eligible expenses

- New/additional lighting
- Signage
- New windows/window protection
- Doors/entranceways
- Patios
- Awnings/canopies
- Accessibility improvements
- Painting
- Landscaping and improvements that contribute to the public realm

Interior improvements

Up to 50% of eligible expenses totalling \$20,000 or less, and up to 33% of any additional eligible expenses

- Menu boards/signage
- Renovations that will attract more customers to your storefront:
E.g., new countertops or built-in product displays
- Renovations to attract your staff back to the downtown office
E.g., improved lighting or staff common spaces

Design work and minor improvements

Up to 25% of eligible expenses totalling \$40,000 or less

- Architectural or engineering services
- Interior design work
- Technical drawings
- Interior painting and decorating

SPACE IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA

- The applicant must be a commercial tenant with at least three years remaining in their lease at the completion date of the project. Businesses that own their building also qualify.
- If the applicant has less than three years remaining on their current lease, they must have first right of refusal to renew lease to at least three years from project completion along with a signed letter from the property stating the property owner intends to allow the lease to be renewed.
- The applicant must obtain a signed approval for any proposed changes to the space that would be subject to the property owner's/landlord's approval as stipulated in their lease agreement. The signed approval from the property owner must be provided to the Building Business Committee.
- Work must be completed with the necessary permits and conform to applicable zoning by-laws or building codes.
- Copies of permits for work covered by this Grant Program must be provided.
- Any work that is completed without the necessary permits or that does not conform to applicable zoning by-laws or building codes will be ineligible for coverage under this Grant Program.



Business Development

Up to 75% of eligible expenses if service provider is a member of Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, Exchange District BIZ, or West End BIZ; up to 50% of eligible expenses if service provider is in Manitoba.

Tell us your long-term business growth plans and how you would like to build capacity. As a successful applicant you will work with expert service providers who can support your goals and help you complete your project successfully. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Business strategy
- Marketing/advertising/branding/graphic design
- Web services, including adding an online selling platform to an existing website
- Finance/accounting
- HR, including staffing solutions and strategies
- Legal services
- IT support

Rent Incentive

For new or expanded storefronts, offices, or workspaces

Tell us how receiving a rent incentive would help you open a new downtown storefront, office, or workspace, and what other plans this would give you the flexibility to accomplish.

- Maximum of \$10,000 for a new storefront, \$5,000 for a new office or workspace
- Grant cannot exceed total rent payable for a 6-month period

RENT INCENTIVE CRITERIA

- Only available for new or expanded storefronts, offices, or workspaces.
- In the case of expanded spaces, it will only apply to newly added space, and not to any previously owned or occupied space.
- In the case of a move within downtown, the Building Business Committee will decide how much will be covered by the Rent Incentive based on previous vs. new square footage and rent.

General Eligibility Criteria

- The applicant's place of business must be within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg's [Downtown Zoning By-law](#). If a business also operates outside these boundaries, only the location(s)/operation(s) within the boundaries qualify for grant funding.

Not sure if your business is located within these boundaries? Check out pages 110-118 of the [Downtown Zoning By-law](#) to see if your location qualifies.

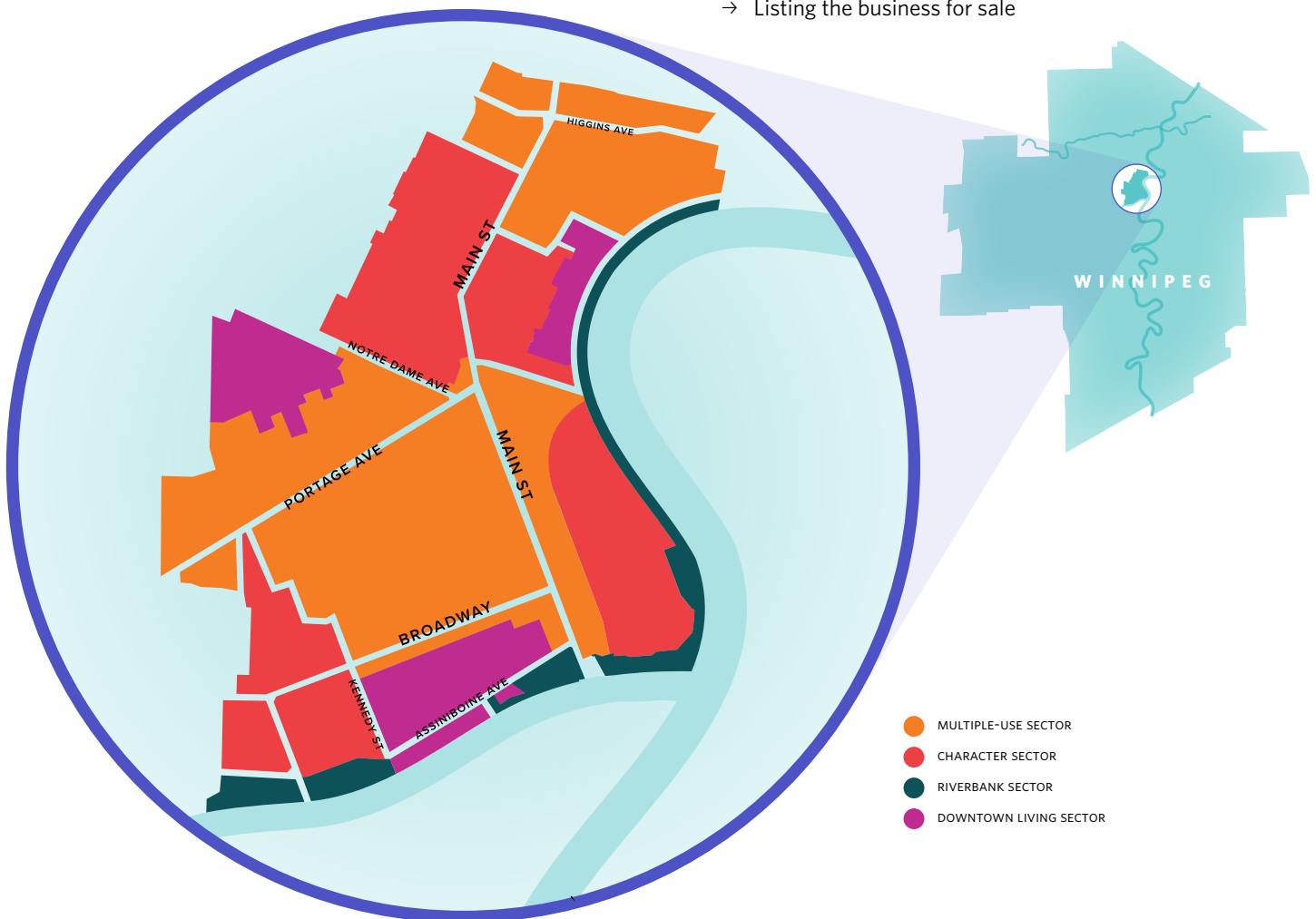
- The business must have a valid and active Business Number and be in good standing with the Manitoba Companies Office or Corporations Canada.

- The business must not be in arrears for any provincial, federal, property or business taxes, or BIZ levy (note: this does not include businesses that have received authorization to defer tax remittances).

- The business must not have any ongoing claims or outstanding judgements against it.

- The business must not be prepared for sale, closure, or dissolution at any point prior to receipt of grant funding. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Announcing a permanent closure to their employees or customers
- Holding a closing-out sale
- Listing the business for sale



- MULTIPLE-USE SECTOR
- CHARACTER SECTOR
- RIVERBANK SECTOR
- DOWNTOWN LIVING SECTOR

Required Documentation

Documents required to qualify for grant funding include, but are not limited to:

- Most recent File Summary from Companies Office
- Most recent Winnipeg Business Tax statement showing address within downtown
- The applicant must obtain a signed approval for any proposed changes to the space that would be subject to the property owner's/landlord's approval as stipulated in their lease agreement. The signed approval from the property owner must be provided to Building Business Committee.
- Proof of permits for space improvement work

Other Important Information

Grant applications will be evaluated for overall impact and alignment with program objectives. To maximize the effectiveness of the program the projects with the highest potential impact will be prioritized. Approval and determination of services included in a grant project are at the sole discretion of the Building Business Committee.

While this program is targeted to for-profit businesses, the program is also open to non-profit community organizations whose projects align with the Program Objectives.

Have questions or need help developing your project proposal? Supports available under this program include:

- Help finding a location if your business is expanding or new to downtown
- Help finding service provider(s)
- Help developing your plan

Contact Chris Sones at business@downtownrecovery.ca for more information







**Apply
Now!**

