

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: The CORE Grant is for businesses. The business must be registered and in good standing within the Capital Area as defined by the map. The applicant must be operating on a property within the defined capital area.

Not Eligible-Mobile Business, Business operating out of a residential property where they reside, Non-Profit, Government, Schools, Faith-based Organizations and Neighborhood Community Groups

Q: What is an eligible capital improvement?

A:

- Façade improvements that enhance the visual appeal and accessibility of storefronts.
- Other capital improvements made to the property, such as ADA upgrades, safety enhancements and energy-efficient retrofits.

Not Eligible acquisition

Q: When can I start the project?

A: Important: You cannot start work until the contract is fully executed.

Q: What compliance actions are required to be awarded funding?

A:To be eligible for funding, the Grantee must:

- Obtain three contractor bids
- Provide proof of required insurance and list the Saint Paul Port Authority as an additional Insured on the Certificate of Insurance.
- Comply with prevailing wage requirements rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§ 177.41 through 177.50](#), as applicable. [Prevailing-wage information | Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry](#)
- Meet ADA accessibility standards, construction projects must follow accessibility laws and guidelines. Please see the [Council on Disability](#) resources and [Requirements of Public Accommodations](#).
- Obtain required Capital Area Architectural and Planning Board permits
- Ensure all contractors and vendors are in good standing with the State of Minnesota. Grantees must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).
- Potential grantee's must provide their most recent federal and state tax returns, current financial statements, certification that the business is not under

bankruptcy proceedings, and disclosure of any liens on its assets. If a business has not been in business long enough to have a tax return, the grantee must demonstrate to the agency's satisfaction that the grantee has appropriate internal financial controls.

- If awarded grant funds, an orientation meeting is required as well as ongoing reporting and progress.
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Q: When must funds be spent? Are extensions available?

A: The capital project must be completed and reimbursement requested no later than **April 30, 2027**. This is a firm deadline; extensions are not available. Any unspent funds must be returned.

Q: When will I receive the grant funds?

A: This is a reimbursement-based grant. After paying the contractor, the Grantee must submit an invoice along with proof of payment (such as a copy of a cashed check). Funds will not be disbursed until all required documentation has been received, including proof of insurance, a W-9, property permissions (if applicable), compliance certifications, and any required risk assessment documents. Each reimbursement request must also include detailed expense documentation, confirmation of compliance, and documentation of project progress and required reporting.

Q: What if I cannot advance funds while waiting for reimbursement?

A: You are still encouraged to apply. Please notify the Saint Paul Port Authority of any financial constraints related to advancing project costs.

Q: What are my responsibilities as the Grantee?

A: Grantee responsibilities include completing the application and all required exhibits, submitting a project budget detailing sources and uses of funds, meeting all compliance requirements, retaining records for six (6) years for audit purposes, completing required impact reporting, and adhering to all grant guidelines.

Q: What if I am not awarded funding?

A: Applicants who are not selected in Round 1 are encouraged to apply again in Round 2.

Q: What if my project exceeds the budget?

A: The **grant award amount is fixed**. Applicants are encouraged to include a modest contingency in their project budget; however, contingency funds will only be reimbursed if actual project costs exceed the original estimate and total reimbursement will not exceed the grant award amount. Any costs exceeding the grant amount are the responsibility of the business.

Q: What if my project comes in under budget?

A: Project costs will be reimbursed at 100% up to the awarded grant amount. If total project costs are less than the grant amount, the unused funds will not be disbursed.

Q: What if I do not own the building?

A: Businesses that lease their space are eligible. A copy of the lease agreement is required to confirm the lease term is sufficient. Written and notarized consent from the property owner is also required.

Q: What if my business operates out of my home?

A: Businesses operated from a residential property are not eligible. To ensure appropriate separation between personal and business use, grant funds may not be used for improvements to residential properties.

Q: What if I recently completed improvements—can I still apply?

A: No. Projects must not be completed prior to award. Grant funds cannot be spent until a fully executed grant agreement is in place.

Q: Are travel costs reimbursable? Or administrative costs?

A: No, this grant is only for capital improvement costs only.
