



Victory Commercial Improvement Grant Program

Program Description

The Victory Neighborhood Association (ViNA) recognizes that healthy neighborhood business districts play an important role in the vitality of our community. The Commercial Improvement Grant Program is designed to encourage and facilitate private business development within existing commercial properties. The intent of the program is to promote the growth of new and existing businesses within the Victory Neighborhood.

The Victory Neighborhood Association has made available \$14,999 in Neighborhood Revitalization funds to support this initiative.

Program Scope

All owners of commercial building(s) and/or tenant business owners, within the borders of the [Victory Neighborhood](#), can submit an application for a commercial improvement grant.

ViNA will administer its Commercial Improvement Grants Program by making grants available for business node improvements in accordance with the guidelines documented herein.

When the funds allocated to this program have been exhausted, the program will be suspended or terminated. Grants therefore will be awarded only if (1) funds are available and (2) the ViNA Business Committee has approved the grant request. Additional funds may be allocated to this program if the resources are available and there is demand amongst the neighborhood businesses.

Program Administration

1. ViNA will keep all necessary books and records and pay all costs incurred by it in relation to the program, including but not limited to, bookkeeping, record keeping, and accounting costs.
2. ViNA shall observe and comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations of the City of Minneapolis, the State of Minnesota, and the United States of America.
3. The City of Minneapolis, its partners, and contractors have the right to inspect all books and records that ViNA is required to maintain.
4. ViNA shall maintain applicant and recipient data to verify eligibility for the program. The data maintained by ViNA will be made available to the City upon request.

Program Guidelines

1. Business owners and commercial property owners with vacant property can apply for a grant.

2. Commercial properties must be located within the geographic boundaries of the Victory Neighborhood.
3. Applicants must demonstrate that they have a plan to stay financially solvent. New or young businesses must provide (1) a written business plan and (2) a written marketing plan as part of their application. More established businesses could provide the above documents or a written statement describing the number of years they've been operating and strategies they've employed to stay profitable. In general, a business open less than two years would be considered a new or young business. ViNA will work with business incubators like the Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON) to assess the viability of the plans. The applicant may be referred to the incubator for additional services before proceeding with the grant process.

Note: ViNA can connect business owners to business incubators like NEON for help developing business and marketing plans if they do not already exist. If an applicant needs assistance in creating those documents, they should contact ViNA.

4. It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to see that all improvements are carried out in compliance with laws, ordinances, and regulations of the City of Minneapolis, the State of Minnesota, and the United States of America.
5. Any improvement pursued by a leaseholder must have the written approval of the building owner.
6. ViNA may request supporting documentation (contractor quotes, price sheets, etc.) to support grant requests and/or project cost estimates.
7. A grant recipient shall allow ViNA to inspect proposed project sites if requested. A grant recipient shall provide evidence that the proposed work has been completed. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, 'after' photos, documentation of the final inspection, or documentation of the final payment made to the contractor.
8. No property or business owner may receive more than one grant per calendar year.
9. Work must begin within 60 days of the application approval date and must be completed within six months of application approval date.
10. Grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis upon review of itemized contractor invoices reflecting a zero balance and/or receipts for materials and equipment. Materials or services purchased prior to completion of grant approval and participation agreement are ineligible. Exceptions to the reimbursement method of grant payments must be approved by the ViNA Board of Directors.
11. Application materials will include, at a minimum, a project description, its location, and objective; two contractor bids, business and marketing plan, and a "before" photo of the property illustrating current conditions.
12. Deviation from these requirements shall require the approval of the ViNA business committee.

Eligibility

Funded improvements are intended to have long-term impacts on the economic viability of the neighborhood by becoming an asset of the property and encouraging further investment. Therefore, proposed improvements must meet the criteria that they benefit the overall value of the property for future owners or tenants for a multiplicity of uses. For example, kitchen components that serve a large cross-section of types of food preparation would be acceptable, whereas a pizza oven would not. A quarry tile floor or furnace system would be acceptable whereas an automotive car lift would not. Eligible uses are meant to be utilitarian and practical

in their nature and are restricted to projects that enhance the viability of the business and/or property.

Eligible improvements may include:

- Asbestos abatement
- Lead abatement
- Fire prevention requirements
- ADA requirements
- Energy efficiency improvements
- HVAC improvements
- Plumbing improvements
- Electrical repairs and upgrades
- Structural repairs and improvements, to include roofing

The City of Minneapolis requires permits for many of the eligible activities listed here. It is vital that business and building owners work with city zoning staff on designs and obtain all permits before beginning work.

Property owners as the applicants of this program must demonstrate how funds are intended to incentivize a new business tenant. Property owners also agree to provide ViNA staff with a tour of their property to verify its vacancy.

Tenant business owners as applicants of this grant must provide rationale describing how the improvements will (1) remain as assets of the structure and (2) strengthen their market position and growth potential.

In general, the following activities would not be eligible for grants:

- Improvements in progress or completed prior to preliminary approval
- Billboards or signage
- Décor or predominantly aesthetic improvements that do not contribute to the business' viability and/or growth
- Security systems, including metal roll-down grates and window bars
- Trash and related enclosures
- Fencing
- Parking areas or improvements thereon
- Improvements that are considered routine maintenance
- Temporary or semi-permanent improvements
- Non-permanent equipment
- Improvements to non-commercial buildings or residential portions of mixed-use buildings
- Improvements covered by any of ViNA's other existing grant programs
- Improvements that diminish the historical value of the subject property

The City may have small business loan programs with favorable interest rates to assist with projects that are not included in this grant program. Visit the [City website](#) or call 311 for more information.

The ViNA Business Committee will review each request and make a determination as to whether the proposed project conforms to the guidelines and intent of the program. Final approval rests with the ViNA Business Committee (any decision must include at least one ViNA board member).

Grant Amounts

Approved projects are eligible for grants of up to \$5,000. For projects that have a total cost of \$2,500 or less, no match is required. Applicants must provide a one-to-one match for amounts beyond \$2,500. For example, for a project costing \$4,000, the first \$2,500 would be covered by the grant with no match required; the remaining \$1500 would require a one-to-one match by the applicant (\$750). ViNA's maximum grant award is \$5,000.

PROCESS

Step 1: Be sure your project meets program guidelines above.

Step 2: Submit a completed application to ViNA including:

- a. Written description of the project, including drawings or other materials that accurately represent scope of project improvements.
- b. Project Rationale: describe how the improvement will increase the value of the property and/or strengthen the business' market position.
- c. Photographs of the current state of the building and where the improvements will be made
- d. Signature of the property owner if the applicant is not the property owner.
Ownership will be verified with Hennepin County tax records and City of Minneapolis licensing.
- e. Contractor bids where applicable. Two (2) contractors' bids are required for projects with total costs exceeding \$2,500. The two bids must be for identical scopes of work. Applicants are encouraged to solicit estimates from women and minority contractors.

Step 3: ViNA will notify applicants within six weeks if the application has been approved.

Step 4: Proceed with project.

Step 5: Submit to ViNA the following items upon completion of the work:

- a. A final invoice from each contractor reflecting a \$0 balance due and describing the work performed and its cost.
- b. Receipts for materials purchased by the applicant
- c. Proof of payment of matching funds
- d. Photographs documenting the completed work, taken from the same locations of the "before" photographs required in the initial application.
- e. When applicable, permits signed by City of Minneapolis inspectors that note the work is complete.

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to see that all improvements are carried out in compliance with laws, ordinances, and regulations of the City of Minneapolis, the State of Minnesota, and the United States of America.

Step 6: ViNA reimburses grant recipient.



Commercial Improvement Grant Program

Include a copy of the following documents with this application:

1. A completed application form, including signatures of business owner and property owner.
2. If the business is less than two years old, include a marketing plan and business plan
3. A complete description of the project including the location of the improvements (i.e. north, east, south or west side of the property), the project's intent, the scope of the work, estimated cost and promotional strategy.
4. A project estimate from at least two contractors on projects over \$2,500. If the project is to be done by the business owner, include an itemized list of the cost of all the materials selected for your project
5. A sketch of the improvement project
6. A "before" photo of the property to illustrate current conditions
7. A copy of applicant's current signed lease or proof of ownership of business

Keep a copy of your signed application and all attachments for your records. Return application and documentation by mail or email to:

Victory Neighborhood Association
2200 44th Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55412
info@victoryneighborhood.org
612.529.9558

Once the project is completed, send 'after' photos, receipts, and final inspection verification and the Victory Neighborhood Association will process the grant payment.

Commercial Improvement Grant Application

I. Contact Information	
Contact Name:	Business Name:
Email:	Phone:
Address of property to be improved:	
<p>Established Business Owners: How long have you been in business? What strategies have you employed to stay profitable? How do you plan to remain financially solvent in the future?</p> <p>New or Young Businesses (<2 years): Include a marketing plan and business plan with your application. If you do not have these documents in place, contact the ViNA office to be connected to resources to assist with their development.</p>	
Property Owner Name:	Property Owner Phone:
<p><i>As the owner of the aforementioned property, I give my permission to make the improvements detailed in this application. I understand this is a matching Business Improvement Grant through the Victory Neighborhood Association and I am committed to maintaining the improvements for a minimum of three years.</i></p>	
Signature:	Date:
II. Project Scope	
Describe the proposed work to be performed. Attach drawings and before photos.	

Business owner applicants: describe how this project will contribute to your business' long-term viability and growth.

Property owner applicants: describe how this project will incentivize new commercial tenants to lease your property.

Estimated Cost:

Anticipated Start Date:

Anticipated Completion Date:

III. Contractor Bids

If work is being performed by business owner, skip to part IV

Scope of work to be completed	Contractor	Bid	Bonded & Insured?
1.		\$	
		\$	
2.		\$	
		\$	
Selected Contractor Name:		Selected Contractor Phone Number:	

IV. Confirmation

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information contained in this application is accurate. By signing, I give consent to the Victory Neighborhood Association to use this application and accompanying documentation for promotional purposes.

Signature

Date