



NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

Application Open Date: April 6, 2026

Pre-Application Due Date: May 1, 2026

Contact Information: City of Toledo, Department of Economic Development
One Government Center, Suite 2250, Toledo, Ohio 43604
(419) 245-1230
Vibrancy@toledo.oh.gov

Applications should be submitted online at:

<https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/PG>

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A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The City of Toledo’s Department of Economic Development announces the availability of **\$50,000** in funding for the Planning Grant Program. This program is part of the City’s Vibrancy Initiative, a coordinated suite of incentive programs designed to stimulate revitalization, reduce blight, preserve existing structures, and strengthen commercial corridors citywide.

The Planning Grant Program provides financial support to small businesses and property owners seeking to activate ground-floor commercial spaces for occupancy by a new business – particularly in historically significant legacy commercial corridors.

How the Grant Works

- Reimburses **50%** of eligible design and architectural services for projects in [designated census tracts](#) and **75%** for projects located within a designated [Legacy Commercial Corridor](#).
- Maximum grant award is \$10,000
- Building must contain vacant or underutilized ground-floor space requiring professional drawings to move toward occupancy.
- Qualifying uses are those designed for walk-in customers, such as retail shops, restaurants, service businesses, offices, and other storefront-oriented spaces.

The City partners with the Business Empowerment Alliance of Toledo (BEAT) to provide application and project support to applicants at no-cost. For more information, call (419) 245-1230 or email Vibrancy@toledo.oh.gov.

B. SCHEDULE

Milestones	Date
Pre-Application Opens Notice of Funding Availability is released and the pre-application opens.	Monday, April 6, 2026 at 9:00am EST
Office Hours Virtual and in-person office hours are offered for questions about eligibility and the application process.	Click HERE for schedule

<p>Pre-Application Submission Deadline Pre-applications are due. No late applications will be accepted. You must submit a pre-application to access the full application.</p>	<p>Friday, May 1, 2026 at 5:00PM EST</p>
<p>FINAL Application Submission Deadline Full applications are due. No late applications will be accepted.</p>	<p>Monday, May 8, 2026 at 5:00PM EST</p>
<p>Awarded Projects Announced Applicants will be informed of the decision on their application.</p>	<p>Friday, May 15, 2026</p>
<p>Grant Agreement Deadline The grant agreement and post award documents must be signed by the deadline or the award will be forfeited.</p>	<p>Friday, May 22, 2026</p>
<p>Project Deliverable Status Documentation demonstrating the project deliverable is actively in progress is due by deadline. Failure to provide update may result in termination of the grant agreement.</p>	<p>Friday, August 14, 2026</p>
<p>Project Completion Deadline All deliverables must be completed, and reimbursement documentation submitted.</p>	<p>Friday, December 4, 2026</p>

C. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

Property Owners preparing vacant ground-floor commercial space for occupancy.

Tenants / Small Businesses proposing to occupy a vacant ground-floor commercial space and able to provide:

- A fully executed lease; or
- A letter of intent outlining proposed lease terms (*lease must be executed prior to grant agreement*)

Incoming tenants must be properly registered with the City of Toledo.

Joint Applications - A building owner and tenant may apply jointly.

Compliance Requirements

To qualify for funding, all applicants must be in good standing with:

- [City of Toledo Division of Taxation](#): (419) 245-1662
- [City of Toledo Public Utilities](#): (419) 245-1800
- [City of Toledo Code Compliance](#): (419) 245-1400
- [Property taxes - Lucas County Auditor](#): (419) 213-4406

Eligible Buildings

Properties must meet the following criteria:

- Located within the City of Toledo
- Must be zoned commercial, or otherwise appropriately zoned for the proposed use.
- Contain a vacant or underutilized ground-floor commercial space.

Ineligible Buildings

- Exclusively single-family, or multi-family residential buildings
- Buildings occupied, or intended to be occupied, by any of the following:
 - Payday loan businesses
 - Pawn shops
 - Firearm or other weapons dealers
 - Adult entertainment
 - Self-storage
 - Tobacco, vape, and marijuana stores
 - Internet cafes
 - Car washes

Eligible Expenses

Architectural & Design Services

- Code-compliant architectural drawings
- Floor plans, site plans, and space planning
- Structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP) engineering
- Accessibility compliance plans
- Life-safety evaluations
- Interior layout or design concepts necessary for build-out

Deliverables

All reimbursable work must result in professional documents such as:

- Stamped architectural drawings

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- Engineering plans
- Permit-ready plan sets
- Feasibility assessments

Ineligible expenses:

- Renderings not linked to code compliance or permit submission
- Furniture layouts not required for occupancy
- Work started before a grant agreement is executed


D. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Applications must be submitted online via the [Zoom Grants platform](#). No paper or emailed applications will be accepted.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early to allow sufficient time for revisions and completion of all required materials.

Step 1: Pre-Application (Eligibility Screening)

 **Opens: April 6, 2026 9:00am**

 **Closes: May 1, 2026 5:00pm**

Pre-applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Once approved, applicants will receive a link to proceed to the full application.

Required elements include:

- Property address
- Ownership status or signed letter of permission from building owner
- Preliminary budget, funding sources
- Basic description of the intended business use, improvements, and timeline
- Photos of existing interior/exterior conditions
- Certificate of Tax Compliance for the business entity. Certificates can be requested by email at incometax@toledo.oh.gov or by phone at 419-936-2020. ***Allow up to 3 business days for response.***

Pre-Application Outcomes:

- ✓ **Approved** - invited to submit Full Application
- ¶ **Conditional** - minor corrections required
- X **Not Eligible** - notified early and referred to partner organizations for support

Step 2: Full Application (Invitation-Only)

Closes: May 8, 2026 5:00pm

Only applicants whose Pre-Applications are approved may submit a Full Application.

Required elements include:

- Detailed project budget and funding sources
- Quotes from licensed architects/engineers
- Contractor/designer scope of work
- Occupancy: letter of intent, lease, self-occupancy statement, or marketing plan

Incomplete applications will not advance to scoring.

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E. SELECTION PROCESS & EVALUATION CRITERIA

Following the close of the application period, the Department of Economic Development will review applications to ensure that all submission requirements have been met. Applications deemed incomplete will not be scored.

The Vibrancy Incentive Committee (VIC) will review and score eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria outlined below. Upon completion of its review, the VIC will forward its scoring results and funding recommendations to the Mayor, who retains full discretion in determining final awards.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORING	WEIGHT	MAX SCORE
<p>Project Impact The proposed improvements meaningfully enhance the building and surrounding area by activating the space, strengthening the commercial corridor, improving safety and accessibility, encouraging foot traffic, and supporting additional private investment.</p>	0-10	X4	40
<p>Legacy Commercial Corridor This criterion evaluates whether a project is located within a designated Legacy Commercial Corridor. Projects located in a Legacy Commercial Corridor receive (5) points, reflecting their cultural and historical significance and their role in strengthening the economic vitality of the neighborhood.</p>	0/5	X4	20
<p>Historic & Design Preservation Consideration is given to the age of the building in recognition of their historic value and the increased complexity and cost associated with preservation and reinvestment. 5 points: constructed prior to 1900; 4 points: constructed</p>	0-5	X3	15

between 1900–1909; 3 points: constructed between 1910–1929; 2 points: constructed between 1930–1949; 1 point: constructed between 1950–1969; 0 points: constructed in 1970 or later.			
Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Areas This criterion evaluates whether a project is located within a designated Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Area (NRSA). Projects located in a NRSA receive (5) points , reflecting a coordinated effort to prioritize place-based revitalization and maximize impact in strategic neighborhoods.	0/5	X2	10
Project Readiness & Feasibility The project is realistic, well-planned, and ready to move forward. Costs are reasonable for the proposed work, bids reflect typical local pricing, matching funds are secured, and the applicant demonstrates the ability to manage and complete the project without significant related obstacles.	0-5	X2	10
Walkability Score This criterion evaluates whether a project is located within a designated Walkable Oriented Development (WOD) cluster. These clusters, identified in the Forward Toledo Plan , are locations where walkable, mixed-use activity is intentionally concentrated. Projects in WOD clusters receive (5) points , reflecting the project’s potential to contribute to and build upon existing clustered activity.	0/5	X1	5
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE SCORE:			100

F. POST AWARD PROCESS

Award Requirements

Documentation: Awardees will be asked to provide the following documents-

- W-9
- Vendor Registration Form
- Copy of Commercial Building Insurance Policy
- Entity Operating Agreement (if applicable)
- Proof of funds for the project
 - 2025 income statement and balance sheet
 - Business bank statement dated within 45 days
- **Grant Agreement:** Awardees must execute a Planning Grant Agreement with the City of Toledo. All required documents must be provided by May 22, 2026. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the award.
- **Pre-Development Meeting:** Upon request, awardees must participate in a [pre-development meeting](#), to review project details.
- **Project Timeline:** Documentation such as preliminary design plans, or other confirmation demonstrating progress of project deliverable must be submitted by August 4, 2026. Projects that fail to meet required timelines may be terminated.

G. PROJECT COMPLETION AND REIMBURSEMENT

All required reimbursement documentation must be submitted no later than **December 4, 2026**. Once approved, the reimbursement will be processed and issued by check.

To initiate reimbursement, the awardee must submit the following documentation:

- Itemized invoices for all eligible expenses
- Proof of payment (canceled checks or bank statements)
- Copy of finalized plans, drawings or approved deliverable

Recognition of City Support

Awardees are encouraged to recognize the City of Toledo's support through signage, decals, or other agreed-upon acknowledgements, highlighting the partnership in supporting local businesses and neighborhood corridor investment.

The City of Toledo may also publicly recognize awarded projects through press releases, social media, website features, or other public communications to celebrate project milestones and promote continued investment in Toledo's commercial corridors.

DISCLAIMER

The Department of Economic Development, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to modify the above dates; suspend, amend, or modify the provisions of this Notice of Funding Availability, to waive selected requirements or limitations herein, to reject all proposals, to negotiate modifications of proposals, or to award less than the full amount of the funding available; all in its sole and absolute discretion.