



NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY WHITE BOX PLANNING GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

Issue Date: March 15, 2024

Due Date: April 17, 2024

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Applications should be submitted online at:

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

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A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The City of Toledo, Department of Economic Development hereby announces the availability of funding for one White Box Planning Grant. This pilot program is designed to equip property owners with the knowledge and resources to transform their vacant first-floor commercial space into a vibrant, code compliant, and ready-to-customize "white box" space for occupancy by a business, and to establish a pipeline of applicants for future White Box Grants.

The program provides funding to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on a vacant first-floor commercial space. Eligible spaces are located in a designated Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) in the city of Toledo and have no active code violation citations.

The application is open from March 15, 2024 to April 17, 2024. Applications will be reviewed and scored by the City's Incentive Advisory Committee (IAC), using the evaluation criteria contained in this notice. The IAC consists of eight independent citizens that provide oversight of the City's incentive programs. Upon completion of review, the IAC will recommend the top-scoring applications to the Mayor. The Mayor shall have the sole and absolute discretion to award funds.

The program is part of the City's Vibrancy Initiative, which is designed to enhance the city's vitality by supporting revitalization efforts that will create jobs, reduce blight, and preserve and improve structures in our community. A full list of Vibrancy Initiative programs can be found [here](#).

B. SCHEDULE

Milestone	Date
Application Opens Notice of Funding Availability is released and the application opens in ZoomGrants .	Friday, March 15, 2024
Webinar A Zoom webinar will be held to educate potential applicants about the guidelines and application process. The webinar will be recorded and posted to the City of Toledo website. https://toledo-oh-gov.zoom.us/j/85847294512	Monday, March 18, 2024 at 4:00 PM EST
Application Submission Deadline Completed applications are due in ZoomGrants . No late application submissions, amendments to applications, or additional application documents will be accepted.	Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 11:59 PM EST
Awarded Project Announced Applicants will be informed of the decision on their application.	Friday, May 17, 2024
Predevelopment Meeting Awarded applicants are required to meet with City officials at the project site to review proposed work.	Monday, May 20, 2024 to Friday, May 31, 2024
Grant Agreement Deadline The grant agreement must be signed by the deadline or the award will be forfeited and the next highest scoring application will be awarded funding.	Friday, June 7, 2024
Feasibility Study Phase The Feasibility Study will begin once the grant agreement is executed.	Monday, June 10, 2024 to Monday, December 2, 2024
Feasibility Study Completion Deadline The comprehensive code assessment, floor plans, and construction estimate must be complete.	Monday, December 2, 2024

C. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant is in good standing with governmental entities (i.e. current income taxes, property tax, utilities, fees, and have no active code violation citations).
- Applicant owns the building for which they are applying.

Eligible Buildings

Eligible buildings must:

- Be located in the Englewood or Old South End NRSA in the city of Toledo. To check if a building is located in a qualified NRSA, click [here](#).
- Contain a vacant first-floor commercial space
- Have no active code violation citations

Eligible building uses include:

- Commercial use (non-residential)
- Industrial use
- Mixed-use (integrated first-floor commercial and upper floor residential uses)

Ineligible Buildings

Buildings with an exclusively single-family residential, multi-family residential, or storage use, or which contain the following businesses are ineligible:

- Payday loan businesses
- Pawn shops
- Firearm or other weapons dealers
- Adult entertainment
- Franchise and chain businesses
- Self-storage

D. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Applications must be submitted online via the [Zoom Grants platform](#). No paper or emailed applications will be accepted. Required documentation upon submission includes:

- Applicant's W-9 (form provided in application)
- Business Tax Registration Form (form provided in application)
- Vendor Registration Form (form provided in application)
- Copy of Commercial Building Insurance Policy
- Current interior and exterior photos of the subject commercial space
- Entity Operating Agreement (if applicable)
- Entity board resolution authorizing authority to enter into agreements (if applicable)

E. SELECTION PROCESS & EVALUATION CRITERIA

Upon closure of the application, the Department of Economic Development will conduct an initial screening of applications to determine if all submission requirements are met. Any incomplete application will be rejected. Members of the IAC will review, evaluate, and score each eligible application using the evaluation criteria below. Upon completion of review, the IAC will recommend the top-scoring applications to the Mayor. The Mayor shall have the sole and absolute discretion to award funds.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORING	WEIGHT	MAX SCORE
Project Need The applicant convincingly demonstrated the necessity of conducting a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the space. A rating scale from one (1) to five (5) will be used, with one being the lowest and five being the highest. Examples of demonstrating project need could include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of time the space has remained vacant due to historical difficulties in securing long-term tenants. • Number of failed leasing attempts due to the existing condition or layout of the space. • Comparable data showing similar properties in the area that have undergone renovations and successfully attracted a tenant and led to increased tax revenues. • Evidence that the vacant first-floor commercial space has been and is currently being marketed for lease to prospective businesses. • Testimonials or letters from neighboring businesses or property owners expressing support for the renovation. • Evidence of interest or letters of intent from potential tenants who would occupy the renovated space. • Evidence of how the current space does not comply with modern accessibility and inclusivity standards, limiting potential tenant options. 	1-5	X3	15
Historic Preservation The subject property is a building constructed prior to 1970 or has historical or design significance. Projects will be scored as follows: Zero (0): building was built post 1971; One (1): building was built prior to 1970; Two (2): building was built prior to 1950; Three (3): building was built prior to 1930; Four (4): building was built prior to 1910, Five (5): building was built prior to 1900.	0-5	X2	10
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE SCORE:			25

F. POST AWARD PROCESS

The awarded applicant will enter into a White Box Planning Grant Agreement with the City of Toledo to establish the terms and conditions by which the City will provide the funding for the Feasibility Study.

The Agreement must be signed by Friday, June 7, 2024, or the award will be forfeited and the next highest scoring application will be awarded funding.

Once the grant agreement is executed, the City will release a Request for Proposals for Professional Services from qualified firms to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on the awarded applicant's vacant first-floor commercial space. The property owner will be required to provide the City and its consultant(s) access to the entire building to perform the assessments. The deliverables of the feasibility study will include:

- **Comprehensive Code Assessment:** Building, fire code and accessibility standard assessment. The assessment will only apply to the vacant first-floor commercial space. However, design professionals will be asked to identify and review code upgrades that will be required to the building as a whole in order to receive a certificate of completion or certification of completion for the vacant first-floor commercial space.
- **Floor Plans:** Print and digital (CAD) architectural floor plans.
- **Construction Estimate:** A construction cost estimate based on the assessments and other major scope items identified by the design professionals.

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 proposal, or to award less than the full amount of the funding available; all in its sole and absolute discretion.