

Minneapolis awards nearly \$500,000 in small business grants

Written by

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Mayor R.T. Rybak and the Minneapolis City Council approved funding of nearly \$500,000 in grants to Minneapolis business districts. Grants, through the City's **Great Streets Neighborhood Business District Program**

, support technical assistance—planning, financial management and education in legal and tax matters—for small businesses. Grants also support business recruitment and marketing efforts aimed at bringing customers to a business district. The program is one of several finance tools the City offers in support of its small business community.

A “Request for Proposals” was issued in January 2011; 23 proposals from business associations, community development corporations and other non profit organizations focused on business district revitalization were received. The City is funding 15 proposals in amounts of \$5,000 to \$50,000, totaling \$499,873. Recipients include:

- Catalyst Community Partners: \$45,000 for business development and business recruitment. Area: West Broadway Ave.
- East Gateway Partnership: \$34,320 for public safety initiatives. Area: West Broadway Ave.
- Harrison Neighborhood Association: \$29,500 for business organizing and technical assistance. Area: Glenwood Ave.; Glenwood Ave. & Van White Blvd.
- Hennepin Theater Trust: \$50,000 for analysis and planning for commercial space. Area: Hennepin Ave.
- Lake Street Council: \$30,000 for business recruitment and marketing assistance for businesses. Area: East, Midtown, and West Lake Street.
- Latino Economic Development Center: \$46,750 for technical assistance. Area: Midtown; East Lake Street; Central Ave.
- Longfellow Community Council: \$25,645 for real estate/market assessment and Art in Vacant Storefronts initiative. Area: East Lake St.
- Lowry Ave North Collaborative: \$30,588 for real estate and market analysis and business organizing. Area: Penn & Lowry avenues, Emerson & Lowry avenues, Lyndale & Lowry avenues.
- NEON: \$35,000 for business technical assistance. Area: West Broadway Ave., Penn & Lowry avenues, Emerson & Lowry avenues, Lyndale & Lowry avenues.
- Nicollet East Harriet Business Association: \$15,250 for construction mitigation, business technical assistance and marketing.
- Seward Redesign: \$42,245 for business recruitment, business and property owner technical assistance. Area: Franklin Ave./ LRT station area.
- University Area Business Associations: \$30,000 for construction mitigation, business technical assistance, district marketing. Area: Cedar Ave., Riverside Ave., West Bank LRT, 29th Ave. LRT, East Bank LRT station areas.
- Uptown Association: \$9,025 for business education and Adopt-a-Block program. Area: Uptown Activity Center.
- West Bank Business Association: \$30,000 for communication, marketing, and media technical assistance.
- West Broadway Coalition: \$46,550 for web and social media technical assistance, membership drive, networking for businesses and business resource brokering.

Since the Great Streets program was created in 2007, more than 250 businesses have received technical assistance in marketing, bookkeeping, product mix, licensing and code requirements,

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and business planning. This type of technical assistance supports both new and existing businesses.

In addition to providing important goods and services for residents, a significant number of jobs are located in neighborhood business districts. The most recent data, from December 2008, shows 133,802 jobs were located on Minneapolis commercial corridors. Given the economic conditions of the last couple of years, supporting existing businesses as well as growing new businesses and creating jobs is critical.