

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “EDA”) has created and now offers the **Fire Suppression Grant Program** (the “Grant Program”). As part of the City’s Business Retention and Expansion Strategy, the EDA has identified the need to bolster public safety and improve the commercial stock within the city. Setting out to encourage the revitalization, rehabilitation, and restoration of older, underutilized commercial spaces within the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”). Many of the older commercial structures throughout the city lack basic fire suppression systems or infrastructure for said systems. As new businesses seek to develop in the city, they are limited by code requirements for the instillation of fire suppression systems. These improvements are very costly making it difficult for small business to enter and utilize many of the City’s older and smaller commercial spaces. The Fire Suppression Grant Program seeks to assist businesses and property owners in partially alleviating the costs of installing fire suppression systems.

The Grant Program reimburses businesses, tenants, or property owners for eligible improvements up to **fifty percent (50%)** of the total project cost; for a **maximum reimbursement of ~~\$30,000~~ \$50,000**. The applicant is reimbursed once the improvements are completed in accordance with program guidelines. The building or business owner must apply for, be approved for, and sign a grant agreement before doing the work in order to receive the grant.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Applicants must be an owner or a tenant, with approval from the property owner(s), of a commercial or industrial property, or a 501(c)(3) organization in the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”) located along 37th Avenue NE, 37th Place NE, 39th Avenue NE, 40th Avenue NE, University Avenue NE, or Central Avenue NE between 37th and 53rd Avenue NE. Additionally, applicants can qualify if they are the building owner or operator of a licensed non-residential based childcare facility.
- Applicants must be in good standing with the City, including but not limited to, legally operating with proper licensure; and current on property taxes, utility bills, and special assessments.
- No new construction will be considered under this program.
- The use of the building must be commercial, **industrial**, or mixed-use.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Fire safety improvements must be completed by a licensed **fire suppression** contractor and comply with all permitting and inspection requirements:

- Design & Engineering costs directly associated to the fire sprinkler system installation

- Construction and installation of a fire line from the main water line to the building
- Fire sprinkler system equipment/installation
- Associated fire alarm systems/installation in conjunction to a fire sprinkler system

Please note: Labor costs of a contractor, including necessary design work, are eligible costs for reimbursement but cannot exceed 10% of the construction costs.

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Required Application Materials:

- A complete application sent to the attention of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority at the following location: ~~590 40th Ave NE~~ **3989 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421**
- Proof of ownership or signed letter from the property owner acknowledging the scope of work and giving the renter permission to apply for the grant and to complete the proposed work.
- A detailed scope of work
- Electronic copy of drawings or designs
- Submit 2 or more competitive proposals from licensed and bonded contractors. These proposals should give detailed information about the work to be done, the costs, and the project completion schedule. Any contractor that has submitted a competitive detailed estimate may be used. Contractors cannot be changed unless new proposals have been submitted and approved by the EDA.
- Other supporting documents may be requested by staff or the EDA.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Applications will be open and accepted until the initial allocation of funding is exhausted.
2. Upon the Receipt of a complete application Community Development staff will review the planned project with the ~~B~~uilding ~~O~~fficial and ~~F~~ire ~~D~~epartment prior to bringing it before the EDA. During the review staff may request more information or documents related to the project
3. After the EDA's decision applicants will be notified via email correspondence. A Grant Agreement must be approved and signed before commencement of any improvements.
4. Once the Grant Agreement is executed, the Recipient of the grant, may begin the project improvements. ~~T~~he Grantee is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and inspections throughout the process.
5. The grant recipient or its contractor must commence the improvements **within** sixty (60) days after an executed Grant Agreement. The project specified in the agreement must be completed within ten (10) months after the signing of the agreement.
6. Once the project is complete, the grant funds will be disbursed for reimbursement to the applicant after all the following pieces of information have been submitted:
 - a. Proof of Final Inspection by the Building Official and ~~F~~ire ~~D~~epartment
 - b. A Copy of the Final Invoice Received from the Contractor
 - c. Before and After Photographs
 - d. Proof of Payment to the **Licensed Fire Suppression** Contractor (i.e. receipt, invoice, etc.)
 - e. Copies of all applicable permits

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Grants will only be awarded for projects that lead to the installation of a complete fully functioning fire suppression system. Installation of a main line attachment without an immediate plan for the installation of a fire suppression system is also prohibited.
- If costs exceed the original estimates or exceed the maximum of the program, the property owner or tenant will be responsible for the full amount of the excess. The EDA cannot reimburse more than the total amount specified in the Agreement.
- Any work commenced prior to the signing of the ~~Grant~~^{RANT} Agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement funding.