

Critical Corridors Commercial Corridor Initiative

Grant Guidelines

Purpose

The Commercial Corridor Initiative Grant supports Ramsey County’s suburban small business economy by investing in pathways to BIPOC entrepreneurship and in thriving main streets and business districts.

Eligible Applicants

Suburban cities and associated development authorities.

Eligible Activities

- Business recruitment activities.
- Establishment of small-business incubators.
- District-wide marketing, branding, and/or promotion initiatives, including initiatives that are in response to impacts from large-scale public infrastructure projects.
- District-wide planning and design.
- Design and/or implementation of wayfinding, street furniture or other public realm enhancements
- Building facade improvements.
- Technical assistance for commercial corridor initiatives or individual businesses. Includes but not limited to: special service district or business-association establishment; financial, legal, or tax-related services; merchandising, marketing, and social media assistance.

Ineligible Activities

- Redevelopment feasibility or market analyses.
- Land use plans (small area plans, corridor plans, and/or station area plans).
- Land use/zoning studies.
- Parking lot improvements.
- Activities for sites without public frontage.
- Activities that benefit a single business.



Funding

Maximum anticipated award is \$50,000, per project. Projects must be completed by December 31, 2023. Activities completed prior to grant award are not eligible for reimbursement.

Strategic and Selection Priorities

- Suburban Ramsey County – priority commercial corridors as defined by cities.
- Activities directed to improving conditions for job creation and BIPOC entrepreneurship.
- Actions directed to improving coordination among businesses.
- Actions that improve sense of place and/or pedestrian access within important commercial corridors.
- Actions that show a strong connection to the Ramsey County Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan (I.e., creation of small business incubators).
- Demonstrated need for financial assistance.
- Organizational capacity and plan to accomplish project objectives.
- Support from businesses and property owners
- For façade improvement projects:
 - o How the initiative would be administered, including a description of the process and criteria for sub-awarding funds.
 - o Timing of grant disbursement to complete façade improvements.
 - o Leverage requirements, and
 - o Proof of landlord approval and that business is current on property taxes.

Application Process

Applications will be accepted via ZoomGrants between Monday, August 29, 2022 and Wednesday, September 28, 2022. To access the application, visit ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors.

Applications should include:

1. Ramsey County Commercial Corridors Initiative grant application.
2. Map of proposed project area.
3. Letters of support from city and affected business owners.

Funding decisions are anticipated in November 2022. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact Martha Faust at martha.faust@ramseycounty.us or [651-358-4341](tel:651-358-4341) to discuss their project before applying.

Application Evaluation

Ramsey County seeks to address racial equity and ethnic-based disparities where all residents can experience fair outcomes including the highest level of health, wellbeing, and opportunities for advancement and growth. Please review the Ramsey County [Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan](#), [Equitable Development Framework](#) and [Strategic Plan](#) for the County's goals and priorities.

When determining funding awards, the County will prioritize proposals that best meet the County's goals and priorities while aligning with local community priorities. Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of Ramsey County [Community & Economic Development](#) staff and other reviewers as deemed necessary.

Contracting and Reporting

Ramsey County will contract directly with grantees for the portion of the proposed work covered by the grant award. All grantees are required to submit a final report summarizing the project process, outcomes and impacts of completed work. Receiving funds through this program does not guarantee that future capital funding will be made available.