



## White Box Grant

The City-wide White Box Program is designed to provide targeted financial incentives to increase the vitality of the neighborhood commercial corridors. The funds will assist in recruiting new businesses to vacant commercial/retail tenant spaces in commercial buildings. This incentive will offer reimbursable grant funds up to \$25,000.

## Eligible Uses of Funds

The White Box Grant may be used on certain expenditures to prepare a vacant commercial space for tenancy. Eligible expenses typically include base improvements such as flooring, ceiling, rough carpentry, drywall, plumbing, electric, and HVAC.

Business and commercial building owners that receive a White Box Grant continue to be eligible for Façade and Signage Grants. However, White Box Grants may not be used in combination with a RIF grant.

## Additional Information

This is a reimbursement program. For more information regarding required materials for the application, eligibility requirements and application review process, see the White Box Program guidelines and requirements online at [milwaukee.gov/WhiteBox](http://milwaukee.gov/WhiteBox).



**Only properties used for business activity are eligible for these grants. The following are not eligible:**

- Properties whose owner has any tax delinquent property in the City of Milwaukee
- Property in litigation
- Property in condemnation or receivership
- Property owned by religious groups
- Property that is exempt from property taxes
- Properties used for schools, charities, clubs, organizations, etc.
- Exclusively residential buildings
- National franchise or retail chain stores
- Properties purchased from the City of Milwaukee are viewed on a case-by-case basis

*CCT reserves the right to deny grant applications that do not meet program guidelines.*

## Business Resources

Partnerships maximize the opportunities to grow businesses. That's why we've assembled a toolbox of resources designed to jump-start a new business, expand an existing company and support business relocation. We can work together to make your business and our city a success.

**City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development**  
[milwaukee.gov/BusinessToolbox](http://milwaukee.gov/BusinessToolbox)

**City of Milwaukee, Office of Small Business Development**  
[milwaukee.gov/OSBD](http://milwaukee.gov/OSBD)

**City of Milwaukee, Local Business Action Team**  
[milwaukee.gov/LBAT](http://milwaukee.gov/LBAT)

**City of Milwaukee, StartSmart**  
[milwaukee.gov/StartSmart](http://milwaukee.gov/StartSmart)

**Kiva City Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee.gov/Kiva](http://milwaukee.gov/Kiva)

**Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation**  
[medonline.com](http://medonline.com)



Produced by the City of Milwaukee  
Department of City Development  
[milwaukee.gov/dcd](http://milwaukee.gov/dcd)

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## Business Resources

### Guide to Business Toolbox

- **Facade Grants**
- **Signage Grants**
- **Retail Investment Funds**
- **White Box Grants**

The Department of City Development's Commercial Corridor Team (CCT) provides support, technical assistance and business development resources to commercial and retail businesses, and designated commercial districts such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NIDs).

In addition to working with BIDs/NIDs, the team is responsible for technical assistance related to the administration of the City Façade Grants, Signage Grants, Retail Investment Fund (RIF) and White Box Programs.

**[milwaukee.gov/BusinessToolbox](http://milwaukee.gov/BusinessToolbox)**

**(414) 286-2801**

## Retail Investment Fund (RIF)

The Retail Investment Fund (RIF) Program assists retail development projects by providing grants to businesses in commercial districts that create jobs. Home-based businesses do not qualify. The size of the RIF grant is determined by the number of jobs created and the amount of private investment, among other factors. Only eligible, pre-approved grant related expenses will be reimbursed to the grantee.

### Eligible Uses of Funds

Following approval of the application, RIF funds may be used for the activities below:

- Architecture and Engineering (A&E) costs
- Purchase of furniture, fixtures and equipment
- Start-up inventory
- Build out and remodeling

### Matching Funds Required

The RIF Program requires matching of funds and the creation of new jobs. The award generally does not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the project budget (i.e. \$125,000 budget, maximum grant \$25,000). Program may not be used in combination with the White Box Program.

### Additional Information

This is a reimbursement program. For more information regarding required materials for the application, eligibility requirements and application review process, see the RIF Program guidelines and requirements online at [milwaukee.gov/RIF](http://milwaukee.gov/RIF).



### CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

Our team can also work with you to locate a City-owned commercial property for sale for your business.

*Photo below: Before  
Photo at left: After*



## Façade Grant

The Façade Grant Program was established by the Department of City Development to enhance the physical appearance of commercial corridors by providing financial assistance for building enhancements to eligible property owners and lessees. Applicant's total project cost must exceed \$2,000 for eligibility. Routine maintenance and repairs are not eligible. This program provides up to \$5,000 in reimbursements for eligible facades, not to exceed 50% of eligible project costs.

### Eligible Improvements

Eligible improvements that may be considered:

- Complete façade renovation
- New sign (must adhere to façade design guideline)
- Windows and door repair or replacement
- Awnings
- Façade restoration of brickwork and masonry\*
- Landscaping and fencing\*
- Painting or cleaning of the façade exterior\*
- Exterior lighting\*

*\*Eligible only if part of a larger project.*

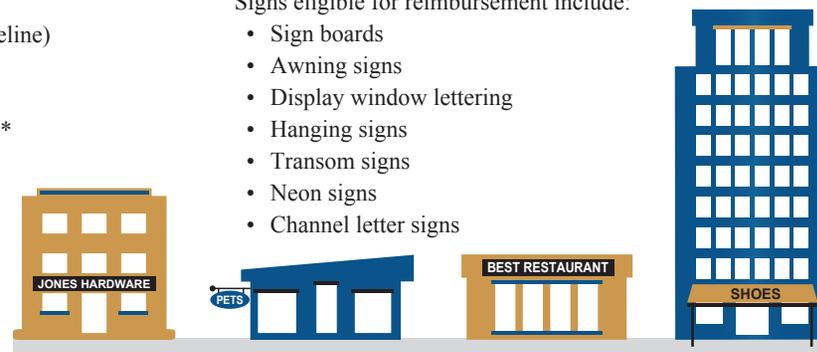
## Signage Grant

The Signage Grant Program was established to provide business owners financial incentive to add signage to commercial buildings in order to better promote their business to patrons and potential customers. This program provides up to \$2,500 toward the cost of approved signage, not to exceed 50% of eligible project costs.

### Signage Types

Signs eligible for reimbursement include:

- Sign boards
- Awning signs
- Display window lettering
- Hanging signs
- Transom signs
- Neon signs
- Channel letter signs



### Additional Information

The Façade Grants and Signage Grants are reimbursement programs. Work done prior to approval of the grants by the Business Resource Committee will be ineligible. For more information regarding required materials for the application, eligibility requirements and application review process, view the Façade Grant application and guidelines online at [milwaukee.gov/facade](http://milwaukee.gov/facade).

**Interested in learning more about any of these programs or need an application?**

Visit us online: [milwaukee.gov/BusinessToolbox](http://milwaukee.gov/BusinessToolbox)

Email us: [facadegrants@milwaukee.gov](mailto:facadegrants@milwaukee.gov)

Call the Business Resource Hotline: (414) 286-8201

Visit us at: Department of City Development, 809 N. Broadway, Room 104, Milwaukee, WI 53202