



## Community Development Investment Program

Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2025	
<b>Lead Division:</b> Business and Community Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Revised</b> 7/1/2024
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Grant</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Loan</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tax Credit</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Technical Assistance</b>

### Introduction

**Background Information:** The Community Development Investment (CDI) program will support urban, small city and rural community redevelopment efforts by providing financial incentives for catalytic, shovel-ready projects emphasizing commercial corridor driven efforts. Funded activities should lead to measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners.

Vibrant Spaces: The Vibrant Spaces funds are awarded through a competitive application process for communities to invest in public projects that will enhance the community as an attractive place to live. The project must demonstrate a collaborative, community-driven effort, such as identified in a community plan or document that has identified it as a positive community investment to be considered eligible.

**Program's Purpose:** The program will support urban, small city and rural community redevelopment efforts by providing financial incentives for catalytic, shovel-ready projects emphasizing commercial corridor driven efforts.

### Eligibility Requirements

**Eligible Applicants:** Community Development Investment grant applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a municipality (including counties, cities, villages, and towns), Tribal entity, other governmental authority, or a private developer designated by a municipality to apply on its behalf
- Provide a signed resolution by the elected governing body authorizing the submittal of the application(s) to the CDI Grant Program.
- Propose a project that does one or more of the following:
  - Develops significant destination attractions.
  - Rehabilitates and reuses underutilized or landmark buildings.
  - Infill development.
  - Historic preservation.
  - Infrastructure efforts, including disaster prevention measures, providing substantial benefits to downtown residents or property owners.
  - Mixed-use development (not exclusively residential).

**Eligible Use of Funds:** CDIs can fund the following activities:



- Building renovation
- Historic preservation
- Demolition
- New construction
- Infrastructure investment
- Building Relocation of CDI project property

An applicant that was impacted by an event that has resulted in a State or Federal Disaster Declaration within the 24 months prior to applying may receive funds for mitigation or preparedness planning and will receive additional considerations including the following:

- WEDC may reduce or waive the match requirements
- Applicants must demonstrate that other funding mechanisms (CDBG, WI Disaster Fund, FEMA, etc.) have been evaluated and fully utilized before applying for WEDC CDI Grant funding.

**Matching:** The applicant must provide matching funds in an amount of 3:1 of the CDI Grant being requested. In any of the following circumstances, the matching funds requirement is reduced to 1:1:

- The project is located in an Economically Distressed or Rural Community.
- The project is located in an Opportunity Zone.
- A key component of a secured/defined development is to provide childcare services or expand housing availability.
- For applicants where the project is in the designated district of a WEDC Main Street Community.

No more than 50% of eligible project costs may consist of other state and/or federal grant sources, excluding federal ARPA funds; exceptions can be made for projects utilizing federal ARPA funds.

#### Vibrant Spaces:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Vibrant Spaces grants can fund the following activities:

- Public Space Enhancements (including, but not limited to alleys, programmable park spaces)
- Public Signage (limited to wayfinding, interpretative signage, kiosks)
- Seasonal equipment with the intent to be used annually (such as tables, chairs, bike racks, etc.)
- Parklets
- Public infrastructure projects (including public restrooms to serve public spaces)

**Ineligible Use of Funds:** Activities ineligible for program assistance or match Include, but are not limited to:

- Events
- Private spaces that are not open to the public



- Activities that are otherwise eligible to be funded through other programs offered by WEDC
- Past costs
- In-kind contributions
- Indirect expenses (a.k.a. "soft costs")

**Matching:** The applicant must provide matching funds in an amount of 1:1 of the Vibrant Spaces grant being requested.

### **Available Incentives**

**FY25:** \$7,750,000

\$6,500,000 CDI Grant Funds.

\$1,250,000 Vibrant Spaces Funds.

**Award Sizes:** The maximum CDI grant may not exceed \$250,000.

**Awards per Applicant:** No more than one grant per fiscal year shall be located within the boundary of a municipality, unless the applicant is in an economically distressed community or opportunity zone; in which case applicants can apply for up to two CDI grants per fiscal year.

**Award Sizes:** Vibrant Spaces grants will be between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

**Awards per Applicant:** Applicants may receive one Vibrant Spaces Grant in any fiscal year. Entities can only receive one Vibrant Spaces award per community. Receiving a Vibrant Spaces grant does not preclude a community from applying for general CDI grants.

### **Activities and Expected Outcomes**

CDI Grant: Assist 26 communities and achieve a 15:1 leverage of other investment.

**Impact:** Funded activities should lead to measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners.

### **Metrics:**

- Leverage – Total.
- Capital investment.
- Taxable Property Value.
- Site Work – Demolition, if applicable.
- Site Work - Renovation/Rehabilitation, if applicable.

**Vibrant Spaces:** Assist 30 communities in creating an open space for public use in their commercial corridor.



**Impact:** Funded activities should lead to measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners.

**Metrics:**

- Total leverage.
- Capital investment, taxable property value, site work – demolition, and site work – renovation/rehabilitation, if applicable.

**Application Guideline**

**Timeline:** The CDI program has a continuous application process.

**Vibrant Spaces:** The Vibrant Spaces grant has a competitive application process and utilizes a scoring rubric to rank projects.

**Review Considerations:** WEDC may take the following into account when considering a CDI award:

- Impact on the community.
- Located in an Economically Distressed community.
- Financial justification.
- Previous planning efforts.
- Alignment with Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)/Economic Development District (EDD) plan for the region.
- Readiness to proceed demonstrated by financial commitments in place.
- Involvement of public-private partnerships and public/community support and collaboration.
- Demonstrates involvement of diverse businesses, including women and veteran-owned contractors, in eligible project costs.
- Primary building occupant is a diverse-, woman-, or veteran-owned business(es).
- Primary building purpose serves the communities of diverse-, women-, veteran-, or low- and moderate-income individuals.
- Clean energy technology investments included in the project (ex. solar panels, electric vehicle charging stations, use of state energy audit and/or energy rebate programs, etc.).
- Quality Urban Design: balancing preservation of existing heritage structures and streetscapes with new development.
- Other factors determined by WEDC.

**Vibrant Space Scoring Criteria:** WEDC will include but not limit the scoring of Vibrant Spaces applications to the following categories:

- Budget and match funding.
- Demonstrated community support and partnerships.
- Impact on community, district, and businesses.
- Space attracts multiple user groups/activities.
- Visible pedestrian-oriented public space.

**How to Apply:** An interested applicant should contact a WEDC Account Manager to determine if their project is right for the program. Upon review of the project, and



alignment with eligibility criteria, an applicant will be invited to submit their application through Network Wisconsin.

### Vibrant Spaces

**Award Process:** The completed application will be assigned to an underwriter and go through the award review process.

**Performance Reporting:** Recipients must annually submit a performance report documenting capital investment, assessed taxable property values, and any other contract deliverable. Vibrant Spaces recipients will submit one performance report at the project's completion.

WEDC annually selects awards on a sample basis for an audit. All backup to the performance report and financial records are required to be maintained by the Recipient for a period of at least three (3) years after the last performance report is due.

WEDC may impose additional reporting requirements to evaluate project performance and to ensure compliance with contract deliverables.

### **Helpful Information**

#### **Definitions:**

"Economically Distressed" - a county or municipality so designated by WEDC by considering the most current area and state data available for the following indicators:

- Unemployment rate
- Percentage of families with incomes below the poverty line
- Median family income
- Median per capita income
- Average annual wage
- Manufacturing assessment values by county
- Other significant or irregular indicators of economic distress – such as a natural disaster, or plant closings and layoffs

"Opportunity Zone" - a designated qualified opportunity zone in the State of Wisconsin under Internal Revenue Code § 1400Z-1.

"Rural Community" - a city, village, or town with a population less than 5,000.

### **Revision History**

#### **Program Inception – Fiscal Year 2013**

- 7/1/2017: Consideration of multiple applications per community per fiscal year when funding is available, removes limitation of one CDI or BF grant per project, Added project or site development planning as eligible activity

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 7/1/2018: Allow applicants in a Designated Rural County to receive more than one grant per fiscal year, Reserve 50 percent of program funding for projects in a Designated Rural County
- 7/1/2019: Allow applicants in an Opportunity Zone to receive more than one grant per fiscal year; allow recipients to submit performance reports annually; clarify performance reporting requirements
- 7/1/2020: Expanded eligibility and funding for COVID-19 recovery initiative.
- 7/1/2021: Eliminated temporary CARES Act provisions; removed eligibility for planning projects; replaced Designated Rural County with Economically Distressed; added consideration for diverse businesses
- 7/1/2022: Expands considerations to determine making a CDI Grant; Adds Vibrant Spaces Pilot
- 7/1/2023: Defines Rural Community; reduces match requirement for rural communities and projects with key components of providing childcare or expanding housing availability; allows for developers to be the applicant/recipient entity.
- 7/1/2024: Expands eligible use of funds; updated review considerations to include clean energy investments; funds Vibrant Spaces