City of Chicago
NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY FUND

DPD
Department of Planning and Development

somercor
Catalysts for the entrepreneurial dream
What is the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund?

Getting Started
• Does my project meet the NOF Eligibility Requirements?
• How are Grants calculated?
• What Technical Assistance is available to help me with my project?

Application Process
• How do I apply?
• Are there tips for successful applications?
• Where can I find resources to help me?

Next Steps
• How are finalists selected?
• What happens if I am selected as a finalist?
NOF provides **Financial Grants** of up to $250,000 per project and **Technical Assistance** to neighborhood business projects on the City’s South, Southwest, and West sides.

The goals of the program are to:

- **Support** Local entrepreneurs and small businesses
- **Attract** Neighborhood businesses and cultural amenities
- **Provide** Resources to ongoing economic development
• Expansion or Renovation for existing businesses

• New locations for start-up businesses or existing businesses

• New construction at vacant properties

Small Grants Track
• Grants up to $250,000
• Competitive selection process based on application details
• Grantees are expected to complete their projects within 2 years

Large Grants Track
• Grants greater than $250,000
• City Council approval required
• Grantees must meet M/WBE construction requirements as well as other conditions as stated in the project’s redevelopment agreement (RDA)

NOF Large is not covered in this presentation.
GETTING STARTED: ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

✓ Commercial Property Owners with known business uses (no speculative/vanilla box projects)
✓ Commercial Business Tenants (with landlord approval)
✓ Non-Profit organizations providing a revenue generating commercial activity to the public

✗ Residential properties including home-based businesses and live/work spaces
✗ Manufacturing or industrial businesses or properties
✗ Social services organizations including workforce development, schools and daycare centers
✗ Churches and places of worship
### GETTING STARTED: ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Not Eligible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Major exterior and interior renovations to existing businesses</td>
<td>✗ Minor repairs or improvements when not part of a larger renovation project (example: painting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Build-outs for incoming businesses</td>
<td>✗ Work on residential units or the residential portion of a mixed-use building</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Building acquisition*, site preparation and demolition</td>
<td>✗ Repairs to address building code violations</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Architectural and engineering fees</td>
<td>✗ Business operating expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Roofing, masonry/façade, windows and doors</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Mechanical systems such as HVAC, electrical and plumbing</td>
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<td>✓ Security systems</td>
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* Only eligible expenses can be covered by NOF grant funds. Other items can be included in the total project cost, but those will not be reimbursable.

* Acquisition costs can not be paid with NOF grant funds; however it can be used to increase the amount of grant available for property renovation or new construction costs.
NOF Small Grant projects must be located on an eligible, priority or Invest South/West corridor.

To verify whether a project is on one of these corridors, visit chicago.gov/nof
Grant funds are awarded based on total eligible project costs and applicant eligibility for Building Community Wealth Bonuses (BCWB)

In addition to the base grant, there are 2 Building Community Wealth Bonus (BCWB) options - one for applicants who are residents of the NOF QIA and one for applicants who intend to hire local residents of the NOF QIA after completion of their project. Applicants who are eligible for both BCWBs may receive up to 100% of their eligible project costs covered in their grant. However, since the local hiring bonus is not applied until after project completion, all applicants will have to contribute a minimum of 25% while completing their project.

Regardless of the total project cost or BCWBs, the maximum award amount for small grants is $250,000
In addition to grant funds, NOF also has technical assistance service providers to help grantees get their projects across the finish line:

- **Architects**
- **Construction Managers**
- **Financial Consultants/Lending Coaches**

Up to 95% of the cost of hiring these TAs can be included in the calculation of the grant award!
The NOF application process is completely online. To apply visit [https://Chicago.gov/NOF](https://Chicago.gov/NOF)
STEP 1: Verify your project is in an eligible location and an allowable industry

Eligible Areas

Properties qualify for funding based on their location in certain commercial corridors. Find out if your property eligible for funding!

Search your address to see if your property qualifies →

CLICK HERE

ENTER ADDRESS
APPLICATION PROCESS: HOW DO I APPLY?

STEP 1: Verify your project is in an eligible location and an allowable industry
APPLICATION PROCESS: HOW DO I APPLY?

STEP 2: If your project is determined to be eligible, you will automatically be directed to complete the Project Readiness Quiz. All applicants must complete the quiz before submitting a grant application.

- 7 multiple choice questions for the applicant, no materials needed
- See if sufficient project planning has been completed
- Save time for applicants who may not be ready by directing them to resources for assistance
- Applicants who demonstrate readiness are provided with a unique application code which is needed to apply
APPLICATION PROCESS: HOW DO I APPLY?

STEP 3: After receiving an application code, you are ready to apply!

1. Click “Continue” on the application code window to be directed to the application

2. Create your account on Submittable.com

3. Begin the application - incomplete applications may be saved and continued later

4. Upload all supplemental files to ensure your project is accurately reviewed

5. Review your application to ensure accuracy and completeness

All applications must be submitted before the deadline. Partial or late applications will not be accepted.
APPLICATION TIP 1: PROJECT READINESS

Successful applications must show sufficient planning to demonstrate feasibility and the applicant’s readiness to begin as soon as possible.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

**Site Control:** Does the applicant have site control? If not, is the applicant able to demonstrate a secured path to site control?

**Plan for Construction:** Does the applicant provide a knowledgeable plan for how and when the project will begin and end?

**Itemized Costs (Budget):** Has the applicant worked with an architect and/or GC to develop a project budget with hard and soft costs fully itemized?

**Applicant Equity (Funding Capacity):** Has the applicant secured any of the additional funds necessary to complete the project? If not, can the applicant demonstrate capacity to do so?
APPLICATION TIP 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Successful applications show knowledge of the neighborhood’s unique needs and priorities and responds to the community’s interests

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Community Plans: Has the applicant reviewed the published community plans for the area to know the goals of the neighborhood?

Community Engagement: Does the applicant demonstrate engagement with the community through business or personal experience? Is the proposed project supported by local residents or local community organizations?

Corridor Conditions: Does the applicant show an awareness of the existing services/amenities in the area? Does the applicant know about new business projects nearby, or how the applicant’s proposed project will affect the corridor?
APPLICATION TIP 3: DESIGN IMPACT

Project Design is critical to the success of not only the business but makes a statement regarding the community which it serves. Successful applicants have thought carefully about the design of their project and will engage a Design Professional when appropriate.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

**Equity & Inclusion:** Achieving fair treatment, targeted support, and prosperity for all citizens

**Innovation:** Implementing creative approaches to design and problem solving

**Sense of Place:** Celebrating and strengthening the culture of our communities

**Sustainability:** Committing to environmental, cultural, and financial longevity

**Communication:** Fostering design appreciation and responding to community needs
APPLICATION PROCESS: AVAILABLE RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR NOF APPLICANTS
Available at https://neighborhoodopportunityfund.com/applicant-support

Contents

Community Partners
Project Readiness
Financial Feasibility
Construction Planning
Catalytic Impact

Applicant Support

Get assistance from NOF Community Partners

Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) has over 20 partner organizations supporting NOF applicants, grantees, and alumni. These organizations work in Chicago’s communities and provide assistance to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow their business ventures and enterprises. From hosting NOF information sessions, presenting topically relevant workshops, to providing one-on-one applicant coaching sessions, these organizations are available and ready to support you.
APPLICATION PROCESS: AVAILABLE RESOURCES

COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR NOF APPLICANTS
List available at https://neighborhoodopportunityfund.com/eligibility/
Application Dates for 2021 Round 2:
Monday, August 16th - Friday, September 24th

Grant Finalists will be announced in January 2022

• Applicants are encouraged to work with community partners in order to develop strong and competitive projects
• All interested applicants must complete the project readiness quiz
• Applications must be submitted online, no late or hard copy applications will be accepted
• Online application is only for small grants (maximum $250,000)

APPLICANTS SHOULD START PLANNING THEIR PROJECTS NOW

NEXT STEPS: APPLICATION PERIOD
After the application deadline, all applications are reviewed and prioritized based on the project strength and readiness. The number of selected projects is based on the available grant funds and will be announced as NOF Finalists.
RESOURCES FOR SELECTED NOF FINALISTS

**Technical Assistance Program** – lending coaches, architects, and construction managers which grantees can elect to hire to help complete the project.

**Concierge Support** – City staff to help support and answer questions regarding building permits, construction timelines, city inspections, business licensing, etc.

**Business Marketing** – City recognition for completed projects via social media marketing, grand openings and ribbon cuttings.

Finalists are expected to complete their projects within 2 years. Loss of site control or project delays will lead to revocation of grant awards.
NEXT STEPS: GET INSPIRED

Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream – 46 E. 47th Street (Bronzeville)
NEXT STEPS: GET INSPIRED

Osito’s Tap – 2553 S Ridgeway Ave (Little Village)
NEXT STEPS: GET INSPIRED

AGB Investigative Services - 2445 W. 71st St. (Chicago Lawn)

BEFORE

AFTER
NEXT STEPS: GET INSPIRED

345 Art Gallery - 345 N. Kedzie Ave. (East Garfield Park)

BEFORE

AFTER
CONTACT INFORMATION

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nof@cityofchicago.org  (Small Grants Track)
FID_Intake@cityofchicago.org  (Large Grants Track)

http://Chicago.gov/NOF
NOF Open Application Period

August 16th to September 24th