

## 2021 Whiting Small Business Incentive Program

### I. ELIGIBILITY

The Whiting Small Business Incentive Program is designed to foster the growth of small businesses in the Downtown Business District or Indianapolis Boulevard Business District. The Program is open to those who meet the following requirements:

- New Whiting business;
- Located on the 119<sup>th</sup> Business District from Atchison up to and including Front Street **or** on the Indianapolis Boulevard Business Corridor from Atchison Avenue to New York Avenue;
- Submit a completed grant application

#### **New Businesses**

New businesses are those seeking to locate, relocate from outside of Whiting city limits, or significantly expand their operations within the Downtown Business District. A qualified business which commences operation on or after December 1, 2020 shall be eligible to apply in 2021 for the grants(s). A new business must apply for the grant within six (6) months of commencing operation.

### II. GENERAL REGULATIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

- A. Any entity which has a Development Agreement with the Whiting Redevelopment Commission or the City of Whiting is NOT eligible for any grant on the property/project covered in the Development Agreement unless specifically stated in the agreement.
- B. All grants are subject to available funding.
- C. Grants will not be distributed prior to commencement of operation.
- D. Certain service businesses are excluded from grant eligibility, including but not limited to:
  - a. Nationally franchised business of any type;
  - b. Professional offices such as legal, medical, dental, financial, or insurance;
  - c. Barber/beauty shops, tattoo/piercing parlors, spas;
  - d. Thrift/resale stores;
  - e. Cell phone stores;
  - f. Taverns;
  - g. Payday loans/check-cashing establishments or pawn shops;
  - h. Private or social clubs and non-profits;
  - i. Home occupations;
  - j. Any other personal service oriented business.
- E. An applicant may not owe any past due property taxes, water/sewer/garbage bills, or fines due to the Whiting City Court for previous violations.

### III. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The following types of grants are offered to incentivize/stimulate the growth of new businesses in Whiting. A total of \$7,500 will be available to businesses accepted into the program. Of this amount, \$1,500 is reserved for signage, leaving a balance of up to \$6,000 for the Business Start-Up Grant.

## **A. Signage**

Commercial signage that conforms to Whiting Historic Preservation Commission guidelines is required of any business within the Downtown District. Additionally, it is required of all new businesses seeking assistance through the Redevelopment Commission. To aid toward such a requirement, the Redevelopment Commission offers a maximum of \$1,500 toward signage. This will be a reimbursement grant. ***NOTE: Established businesses located in one of the designated corridors MAY apply only for the signage reimbursement grant.***

The Commission may authorize up to \$1,500 toward the purchase of a sign upon receipt and review of the grant application. The applicant must also provide a rendering or drawing of the proposed sign.

To apply for signage reimbursement funds, the applicant must provide proof of the following: permission of the building owner, proper permitting from the Whiting Building Department, a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission (if applicable) and proof of payment to a sign vendor.

The Redevelopment Commission strongly encourages applicants to consider Whiting-based businesses when contracting for goods and services toward which our assistance will be provided.

## **B. Application**

- a. A new business owner shall complete the attached application form.
- b. All required attachments must be filed with the grant application.
- c. The applicant must also attach a narrative with the following information:
  1. Vision, purpose, aim or goal of establishment;
  2. Financial viability of operation – including but not limited to previous business experience, dollar value of personal investment, number of new employees and rent/mortgage payment;
  3. Hours of operation;
  4. Marketing/advertising strategy;
  5. Nature of merchandise served or sold;
  6. Plans for community engagement.

## **C. Business Start-Up Grant**

The Redevelopment Commission may provide grant assistance in an amount up to \$6,000 for any of the following types of assistance, to be determined by the business owner:

- Rental Assistance
- Utilities Assistance
- Advertising Assistance
- Moving Expenses
- Interior Renovation

- Equipment for business location
- The funds may **NOT** be used for payroll or personal expenses of the owner.

#### **Rental Assistance**

The grant proceeds may be used for rental assistance for businesses locating within the designated corridors.

#### **Utilities Assistance**

The grant proceeds may be used for utilities assistance (natural gas, electrical, water, etc.) for businesses locating within the designated corridors.

#### **Advertising Assistance**

The grant proceeds may be used for any advertising that promotes the place of business in a way that also promotes the City of Whiting and its business district (to the exclusion of other locations). Advertising should occur in recognized print, online, broadcast, or traditional outdoor media.

#### **Moving Assistance**

The grant proceeds may be used for moving-related expenses. Allowable expenses include payment of professional movers for the relocation of equipment and merchandise related to the opening of the business.

#### **Interior Renovation**

The grant proceeds may be used for interior renovation that supports the creation of commercial space in the designated corridors. The business owner must secure approval of the building owner and proper permitting and contractor licensing from the Whiting Building Department prior to renovation.

#### **Equipment for Business Location**

The grant proceeds may be used to purchase equipment for the operation of the business at the eligible location. This does not include the purchase of inventory.

### **IV. PAYMENT**

Before the Grant funds may be released, the applicant must provide a copy of the executed lease for the business location (if applicable), a copy of the City of Whiting business license, and copies of all other permits required for the business operation (i.e., health permits, liquor licenses, etc.). Payment will be authorized at the next regularly scheduled Redevelopment Commission meeting (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month) after which the completed documentation has been submitted.

### **V. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Within six (6) months after receipts of the funds, the grantee shall be required to submit a written report documenting the expenditure of funds. The report should be a short narrative categorizing the expenditures with receipts attached. The report should be submitted to: Redevelopment Director, Whiting City Hall, 1443 – 119<sup>th</sup> Street, Whiting, IN 46394.

**WHITING SMALL BUSINESS INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Mailing Address of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_

Street

City

ZIP

Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant assistance applied for: \_\_\_\_\_ New Business Grant  
\_\_\_\_\_ Signage Reimbursement Grant

Date business commenced operation: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the guidelines for this Program. I understand that an application for funding is not a guarantee of funding and disbursement of funds will be made in compliance with the terms of the program. I have attached the required narrative and all other documents required in Section IV. I understand that approval by the Whiting Redevelopment Commission is subject to availability of funds. I understand and agree that I must submit the written report required by the program within six (6) months of receipt of funds. Further, I affirm that the information I have provided is true and accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*For internal purposes:*

Applicant # \_\_\_\_\_ Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_ Declined on: \_\_\_\_\_