

# HENNEPIN COUNTY MINNESOTA

## 2025 Request for Applications

### Love Local Storefronts



Application period opens:  
Application period closes  
Deadline for questions:

Thursday, October 2, 2025  
Thursday, October 16, 2025  
Thursday, October 9, 2025



## Introduction

Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (“HRA”) is offering the Love Local Storefronts program to help cities enhance their local business districts through improvements to building façades.

The goals of Love Local Storefronts are to:

- Improve the vibrancy of Hennepin County small business districts
- Preserve community and cultural heritage
- Support locally owned small and mid-sized businesses
- Invest in projects that would not advance without HRA support

Up to \$225,000 is available for the 2025/2026 program cycle in the Love Local Storefronts program.

## Eligibility

LGUs, including municipalities, housing and redevelopment authorities, economic development authorities, or port authorities are eligible applicants. However, municipalities that have received HRA Business District Initiative funding for façade improvements in the past two years are not eligible. Funding prioritization will be given to LGUs that plan to award funds to projects located within a business district without a separate façade improvement program.

A business district is defined as an area, such as a main street or neighborhood business node, characterized by foot traffic and street-facing storefronts with a majority of locally-owned small businesses, including retail, dining, or service businesses. It excludes office or industrial parks and focuses on clusters of commercial activity that serve the general public.

If you are unsure if a building or geographic area is located in a business district, please contact HRA program staff with questions.

## Program details

Love Local Storefronts aims to offer a consistent façade improvement program to LGUs through a competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. This RFA invites applications from LGUs with interest and capacity to administer, promote, and invest in a city-run façade improvement program that meets program goals and requirements while improving local business districts.

- The maximum award amount is \$50,000 per city.
  - Minimum reimbursement per project is \$5,000.
  - Maximum reimbursement per project is \$15,000.
- A 1:1 match is required. The match may be provided by the Local Governmental Unit (LGU) or the LGU may require the participating property owners to provide it.

- While the LGU is not required to provide any matching funds, a financial contribution from the LGU is encouraged and will be considered during the proposal evaluation.
- The HRA will negotiate a grant agreement with successful applicants that outlines eligible uses of funds and other program terms. Grant funds will be disbursed to awardees on a reimbursement basis. Only activities that occur after the date of a grant award are eligible for reimbursement.
- Applicants must explain how they will ensure that proposed façade improvements, such as windows, doors, and exterior details, will elevate the public realm and maintain high-quality design standards that prioritize aesthetic quality over low-maintenance solutions.
- Successful applicants must limit individual property owners to one Love Local Storefronts reimbursement each, within a two-year period.
- Grant funds may only be used on building façades facing a public street.
- If an eligible property is not occupied when the property owner applies to an LGU grantee for funding, there must be a signed lease agreement in place with business that meets the project eligibility criteria (below). The LGU must provide a copy of a lease to qualify for reimbursement.
- To qualify for reimbursement, LGU grantees must submit:
  - Before and after photos of all completed projects;
  - Final invoice(s) from any contractor(s) showing the total project cost;
  - Proof of LGU reimbursement (to either the property owner or the contractor, depending on the LGU program), including but not limited to lien waiver(s), cancelled check(s), and/or final receipt(s)
    - The LGU may reimburse property owners upon proof of payment to contractor, or pay contractors directly upon agreement with the property owner. County reimbursement to the LGU requires submission of the above documentation to prove that there are no claims against the property and that the debt is satisfied.
- Successful applicants may not award funds to non-profit enterprises that primarily serve the non-profit's members rather than the public (i.e. employee or school cafeteria or coffee shop within a larger facility), or that do not maintain regular business hours (i.e. fundraising events or pop-up sales) Successful applicants may not award funds to national franchise chains, even if locally owned.

## Project eligibility

Facade improvement project must include the following characteristics to be eligible for reimbursement:

- Be a commercial building in an LGU's designated business district;
- Contain at least:
  - one for-profit independent, locally owned retail, food and beverage, or service business with 50 or fewer employees that is open to the public, or;
  - one non-profit organization with an enterprise that is open to the general public and operates in a manner similar to a business with regular hours (i.e. a thrift shop, coffee shop, etc.);

- Be current on property taxes;
- Property owner must demonstrate their ability to complete the project within nine months of city approval. All work funded through Love Local Storefronts must be completed by December 31, 2026.

Successful applicants must ensure that eligible property owners are registered and in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State. Property owners barred from contracting with the federal government or the State of Minnesota due to debarment or suspension, those involved in developing or managing residential housing, those primarily earning from passive investments, lobbying, gambling, or adult entertainment, and those whose income is mainly derived from asset appreciation and resale are not eligible to receive funding for projects through this program.

### Eligible activities:

The following building façade improvements are eligible for reimbursement under this program:

- Exterior painting or re-siding
- Restoration of exterior finishes and materials
- Masonry repairs and tuck pointing
- Removal of architecturally incompatible exterior finishes and materials
- Restoration of historically appropriate or accurate architectural details
- Repair, replacement, or installation of windows and doors
- Window and cornice flashing and repair
- Canopy or awning installation or repair
- Installation or repair of permanent exterior signage on the building
- ADA improvements on the exterior of the property
- Additional improvements not listed as ineligible (below) may be considered with prior approval from HRA staff

### Ineligible activities:

The following activities are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Improvements completed prior to date of city's grant award
- Improvements outside of the project scope
- Items considered routine maintenance
- Billboards
- Roofing
- Mechanical and HVAC systems
- Interior work
- Temporary signs or improvements
- Interior window displays
- Security systems
- Trash and mechanical enclosures
- Landscaping

- Parking lot improvements
- Fencing
- Improvements not visible from the street
- Improvements to buildings that have received façade improvement awards with Hennepin County funds within the last three years

## Application process

Applications are **due by 3:00 p.m. October 16, 2025**, via the Hennepin County [Supplier Portal](#).

Applications must include the following items:

- 2025 Love Local Storefronts Application
- Map(s) of project area(s)
- Proposed program guidelines and implementation plan, if available
- Resolution, or letter(s) of support

The HRA anticipates making funding recommendations to the HRA Board in November or December 2025, but this timeline is subject to change. Awards are not final until approved by the HRA Board.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to submit questions prior to the deadline. Questions must be submitted via email to Laura Fredrick, [laura.fredrick@hennepin.us](mailto:laura.fredrick@hennepin.us), no later than 3:00p.m. on October 9. Program staff cannot answer any questions about Love Local Storefronts after October 9. Responses will be posted by October 10, on the Supplier Portal.

Send questions to:

Subject line: Love Local Storefronts RFA

To: Laura Fredrick

Email: [laura.fredrick@hennepin.us](mailto:laura.fredrick@hennepin.us)

Copy: Christine Longwell

Email: [christine.longwell@hennepin.us](mailto:christine.longwell@hennepin.us)

## Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following priorities:

- **Completeness and clarity of proposal**, including:
  - Clear description of program and how it will be implemented
  - Detailed list of tasks or activities with explanation for how they will result in completion of façade improvement projects within the program timeframe
  - Complete description of project area

- **Alignment with Love Local Storefronts program priorities**
  - Degree to which the proposed activities will improve the visual appeal and enhance the cultural heritage of the identified business district
  - Degree to which the proposed activities will improve vibrancy of the small business node
  - Ability to help locally owned small and medium-sized businesses with projects that would not otherwise happen
  
- **Readiness and need**
  - Organizational capacity for implementing project
  - Support from business and property owners
  - Expressed support from City Council or governing body
  - Identified matching sources of funds for the proposed activities and additional investments in the business district
  - Priority will be given to projects proposed in business districts without an existing façade improvement program

## Reporting and compliance:

Cities must maintain thorough records and submit required documentation to Hennepin County. County staff may perform periodic compliance checks and audits. Cities are responsible for ensuring that selected properties adhere to all guidelines, with reimbursement contingent upon full compliance. The HRA has a strong interest in measuring the impact of Love Local Storefronts awards. It is expected that cities will work with HRA staff to develop a process and metrics for evaluating the results of the Love Local Storefronts award made, including before and after photos, pre-and post-intervention assessments. Successful applicants will be encouraged to provide baseline and follow-up data to evaluate the impact of their projects.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of Hennepin County Housing and Economic Development staff and additional reviewers as deemed necessary to thoroughly evaluate applications as needed to ensure a thorough assessment of proposals.

**We encourage LGUs to share Hennepin County's [business recycling and waste prevention grants](#) with local businesses and nonprofits.** These programs offer up to \$3,000 in recycling and composting supplies, competitive grants for waste prevention projects, and support to reduce single-use plastics.

## General rules

### RFA overview

This Request for Applications ("RFA") is an invitation for Proposers to submit a proposal to the HRA. It is not to be construed as an official and customary request for bids, but as a means by which the HRA can facilitate the acquisition of information related to the purchase of services. Any proposal submitted is a suggestion to negotiate and **NOT A BID**.

### Proposal submission

Proposals will be received in the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal](#). To submit a proposal, you must first register with the Supplier Portal. For more information on how to register, go to the [Supplier Portal help page](#). Register early to allow enough time to resolve technical issues which could cause you to miss out on this contract opportunity.

**Proposers are strongly encouraged to make their submissions well in advance of the proposal due date as the process may take some time to complete.**

Failure to submit a proposal on time may be grounds for rejection of the proposal; however, the HRA reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to accept proposals after the proposal due date.

### Questions and communication restrictions

Questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing via e-mail with the subject line Love Local Storefronts RFA to the following:

[Laura.Fredrick@Hennepin.us](mailto:Laura.Fredrick@Hennepin.us) Copy to: [Christine.Longwell@hennepin.us](mailto:Christine.Longwell@hennepin.us)

Proposers shall not communicate, verbally or otherwise, with any HRA or County personnel or relevant consultant(s) concerning this RFA, except for the persons listed in this section. This restriction may be suspended or removed by the authority and direction of the persons listed above. If any Proposer attempts or completes any unauthorized communication, Hennepin County may, in its sole and absolute discretion, reject the Proposer's proposal.

### Addenda

The County reserves the right to modify the RFA at any time prior to the proposal due date. An addendum will be posted in the Supplier Portal if the RFA is modified. Addenda may be viewed by clicking on the 'View Documents' on the Event Details page. It is the responsibility of each prospective Proposer to assure receipt of all addenda.

The HRA will modify the RFA only by formal written addenda. Proposer's proposal should be based on this RFA document and any formal written addenda. Proposers should not rely on oral statements, including those occurring at pre-proposal meetings or site visits.

### HRA's right to withdraw, cancel, suspend and/or modify RFA

The HRA reserves the right to withdraw, cancel, suspend, and/or modify this RFA for any reason and at

any time with no liability to any prospective Proposer for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with the RFP or otherwise.

### Proposer's right to edit or cancel proposal

Proposer may edit, submit, resubmit and/or cancel or withdraw its proposal at any time before the proposal due date. For instructions go to the [Supplier Portal help page](#).

### Proposals will not be returned

Upon submission, proposals will not be returned.

### Public disclosure of proposal documents

Under Minnesota law, proposals are private or nonpublic until the proposals are opened on the proposal due date. Once the proposals are opened, the name of the Proposer becomes public. All other data in the proposal is private/nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process. The evaluation process is completed when the HRA enters into a grant agreement with a Proposer. At that time, all remaining data submitted by all Proposers is public with the exception of data classified as private/non-public trade secret data under Minn. Stat. § 13.37 of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

**Proposers must not submit trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37, as part of their proposal.** The HRA does NOT consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by the statute. Proposers may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration, if applicable.

The Proposer agrees, as a condition of submitting its proposal, that the HRA will not, as between the parties, be liable or accountable for any loss or damage which may result from a breach of confidentiality related to the proposal. The Proposer agrees to indemnify and hold the HRA and the County, their officials, agents, and employees harmless from all claims arising out of, resulting from, or in any manner attributable to any violation of any provision of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, including legal fees and disbursements paid or incurred to enforce this provision. This indemnification survives the HRA's award of any grant agreements. In submitting a proposal in response to this RFA, the Proposer agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the Proposal is in the HRA's possession. The HRA is required to keep all the basic documents related to its contracts, including RFP proposals, for a minimum of seven years.

### Proposer's costs

The HRA shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Proposer in connection with this RFP. Proposer shall bear all costs associated with proposal preparation, submission, and attendance at interviews, or any other activity associated with this RFP or otherwise.

### Proposer's ideas

The HRA and County reserve the right to use any or all ideas, concepts, or other information provided in any proposals. Selection or rejection of the proposal does not affect this right.

## Collusion

If the HRA determines that collusion has occurred among Proposers, none of the proposals of the participants involved in the collusion shall be considered. The HRA's determination shall be final.

## Conflict of interest

The Proposer affirms that to the best of its knowledge the submission of its proposal, or any resulting contract, does not present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. The Proposer agrees that should any actual or perceived conflict of interest become known, it will immediately notify the HRA and will advise whether it will or will not avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the conflict of interest.

The HRA may make reasonable efforts to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize a conflict of interest by a Proposer. To avoid a conflict of interest by a Proposer, the HRA may utilize methods including disqualifying a Proposer from eligibility for a contract award or cancelling the contract if the conflict is discovered after a contract has been issued. The HRA may, at its sole and absolute discretion, waive any conflict of interest.

## Evaluation and selection

### Proposal evaluation and recommendation for selection

This RFA does not commit the HRA or the County to award any grant agreement(s). Submission of a proposal shall neither obligate nor entitle a Proposer to enter into a grant agreement with the County or HRA. The HRA and County reserve the following rights, to be exercised in their sole and absolute discretion: 1) to determine whether any aspect of a proposal satisfactorily meets the criteria established in this RFA; 2) to seek clarification or additional information from any Proposer; 3) to negotiate, sequentially or simultaneously, award amount and/or terms with any Proposer; 4) to reject any or all proposals with or without cause; 5) to waive any irregularities or informalities in a proposal; 6) to cancel or amend by addenda this RFA, in part or entirely; 7) to award multiple grants to Proposers; and/or 8) award a grant agreement to a Proposer that did not submit a proposal.

Evaluation of proposals by a selection committee, evaluation panel, HRA staff, a technical advisory committee, or by another group, individual or entity is advisory only. The HRA Board or its designee may consider or reject such evaluation(s) for any or all proposals. Such evaluations are for the sole benefit of the HRA Board or its designee, and as such, they are not binding upon the HRA, nor may they be relied upon in any way by a Proposer.

### Evaluation of responsiveness

The HRA will consider all the material submitted by the Proposer to determine whether the Proposer's offer is in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in this RFP. Proposals that do not comply with the provisions in this RFP may be considered nonresponsive and may be rejected.

### Evaluation of responsibility

To determine whether a Proposer is responsible, the HRA will consider the Proposer's general

qualifications to perform the requested services in a satisfactory manner; financial responsibility; integrity; skill; and ability.

Factors considered by the HRA may include, but are not limited to, Proposer's past performance on previous projects; the Proposer's technical capabilities; individual qualifications of Proposer's key personnel; and the Proposer's financial ability to perform on the contract. Proposals from Proposers considered non-responsible will be rejected.

### Execution of grant agreement

Before a grant agreement becomes effective between the HRA and any Proposer, the agreement must be ratified and signed by the HRA Board or its designee. If for any reason the HRA Board or its designee does not ratify and sign the contract then there are no binding obligations whatsoever between the HRA and the Proposer relative to the proposed agreement.