

Motor City Re-Store FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ... & ANSWERS

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Motor City Re-Store: The Basics

What is Motor City Re-Store?

Motor City Re-Store gives Detroit's neighborhood businesses a boost in curb appeal through matching grants that improve their storefronts, making our commercial corridors more walkable, more attractive, and better for business.

Business owners compete each quarter for their share of up to \$500,000 in matching grants to upgrade their storefront.

What is the purpose of the program?

Small businesses are cornerstones of Detroit's neighborhoods, and have been for generations. As Detroit neighborhoods grow and economic conditions change, long-time businesses must adapt, too, in order to thrive. Motor City Re-Store aims to help long-time businesses contribute to the positive change in their neighborhood by improving their curb appeal.

The goal of Motor City Re-Store is to support the beautification of storefronts to benefit the community and make neighborhood commercial corridors more walkable, more attractive, and better for business.

Who can apply to Motor City Re-Store?

Business owners who are:

- Open and operating within the City of Detroit
- Looking to stay in their existing location
- In need of exterior improvements to their storefronts
- Interested in contributing to the vibrancy of their commercial corridor

Building owners and business owners should apply together in one application.

How do I apply?

Apply online at www.motorcityre-store.com

For a printed application, please email: info@motorcityre-store.com

Application Periods:

- Round 1: Applications open June 15 and close August 1
- Round 2: Applications open September 1 and close October 1
- Round 3: Applications open December 1 and close January 1, 2018
- Round 4: Applications open March 1, 2018 and close April 1, 2018

Who runs Motor City Re-Store?

The Economic Development Corporation of the City of Detroit (EDC) administers Motor City Re-Store on behalf of the City of Detroit. The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation provides the staff.

What if I am a new business looking for space?

You should apply to Motor City Match. Visit www.motorcitymatch.com for more information about this program.

Who funds Motor City Re-Store?

The variety of Motor City Re-Store funding sources reflects the common desire amongst community partner and stakeholders to support small business growth and retention in Detroit.

Funding for architecture and design services comes from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). CDBG funds have been allocated by the City of Detroit to the Economic Development Corporation of the City of Detroit (EDC), which administers the program.

Matching grants for construction of exterior improvements is funded by the City of Detroit and a variety of grants from philanthropic partners, including The Erb Family Foundation, the New Economy Initiative, Invest Detroit, and the Kresge Foundation.

Several city departments, small business service providers and community organizations are also part of the unified partnership to advance small business growth and corridor revitalization in Detroit.

Eligibility

What are the eligibility requirements for business owners?

- Businesses and Building Owners must be in good standing with the City of Detroit, State of Michigan and Internal Revenue Service OR willing to work towards resolving non-compliance issues in cooperation with MCRS staff
- Businesses must be open and operational within the City of Detroit before applying
- Business must also meet the Federal Eligibility Requirements provided in the program guidelines

Is Motor City Re-Store open citywide or only in certain areas?

Motor City Re-Store is a citywide program.

Do applicants need to be Detroit residents to apply for Motor City Re-Store?

No. Applicants are not required to live in the city, but your business must be located within the city.

Who is NOT eligible to apply?

- Non-profit organizations
- Franchises
- New businesses that are not yet open and operating within the City of Detroit
- Anyone with a conflict of interest. See program guidelines for conflict of interest regulations.

Does my project have to meet a program objective to be eligible for Motor City Re-Store?

Yes. Motor City Re-Store participants must provide a benefit for low to moderate income persons on an area basis. Please see the program guidelines to see how program objectives are defined and determine if your project meets program objectives.

I was a Motor City Match awardee, am I still eligible?

Yes. If your business is open and operating, you are eligible.

Can my business be open somewhere besides Detroit?

No, Businesses must be open and operating within the city of Detroit and remain in their location for at least five years.

What do I need to apply directly to Track 2: Construction?

Businesses may apply directly to Track 2 if they already have signed and sealed construction drawings complete, OR if their project is simple eg., only installing a new sign or awning. The drawings do not necessarily need to be completed via Motor City Re-Store's Track 1. Both tracks will consider applicant's ability to fund their project, and Track 2 requires more detailed financial information.

Application Details

How do I apply?

Apply online at www.motorcityre-store.com or email us at info@motorcityre-store.com if you would like to fill out a printed application.

Business owners who do not own their space must apply jointly with the owner of the building. A target of twenty total awardees will be determined every round. Business owners that are not awarded may reapply in the subsequent rounds.

Business owners will apply for Track 1: Architecture and Design to receive conceptual design assistance and construction drawings. With those deliverables complete, the awardee is then eligible for Track 2: Construction. Applicants may apply directly to Track 2 if they already have signed and sealed construction drawings, or if their exterior improvement project is simple (eg., only installing a new sign or awning).

Business owners apply for one track at a time, and must have signed and sealed construction drawings in order to apply for Track 2. If those drawings are completed without assistance from Motor City Re-Store's Architecture and Design Track, they are still eligible for consideration.

Finalists may be asked to provide additional information, and will be notified as such.

When are applications due?

Application Periods:

- Round 1: Applications open June 15 and close August 1
- Round 2: Applications open September 1 and close October 1
- Round 3: Applications open December 1 and close January 1, 2018
- Round 4: Applications open March 1, 2018 and close April 1, 2018

If I have questions or need help filling out my applications, what should I do?

Information sessions will be held to provide more information on the program and the application process. Event information will be posted www.motorcityre-store.com

If you have questions, contact Motor City Re-Store at:
info@motorcityre-store.com or 844-749-8359

Do I have to create an online profile as part of the application process?

Yes. Starting a profile on our online system gives you access to the application and allows us to follow up with additional information, questions and opportunities. The profile will allow you to update and track your applications with Motor City Re-Store. It also allows you to submit everything online instead of coming downtown.

Will business owners receive a confirmation that their application has been received?

If applying online, applicants will receive an automatic confirmation email after submitting. If applying with a printed application, applicants will receive a confirmation email once applications are processed. It may take several days to process printed applications. Please note that an email address is required to receive confirmation that an application has been received.

Can individuals or companies that own multiple buildings or multi-unit buildings apply multiple times?

Yes. You may only apply once per round for a specific project, however if your project is not awarded you may apply in subsequent rounds.

I am a building owner, can I apply for more than one property?

Yes, a building owner may apply for multiple commercial properties in partnership with a business that is open and operating. There is no limit to the number of properties a building owner may receive grants for.

I am a business owner, can I apply for more than one business?

Business owners may only apply for one project location per round. Multiple applications for multiple businesses and/or locations will be ineligible for award. However, a business owner may apply in a subsequent round for a second business or second location.

I own several businesses. Can I submit multiple applications for my different businesses?

Applicants are limited to one application per business per track per round. You can apply again in a subsequent round with your different business, or for the next track.

Award Details

What types of awards are available to Motor City Re-Store Applicants?

Track 1: Architecture and Design

- Businesses will apply to receive conceptual design and scoping services, paid for by Motor City Re-Store. These services shall not exceed \$10,000 per project.

- The selected architect will then provide construction drawings, paid for by the awardee, for their exterior improvement project
- When drawings are complete, the awardee is eligible for Track 2: Construction

Track 2: Construction

- Business owners apply with construction drawings ready to build.
- Each business will receive a reimbursement grant for 50% of the cost of the construction for exterior improvements to their building.
- ** Businesses that apply together with 3 neighboring businesses on their block will be eligible for a 75% match
- No grant shall exceed \$25,000 per business

What types of projects are eligible for the grants provided?

- Façade improvements
- Visible security and safety measures
- Signage and exterior lighting
- Parking lots repairs
- Landscaping, storm water drainage, and other and green improvements

Business owners will have the opportunity to apply for financing through a dedicated façade improvement loan fund administered by the Detroit Development Fund in order to cover their up front expenses, but conventional loans or existing equity may also be used.

What do I need to prepare to receive grants through Motor City Re-Store?

Business owners being considered for grants will have:

- Signed and sealed construction drawings (or a simple project that does not require them, such as installing a new sign or awning)
- A signed lease or letter intent with a minimum 5 year term and preferably option to renew.
- A sound understanding of how much money they have ready to invest and how much money they need.
- In addition, building owners and business owners may be asked to provide various documents that will allow Motor City Re-Store staff to verify the legitimacy of the property, business and the financial well-being of the owner(s). Examples include personal financial statements, balance sheets, business organizing documents and current accounts payable/receivable.

Can I get a grant if I don't have any money to contribute to my project?

No. Motor City Re-Store grants are equity-matching grants. An applicant must be able to finance the full cost of their improvement project through personal funds or loan financing.

I can pay for my project on my own, am I still eligible for a grant?

Yes.

Do grantees receive the funding up front?

No. Grants are given on a reimbursement basis and accessed by grantees on a “draw-down” basis. More details will be provided when grants are awarded. We can help connect you to a loan as needed.

What if I spend money on qualifying expenses before I am selected as an awardee? Can my expenses be reimbursed?

Motor City Re-Store awardees will be notified as soon as they are selected for a grant and/or loan award. Prior to notification, there should be no expectation that costs will be reimbursed.

What if I don't use all of the grant funds I was awarded? Can I keep the money?

No. Any grant funding unused at the end of a 1-year period will be forfeited and reallocated by the Motor City Re-Store program.

Is it possible to win multiple awards?

Motor City Re-Store participants can only win an award once per track per business. If you own multiple businesses you can apply in different rounds for each business. If you own more than one property, you may win more than once.

What if I go out of business before the end of five years? Will I have to repay the money I received?

Although the goal of Motor City Re-Store is to select businesses that will be permanent fixtures in their respective communities, help from the program does not guarantee success. The program will address business closures on a case-by-case basis.

How long do businesses have between grants and completing their exterior improvement project?

It is expected façade improvement projects will be completed within 12 months of receiving the Track 2 .

Selection Process

What is the process for selecting Motor City Re-Store winners?

Motor City Re-Store awards are issued on a competitive basis due to limited resources. Applications are scored based on set criteria by a selection committee. A combination of these scores, site visits and personal interviews are used to choose participants and make awards.

We recognize business needs vary greatly, therefore each award may look different based on an individual business's needs. Please refer to the Program Guidelines documents for specific requirements that must be met.

How are Motor City Re-Store applications scored?

All applications submitted on time will be reviewed by the MCRS selection committee. Initial screenings will select finalists based on the following factors:

1. Eligibility
2. Vision and plan for the business based on the soundness, completeness, and creativity;
3. Feasibility of the exterior improvement project including building conditions and cost
4. Potential for the business and the exterior improvement project to benefit the community; and

5. Leverage and business owner/building owner investment in the project

How long does the selection process take?

Our aim is to select and announce awardees every 90 days. That may vary based on the number of applications. If you have completed Track 1 and are applying for Track 2, this process will likely be shorter.

What makes a competitive application?

Competitive projects will be of benefit in some way to their surrounding community. They will improve the walkability and beauty of the business's neighborhood. The business owner should show commitment, responsibility, and responsiveness.

Additional Information

What is expected of Motor City Re-Store awardees?

All awardees are expected to utilize their award within one year of receipt. Awardees may be required to sign an agreement that outlines terms and conditions for receiving the award. Award winners are expected to attend events designed to connect them with other award winners and resources. They are also sometimes asked to share their story via media opportunities.

Are grant awards taxable income?

Yes, all grant awards are considered taxable income by the IRS. Award winners will receive a W-2 from the DEGC for tax purposes.

How is application information used?

Applicant data is used only for the award selection process and providing business support. Applicant data is not sold.

Applicant information is shared with the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) to provide direct follow-up on all applications. DEGC has a business attraction program that connects businesses with support services. If DEGC cannot directly help a business, it will connect that business with one of its non-profit partner organizations that can. Many of these non-profit partners are featured on the BizGrid list of business support services.

Information may also be shared with lending partners if the applicant wishes to pursue a loan to cover the up front costs of their exterior improvement project.

How soon after receiving a Motor City Re-Store grant award and completing improvements can a building be sold?

A building receiving Motor City Re-Store grant funding cannot be sold for at least five years after renovations are made. Motor City Re-Store strictly prohibits building owners from "flipping" their property to capitalize on grant-funded renovations that increase the value of the property.