

Downtown Building Rehabilitation (DBR) Grant Program

Applications open starting July 1, 2026 for Fiscal Year 2027.

Grant Program Overview

Downtown Building Rehabilitation (DBR) grants are funded by Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR) and administered through a partnership with Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) to assist downtown businesses with financing code compliant construction and remodeling projects.

Contact Information

Noah Ningen, AEOA noah.ningen@aeoa.org or 218-780-8061.

Funding Availability

- Funded at \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2027.
- The DBR program will support and provide a business up to 1/3 of the total project cost up to \$50,000 in eligible expenses.
- The number of grants awarded is variable and dependent upon the amount awarded to successful applicants.
- Building must be located on a main street in a downtown area. Applications not on the main street in a downtown area will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and eligible to apply contingent upon:
 - Additional funds available.
 - Being located in a commercial business corridor.
- A \$500 application fee to AEOA is required to participate in the program at the initial inspection and processed at the time of project closing.
- Work cannot begin prior to approval and site inspection.
- Businesses are encouraged to apply at any time for an opportunity to receive a DBR grant. There is no risk to apply. Applications are reviewed twice per year.
- Grant payments are made directly to the awarded contractor or vendor upon completion and final inspection. Prevailing wage must be paid and certified payroll collected.
- One project per applicant per year. If more than one project is proposed, approval will be determined on a case-by-case basis by grant administrator prior to project beginning.
- Verification from the Minnesota Secretary of State that the organization and contractors are active and in good standing.
- Property taxes must be paid and up to date.

- All applications are subject to verification, and funding may be denied or withdrawn if fraudulent or misleading information is identified.

Eligible Applicants

Business owners, Tribal governments and nonprofits who own a downtown building located within the IRRR service area.

Eligible projects

Eligible costs must be related to code compliance. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- General construction.
- Electrical.
- Plumbing.
- Elevator.
- American Disabilities Act.
- Mechanical.
- Sprinklers.
- Housing rehabilitation.
- Lead and asbestos removal.
- Storefront.
- New construction or remodeling in event of fire or natural disaster.
- Professional assistance:
 - Up to 10% of grant may be used for professional services such as an architectural, engineering and design assistance on code compliance issues.

Application

For project questions and additional information: <https://www.aeo.org/programs/business-commercial-services/dbi/>

Accessibility Inquiries or Accommodation Requests

Contact: Jordan Metsa, Jordan.Metsa@state.mn.us or 218-735-3061.