

AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESSES

BUSINESS FAÇADE ARCHITECTURAL GRANT PROGRAM

The BFA program provides an incentive to stimulate visible (re)investment in St. Joseph businesses. The program provides a matching grant for actual design and construction costs, up to \$1,000 per property address per year. Qualifying projects must be of an approved design, be applied for by commercial property owners and/or merchants, and be applicable to exterior building improvement, landscape improvements, and other similar improvements visible from a public right-of-way. Signage is an eligible expense when combined with another improvement.

DEMOLITION GRANT PROGRAM

An incentive is available for St. Joseph commercial property owners with outdated buildings. The Demolition Grant Program will match up to \$2,500 in demolition costs per property. Additional expenses relating to lead paint and/or asbestos removal may qualify for additional assistance. The intent of the grant is to create vacant buildable parcels in existing concentrated business districts by removing structures exceeding their useful life.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax increment financing is a tool which allows the City/EDA to reimburse the company or land owner a portion of the new property taxes which are generated as a result of an expansion project. The amount of financial assistance available (TIF) is dependent upon a number of factors including but not limited to the assessed market value of the building and the financial need of the company. Several types of TIF districts are authorized by state law.

TAX ABATEMENT

Like TIF, tax abatement is a tool which allows the City/EDA to reimburse the company a portion of property taxes which are generated within a specified period of time. The difference between TIF and tax abatement is that with tax abatement the County and/or school district have an option to participate (with TIF participation is mandatory). The amount of the tax abatement available depends on a number of factors, including, but not limited to the financial need of the company and participation by County and school entities.

INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS

IDBs are private activity bonds (small issue manufacturing bonds) issued by cities or EDAs on behalf of private borrowers to finance the fixed costs of manufacturing facilities. IDBs may be utilized if the company owns or is leasing the facility. The bonds are marketed on their financial strength. Financial statements of the company do not need to be disclosed to investors. If the company is interested in this option, the City or EDA would proceed with requesting an allocation for funds from the state of MN, following submittal of the required pre-application.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LOAN PROGRAM (DEED)

This state program is available to manufacturing or industrial small businesses (500 employees or less) which create a significant number of new jobs. Eligible projects include business expansions with funding for acquisition of land, building, equipment and/or building construction or renovation. This state issued IDB requires a minimum \$500,000 and maximum \$6,000,000 project. Interest rates depend on the market rate of interest at the time bonds are sold. Terms are typically 20 years for real estate and 10 years or 80% of the useful life for equipment. Projects must be completed within two years. The MN Agricultural and Economic Development Board (MAEDB) review applications monthly.

MINNESOTA INVESTMENT FUND

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) offers a program, which is a grant to the community that in turn makes a low interest loan to a company for land, buildings, equipment and infrastructure improvements.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

A revolving loan fund was established in 2002 through principal and interest payments from a MIF grant/loan.

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SBA LOAN/GRANT

The U.S. Small Business Administration does not offer grants to start or expand small businesses, though it does offer a wide variety of loan programs for business start-ups and expansions including 7(a), 504 and disaster assistance.

SBA 7(a)

SBA 7(a) loans are the most basic and most used type loan of SBA's business loan programs. The '7(a)' name comes from section 7(a) of the Small Business Act, which authorizes the SBA to provide business loans to American small businesses. A key concept of the 7(a) guaranty loan program is that the loan actually comes from a commercial lender not the Government. All 7(a) loans are provided by commercial lenders called 'participants' because they participate with SBA in the 7(a) program. Not all lenders choose to participate, but most American banks do. There are also some non-bank lenders who participate with SBA in the 7(a) program which expands the availability of lenders making loans under SBA guidelines.

7(a) loans are only available on a guaranty basis. This means they are provided by lenders who choose to structure their own loans by SBA's requirements and who apply and receive a guaranty from SBA on a portion of this loan. The SBA does not fully guaranty 7(a) loans. The lender and SBA share the risk that a borrower will not be able to repay the loan in full. The guaranty is a guaranty against payment default. It does not cover imprudent decisions by the lender or misrepresentation by the borrower. Under the guaranty concept, commercial lenders make and administer the loans. Under the program a business applies to a commercial lender for their financing. The lender decides if they will make the loan internally or if the application has some weaknesses which, in their opinion, will require an SBA guaranty if the loan is to be made. The guaranty which SBA provides is only available to the lender. It assures the lender that in the event the borrower does not repay their obligation and a payment default occurs, the Government will reimburse the lender for its loss, up to the percentage of SBA's guaranty. Under this program, the borrower remains obligated for the full amount due.

Loan documentation requirements may vary; contact your lender for information you must supply. Common requirements include: purpose of the loan, history of the business, financial statements for three years (existing businesses), schedule of term debts (existing businesses), aging of accounts receivable and payable (existing businesses), projected opening-day balance sheet (new businesses), lease details, amount of investment in the business by the owner(s), projections of income, expenses and cash flow, signed personal financial statements and personal resume(s). You should take the information, including your loan proposal and submit it to a local lender. If the lender is unable to approve your loan, you may ask if the lender can consider your request under the SBA loan guaranty program. Under this program, the SBA can guaranty up to 85% of a small business loan; however, the lender must agree to loaning the money with the SBA guarantee. The lender will then forward your loan application and a credit analysis to the nearest SBA District Office. After receiving all documentation, the SBA analyzes the entire application, then makes its decision.

SBA 504 Certified Development Company Program

The 504 Certified Development Company (CDC) Program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major assets: Purchase land & improvements, including existing buildings, grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping; constructing, modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities; and purchasing machinery & equipment. 504 program loan proceeds cannot be used for working capital or inventory, consolidating or repaying debt, or refinancing. See "Minnesota Business finance Corporation" heading below for more information on the 504 loan program.

SBA Disaster Assistance

The SBA Disaster Assistance Program provides financial assistance for those who are trying to rebuild their businesses in the aftermath of a declared disaster. SBA Disaster Assistance is a loan program to help businesses with long-term rebuilding and repairing pursuant to a declared disaster.

Website: www.sba.gov

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MINNESOTA BUSINESS FINANCE CORPORATION

The Minnesota Business Finance Corporation (MBFC) is a Certified Development Company authorized by the U.S. Small Business Administration to originate and service SBA 504 loans.

The SBA 504 loan program is "the money that makes America work." As a nonprofit CDC, MBFC, a member of the National Association of Development Companies (NADCO), promotes economic development throughout Minnesota. The SBA 504 loan program is economic development financing specifically designed to stimulate private-sector investment in long-term fixed assets to increase productivity, create new jobs and increase the local tax base. This is done by providing long-term, low down payment, reasonably priced, fixed-rate loans to businesses which have the highest probability of successfully creating new jobs and competing in the world marketplace. Program specifications; Structure: 50% bank or nonbank in 1st lien position; 40% SBA 504 in 2nd lien position; and 10% equity injection. New business or special-purpose building will require 15 percent equity injection. New business and special-purpose building will require 20 percent equity injection. Advantages of 504: Long-term, fixed-rate financing; terms - 20 years on real estate; 10 years on equipment; and, low equity injection - 10 to 20 percent preserves working capital and increases return on equity. Website: www.mbfc.org

USDA: RURAL BUSINESS COOPERATIVE SERVICE, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Loan guarantee (up to 80%) to individuals, partnerships, corporations, cooperatives or non-profits for improving private business enterprises. Loans can be for business creation, expansion or refinancing and used for land acquisition, facility construction, equipment purchases and/or working capital. Terms depend on proposed collateral but are typically seven years for working capital, 15 years for equipment and 20 years for real estate. Requires 20% equity injection for new businesses or 10% for existing businesses. Applications accepted year round. Website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mn/rbs.htm>

INCENTIVES FROM ENERGY PROVIDERS

Stearns Electric offers rate incentives to qualifying businesses within the City of St. Joseph.

INCENTIVES FOR DISADVANTAGED PERSONS

The African Development Center (www.adcminnesota.org) provides business consulting services and financing to African entrepreneurs. The American Indian Economic Development Fund (www.aiedfloans.org) provides gap financing, technical assistance, and culturally relevant business education to enrolled Bank members who wish to start or expand businesses. Latino Economic Development Center (www.ledc-mn.org) provides business development services to Latino entrepreneurs, including help with understanding financing and regulatory processes. The SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program is a business development program (<http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/8abd/index.html>) created to help small disadvantaged businesses compete in the American economy and access the federal procurement market. Socially disadvantaged individuals are those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias because of their identity as members of a group.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE – CITY OF ST. JOSEPH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The City of St. Joseph contracts with consulting economic development professionals who are able to assist with technical input into projects, finance packaging and navigating the City review process.

JOB TRAINING

The City of St. Joseph has established ties with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and is familiar with job training and retraining resources offered through DEED.

ONLINE RESOURCE – A GUIDE TO STARTING A BUSINESS IN MINNESOTA (FREE)

A copy of this document is available in electronic format from the City of St. Joseph Economic Development Authority. This publication by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is intended to provide a concise, summary discussion of the major issues faced by those starting a business in Minnesota. This edition of the Guide contains three major sections: the narrative text; a Resource Directory, which provides addresses and telephone numbers of organizations referenced in the text; and the Directory of Licenses and Permits, which lists all business licenses and permits required by the State of Minnesota, the state agency which issues or administers the license or permit, and a telephone number for obtaining more

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information. Topics presented in the narrative text are presented in the order in which the new business owner typically must address them.

Web Link: http://www.mnwfc.org/hibbing/Veteran_Info/A%20Guide%20to%20Starting%20A%20Business%20in%20MN%202005.pdf

ONLINE RESOURCE: SBA FREE ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES

The SBA offers over 25 free online courses for businesses. Topics include: starting a business, business planning, business management, financing & accounting, marketing & advertising, government contracting, risk management & cyber security, e-commerce, international trade, federal tax training and small business retirement. For more information go to: <http://www.sba.gov/services/training/onlinecourses/index.html>

FREE BUSINESS CONSULTING SERVICES

The SCORE Association (Service Corps of Retired Executives) "Counselors to America's Small Business" is a nonprofit association comprised of 11,500 volunteer business counselors throughout the U.S. and its territories. SCORE members are trained to serve as counselors advisors and mentors to aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners. These services are offered at no fee, as a community service. SCORE's experienced business experts provide general business advice on everything from how to write a business plan, to cash flow management, to developing a small business advisory board. Assistance for aspiring entrepreneurs may involve investigating the market potential for a product or service and assessing the capital needs to start a business. Counselors can provide insight into how to start a business, operate a business, buy a business or franchise and sell a business. The SCORE website offers practical "how to" information to help your run your business.

Website: <http://www.score.org> or www.stcloudscore.org

ONLINE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER

The SBA's Online Women's Business Center (www.onlinewbc.gov), is a state-of-the-art Internet site to help women expand their businesses. This free, interactive Web site, offers women information about business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, market research and technology training, free, online counseling, and hundreds of links to other sites, as well as information about the many SBA services and resources available to them.

MINNESOTA TECHNOLOGY, INC.

This fee-based service provides business/technology consulting and training services for manufacturing and high technology companies in Minnesota. Website: www.minnesotatechnology.org

FREE BUSINESS COUNSELING: MINNESOTA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

The Small Business Development Centers provide business counseling services for prospective and current business owners at no charge. Services include business planning, loan application preparation, sales and marketing assistance, accounting, and financial analysis. Website: <http://www.mnsbdc.com/> Local offices: St. Cloud State University phone #320-308-4842.

ANDERSON CENTER FOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Anderson Center in St. Cloud provides management and leadership development services that facilitate economic growth in Central Minnesota. The Center provides management and leadership forums throughout Central Minnesota. Anderson Center serves business owners, executives, directors, managers, financiers, and their advisors from businesses and non-profits throughout greater Minnesota.

DONALD MCNEELY CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Donald McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship at the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University is an entrepreneurship education resource that provides classes, coaching and assistance to entrepreneurs. It builds relationships among and between CSB/SJU students, faculty, alumnae/i, and community members to create and strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit.

Website: <http://www.csbsju.edu/center-for-entrepreneurship.htm>