

River District Wausau Sign Grant Program

River District Wausau, Inc., would like to help you improve the signage of your business! The Sign Grant Program (the “Program”) is intended to stimulate signage improvements within the area bounded by the River District Wausau, Inc. district boundaries (the “District”). Under the Program, grants up to \$500.00, but not exceeding 50% of the total project cost may be available to qualified applicants. This grant will be a reimbursement grant for eligible costs already incurred and paid by the applicant. Proof of payment of eligible costs shall be required prior to reimbursement.

Grant Use:

1. Grants provided by the program are to be used by the applicant for the design, construction, and installation of signage on the applicant’s designated commercial building located within the boundaries of the District. Examples of eligible expenditures for the sign grant program include exterior signs, window signs, awnings with signage, materials, labor and sign design assistance. Ineligible projects for this grant program include, but are not limited to secondary business signs, interior signs, rooftop signage, and billboards.
2. Any grant recipient must have the applicant’s proposed signage design approved in writing by the River District Design Committee (the “Design Committee”) prior to the commencement of construction or installation of the proposed signs. In making its determination of approval, the Design Committee will use the most current zoning and other signage laws, ordinances, rules, and orders of the City of Wausau, Wisconsin, including, but not limited to the guidelines contained in the City of Wausau Sign Ordinance and Design Guidelines for Commercial Rehabilitation, as well as any other written guidelines established by the Design Committee from time to time (which additional guidelines must be provided to the applicant in writing prior to submission by the applicant), including the additional guidelines contained in this document.
3. Any applicant who deviates from the design approved by the Design Committee or otherwise violates any applicable law with respect to the sign shall forfeit any benefit received under this Program.

Additional Guidelines

Signs are a vital part of all downtown. With a sign you call attention to your business and create an individual image of your store. Signs contribute to an overall image as well. A successful sign can reinforce the image of downtown, serve the needs of the business and compliment the building design.

- A sign should express an easy to read, direct message. Keep it simple.
- A storefront should not have more than two signs – one primary, one secondary.
- The total signage for a storefront shall not exceed in square feet, three times the lineal footage of the storefront it is attached to. The sign should not be more than two feet high and should be mounted somewhere above the storefront display windows and below the second story window sill. Generally, lettering should be 8-18 inches high and occupy only 75 percent of the sign board.
- Choose a sign maker carefully. Quality of workmanship and construction is vital as any of the guidelines above. Ask your sign maker where you can see examples of previous work.

- Window signs should not obscure the display area. The color of the letters should contrast with the display background. Light colored letters or gold leaf letters with dark borders are effective.
- Awnings can also serve as signs with contrasting letters sewn onto a valance. Usually 6-8 inch letters are sufficient.
- Be very cautious about plastic signage. It rarely matches the downtown character and may not receive approval.
- There are hundreds of letter styles available. A letter style should be chosen that is easy to read and reflects the image of the business it represents.
- Sign colors should compliment the colors of the building. Light color letters on a dark background are easier to read.
- Illuminated signs can be appropriate downtown if they represent the proportions of the storefront and the guidelines above. Painted signs can be directly illuminated with incandescent lights. Exposed neon letters can also be effective, adding color and vitality to the downtown during the evening.

Program Implementation

Applications and guidelines for the program are available at the River District office.

Completed sign grant applications, design plans, cost estimates and construction schedules will be returned to the River District office for review by the Design Committee.

The Design Committee shall act on each application no later than 45 days following the date of submission. If an application is not approved, River District will explain to the application the reason for rejection and what, if any, steps can be taken to receive approval.

Upon approval, the application must sign a letter of agreement which shall provide, among other matters, that the applicant agrees to complete the sign project in accordance with the application, all applicable laws, and all applicable guidelines, as well as the acknowledgement that a failure to comply will result in a forfeiture of the grant.

Post Application Procedure

The River District Director will monitor the progress of the project.

Changes in the approved sign project must be approved by the Design Committee.

The applicant and the River District Director will conduct a final inspection before the grant payment is made. The inspection will include the review of all paid invoices for the design, manufacture and placement of the sign. No grant money will be released until all invoices are paid.

Deviations from an approved plan may disqualify the applicant from this program.

Sign Grant Application

Name of Business: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Will you be using the services of a graphic artist or professional sign designer for this project?

Yes/No Who: _____

Estimated cost of the project: _____

Please provide a cost breakdown by major category (design, materials, mounting, lighting, and other cost):

Item	Cost
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Proposed project start date: _____

Proposed project completion date: _____

The undersigned affirms that:

- 1) The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- 2) I have read and understand the conditions of the River District

Signature of Applicant:

_____ Date: _____