

Façade + White Box Matching Grant Program Manual

A competitive, reimbursement-based 50% matching grant with two tracks: exterior façade work and interior improvements that prepare vacant ground-floor commercial space for occupancy.

Submit all materials and questions to Emily Scott ; emily@downtowntulsa.com

Restrictions:

- Downtown only: The property must be located within Downtown Tulsa, inside the Inner Dispersal Loop (IDL). See map on page 3.
- Ground-floor focus: White box funding is limited to ground-floor commercial spaces. Façade funding prioritizes ground-floor storefronts and entrances but may also support publicly visible architectural features on the same building elevation, including cornices, parapets, and decorative roofline elements, when part of a coordinated façade improvement. Roof replacement remains ineligible.
- White box track: Funding is limited to ground-floor commercial spaces intended for retail or other customer-facing commercial activity, including restaurants, cafés, and personal-service businesses. Office, residential, institutional, industrial, warehouse, and storage uses are not eligible for white box funds.
- Façade track: Funding is available for ground-floor exterior improvements across a broader range of building uses, including retail, restaurant, office, institutional, hospitality and mixed-use properties. Improvements must be visible from a public street, sidewalk, alley, or publicly accessible civic space. **Residential-only properties remain ineligible.**

1. Program purpose

Downtown Tulsa's long-term vitality depends on attractive, well-maintained buildings and a steady supply of spaces that businesses can occupy without prohibitive upfront construction costs. The program uses targeted matching grants to leverage private investment, preserve architectural character, improve the street experience, and reduce barriers to filling vacant, ground-floor storefronts.

2. Program objectives

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- Improve façades and storefronts visible from public streets, sidewalks, alleys, and civic spaces.
- Create code-compliant, safe, clean, and flexible ground-floor commercial spaces that can accommodate tenants.
- Preserve historic materials and character-defining features while supporting compatible adaptive reuse.
- Increase storefront transparency, accessibility, lighting, and pedestrian activity.
- Concentrate limited public or philanthropic funds on projects with visible, durable, and catalytic benefits.
- Leverage property-owner, business-owner, lender, and other grant investment.

3. Grant structure

Track	Purpose	Award Opportunity
A. Façade	Exterior improvements to a principal or publicly visible elevation.	50% of eligible costs; \$10,000 minimum and \$40,000 maximum.
B. White box	Base-building and limited tenant improvements that prepare a vacant ground-floor commercial space for occupancy or deliver a base-building shell ready for tenant-specific improvements.	50% of eligible costs; \$10,000 minimum and \$40,000 maximum.
C. Combined	An exceptional coordinated project using both tracks.	50% of approved eligible costs; \$10,000 minimum total award and \$60,000 maximum combined award. Neither the façade nor white box component may exceed \$40,000. The \$10,000 minimum applies to the combined award, not separately to each component.

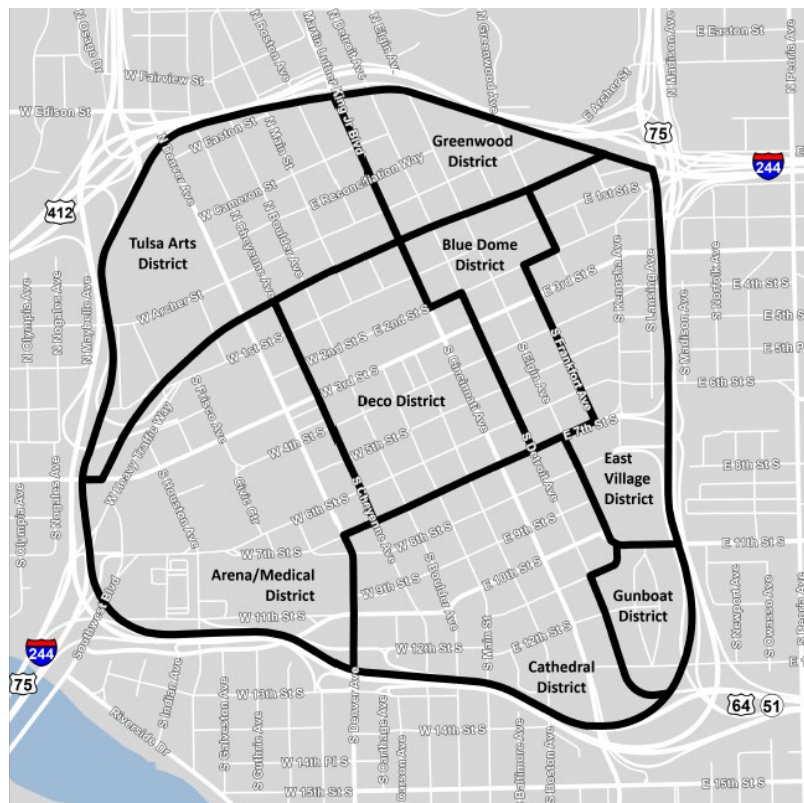
Annual limits and repeat applications: Total awards for a single building may not exceed \$40,000 for façade improvements, \$40,000 for white box improvements, or \$60,000 across both tracks

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during a program year. These limits apply collectively to all applications and awards for the building, regardless of the number of owners, tenants, storefronts, or applicants. Additional applications may be considered within the remaining limits but may not fund costs previously reimbursed. Repeat awards are not guaranteed and remain subject to available funding and competitive review. A program year follows DTP's fiscal year, July 1 through June 30; awards count toward the year in which DTP approves them.

4. Eligible geography and properties

- **Location.** The subject property must be within Downtown Tulsa which is inside the Inner Dispersal Loop (IDL) :



- **Use:** Eligibility depends on the track requested. Façade grants may support ground-floor exterior improvements to commercial, mixed-use, institutional, industrial, or hospitality buildings, including buildings with office uses. Residential-only properties are not eligible. white box grants are limited to vacant ground-floor commercial spaces intended for retail or other customer-facing commercial activity, including restaurants, cafés, and personal-service businesses. Office, residential, institutional, industrial, warehouse, and storage uses are not eligible for white box funding. A building's eligibility for façade funding does not establish eligibility for white box funding.

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- **Visibility:** Façade work must be visible from a public right-of-way or publicly accessible civic space. White box work must serve an eligible ground-floor commercial space.
- **Standing:** The property and applicant must be current on applicable taxes, assessments, and DTP obligations and free of unresolved code violations, judgment liens, or regulatory violations, unless the funded project will cure an approved violation.
- **Condition:** The building must be structurally capable of supporting the proposed work. DTP may require a professional assessment.
- **Vacancy for Track B.** The white box space must be vacant at application, meaning it is not occupied by an operating commercial business. A tenant may apply with an executed lease or letter of intent; the lease must be executed before the grant agreement.
- **No displacement:** A white box award may not be used to displace an existing tenant in good standing solely to reposition the space.

5. Eligible applicants

- Property owners of eligible buildings.
- Business or nonprofit tenants with written property-owner consent and a lease or other right to occupy extending through the project completion period.
- A property owner and tenant may apply jointly. One party must accept responsibility under the grant agreement.

6. Eligible costs

- Track A — Façade
 - Repair or restoration of masonry, terra cotta, stone, wood, metal, and other exterior materials.
 - Repair or historically compatible replacement of windows, doors, storefront systems, transoms, cornices, parapets, canopies, and awnings.
 - Removal of incompatible or non-historic coverings and restoration of concealed features.
 - Exterior painting where appropriate; professional cleaning using the gentlest effective method.
 - Architectural lighting, code-compliant signage integration, storefront transparency improvements, and exterior accessibility improvements.
 - Visible roofline features integral to the façade.
- Permits and sales tax are eligible. Professional design or engineering services directly related to approved work are eligible up to 10% of eligible construction costs.

- Track B — White box
 - Selective interior demolition, removal of outdated materials, and environmental remediation necessary to prepare the eligible space.
 - Framing, drywall, insulation, subfloor repair, and basic flooring.
 - Code-required fire/life-safety work, sprinklers, alarms, exits, emergency lighting, and accessibility improvements.
 - Base-building electrical service, panels, distribution, base lighting, plumbing rough-ins, HVAC, and ventilation.
 - Code-compliant restroom(s), basic walls and ceilings, and neutral interior finishes.
 - Limited tenant improvements necessary to make an identified business operational, including non-structural partitions, finish flooring, paint, millwork, business-specific utility adjustments, and restaurant hood or grease systems when approved.
 - Utility separation or metering when necessary for tenant occupancy.
 - Storefront-to-interior work that increases transparency or connects the space to the sidewalk.
 - Permits, sales tax, and professional design or engineering services directly necessary for the approved construction project are eligible costs. Design and engineering may be included in the grant request and count toward the required match when approved by DTP. Standalone design projects are not eligible.

White box standard

Funded work must deliver either (1) a space eligible for a Certificate of Occupancy for its intended eligible use, subject to required inspections and approvals, or (2) a safe, dry, structurally sound base-building shell ready for tenant-specific improvements. A shell must include the utilities, building systems, accessibility, and life-safety improvements identified in the DTP-approved scope. The application must clearly identify any remaining work required before occupancy. A Certificate of Occupancy is not required at grant closeout for an approved shell project.

7. Ineligible costs

- Property acquisition, refinancing, debt service, rent, taxes, insurance, working capital, operating expenses, or routine maintenance.

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- Work completed or materials ordered before a fully executed grant agreement and written Notice to Proceed.
- Applicant or employee labor, except that DTP may approve documented materials for qualified self-performed work; donated labor and undocumented cash payments are ineligible.
- Movable furniture, equipment, décor, inventory, appliances, kitchen equipment, point-of-sale systems, security equipment, or tenant branding.
- Roof replacement except a visually integral roofline feature; structural work not directly necessary for the approved scope.
- New building construction, full-building demolition, or removal of historic character-defining features.
- Landscaping, events, temporary installations, or work required solely because of applicant neglect after award.
- Design or engineering costs incurred before submission of the grant request, including drawings or other materials prepared to support the application.
- Design-only projects and costs paid by another grant or tax credit when reimbursement would duplicate payment.

8. Design and preservation standards

- Projects must comply with all applicable codes, zoning, permitting, accessibility, and historic-preservation requirements. For buildings 45 years old or older, or properties within a historic district, applicants must document how the work follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. In particular:
- Retain and repair historic materials and character-defining features whenever feasible.
- Replace deteriorated features only when repair is infeasible; match the historic feature in design, scale, color, texture, and, where practical, material.
- Do not create a false historic appearance or add conjectural features without evidence.
- Use gentle cleaning methods; abrasive blasting and treatments that damage masonry are prohibited.
- Make new work compatible with the building while distinguishable on close inspection.
- Preserve transparent storefront openings and avoid blank walls, opaque coverings, or internally illuminated cabinet signs unless specifically approved.

9. Match and funding rules

- The applicant must provide at least one dollar of eligible match for every grant dollar.

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- Match may include cash paid by the applicant, documented loan proceeds, or other non-duplicative private or public funds permitted by the funding source.
- In-kind labor, applicant labor, unpaid invoices, and costs incurred before Notice to Proceed do not count.
- Costs incurred to prepare the application are not reimbursable and do not count toward the required match.
- Awards are based on eligible, verified costs. Cost overruns are the applicant's responsibility; cost savings reduce the grant proportionally unless DTP approves a reallocation.
- DTP may award less than requested and may impose conditions.

10. Application process

1. Pre-application: Applicant submits the property address, ownership/permission, preliminary budget and funding sources, intended use, timeline, and current-condition photographs. DTP screens eligibility and readiness.
2. Invitation to full application: Eligible applicants submit the signed application and all required attachments by the published deadline. A pre-application is not an award.
3. Completeness review: DTP may request clarification, revised estimates, or design changes. Incomplete applications are not scored.
4. Evaluation: DTP staff scores complete, eligible applications using the program's 100-point rubric and recommends award amounts and conditions. Applicants receive their scores and a brief explanation of the evaluation.
5. Approval and agreement: DTP issues a conditional award and executes a grant agreement.
6. Notice to Proceed: Work may begin only after written authorization. Applicant secures all permits before applicable work starts.
7. Construction: Applicant completes the approved scope.
8. Inspection and closeout: DTP verifies completed work and receives paid invoices, proof of payment, permits, Certificate of Occupancy when applicable, lien releases if requested, and before/after photographs.
9. Reimbursement: DTP pays the approved share of verified eligible, reimbursable costs, up to the award amount.

11. Required application materials

1. Completed and signed application; property-owner authorization when applicant is a tenant.

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2. Proof of ownership or lease/right to occupy. A letter of intent may support application review, but an executed lease is required before agreement.
3. Current photographs of all affected exterior and interior areas.
4. Narrative scope, public benefit, project schedule, and occupancy/tenant strategy.
5. Concept drawings or renderings showing dimensions, materials, colors, lighting, signage, and storefront treatment; stamped plans when required.
6. Itemized budget and contractor quote(s) separating eligible costs; DTP may require a second quote for reasonableness.
7. Evidence of committed match and project financing.
8. Applicable professional assessments, historic photographs, environmental reports, or preliminary code analysis.
9. Disclosure of other incentives, grants, tax credits, insurance proceeds, or related-party contractors.

12. Evaluation and award

Complete applications are scored by DTP staff using a 100-point rubric after pass/fail eligibility and readiness screening. Staff may interview applicants, request revisions, or recommend partial funding. Scoring does not guarantee funding. Applicants receive their scores and a brief explanation of the evaluation. Awards remain subject to available funds, due diligence, approval by DTP's designated approving authority, and execution of a grant agreement.

13. Construction, reimbursement, and closeout

1. Begin construction within six months of Notice to Proceed and complete within twelve months, unless DTP approves a written extension.
2. Use licensed contractors when required and comply with all permits and inspections.
3. For a building-wide system upgrade, only the documented proportionate share benefiting the approved commercial space is eligible unless DTP expressly approves another allocation.
4. Maintain records for at least six years after final payment or longer if the funding source requires.
5. Submit a reimbursement packet with a DTP invoice form, itemized paid invoices showing zero balance, proof of payment, approved change orders, final inspection documents, Certificate of Occupancy when applicable, lien releases if requested, and final photographs.
6. DTP may inspect work before, during, and after construction. Payment is generally issued within 30 days after an approved complete closeout packet.

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14. Maintenance, recapture, and publicity requirements

- Maintain funded improvements in good condition for six years after completion.
- Do not remove, obscure, or materially alter funded improvements during that period without DTP's written consent.
- If the property is sold, the applicant must notify DTP and, when required, assign maintenance obligations to the successor.
- DTP may require prorated repayment if funded improvements are removed, materially altered, or not maintained: 100% in year 1, declining by one-sixth after each completed year.
- Applicant permits reasonable use of project descriptions and before/after images for program reporting and promotion, subject to agreed crediting and access.

15. Program administration and reservations

DTP may reject, defer, condition, reduce, discontinue, or withhold an application or payment; verify information; require additional documentation; interpret these guidelines; and waive a non-material provision when consistent with law, funding restrictions, and program purpose. DTP is not responsible for costs incurred by an applicant and does not guarantee permits, tenant occupancy, business success, or reimbursement until all agreement conditions are satisfied.

16. Program Administration and Technical Review

Role	Responsibility
DTP staff	Conduct eligibility, readiness, and completeness reviews; score applications using the 100-point rubric; communicate scores; recommend awards and conditions; coordinate architectural review; administer and award agreements; verify closeout documentation; and process reimbursement.
On-call architect*	Provide technical review as requested by DTP, including design quality, materials, compatibility, preliminary code and accessibility considerations, constructability, contractor scope, and cost reasonableness. Review approved work, proposed changes, and completed improvements as needed and authorized by DTP, and provide written findings to support staff evaluation and reimbursement decisions.

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Applicant	Finance, permit, construct, document, and maintain the approved improvements; and submit required reimbursement and reporting materials.
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*Architectural review is advisory and does not replace required permits, governmental inspections, or the responsibilities of the applicant’s design professionals and contractors. DTP retains responsibility for grant scoring, award administration, and reimbursement decisions.