

# Center City Development Corporation Board Meeting

To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC)  
From: DMC Staff  
Date: June 26, 2024  
RE: Retail Tenant Improvement (TI) Grant Request – I AM Rare Clothing Boutique

The enclosed Retail Tenant Improvement Grant has been submitted for consideration at the June 26, 2024, CCDC Board of Directors Meeting.

**Project:** **I AM RARE Clothing Boutique – 107 GE Patterson Ave.**

---

**Applicant:** Latasha Brown  
107 GE Patterson Ave  
Memphis, TN 38103

**Applicant's Request:** \$30,000 Retail Tenant Improvement (TI) Grant.

**Project Description:** The subject property is located on the south side of GE Patterson Ave. The building is owned by the Zepatos Property Management LLC and the subject site is located between the Arcade Restaurant and the After Burners Cigar Lounge. The space has been vacant for nearly a year.

The applicant began the I AM RARE Clothing Boutique out of her home in 2020. Since that time, she has steadily built a customer base and brand loyalty by bringing her signature RARE style to the Memphis market, earning herself many loyal clients. The applicant is now ready to expand operations by opening her first storefront.

The applicant plans to fully renovate the interior space with the scope of work including mechanical/HVAC, plumbing, electrical, demolition and ADA compliant buildout.

Following CCDC approval of a Retail TI Grant, the applicant intends to sign a 2-year lease and start construction.

**Scope of Work:** The Retail Tenant Improvement Grant program is designed to encourage new businesses to open ground-floor locations along priority corridors and within targeted retail nodes.

The Grant is reimbursable and requires the applicant to provide receipts of completed work.

Overall Project Budget: The overall project budget *eligible towards the Retail TI scope of work* includes the following sources:

CCDC Retail TI Grant	\$ 30,000	(78%)
Business Owner's Equity	\$ 8,300	(22%)
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$38,300</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Work Eligible for TI Grant: Permanent improvements that are potentially eligible for reimbursement under the Retail TI Grant program include the following uses:

New walls/framing/millwork	\$12,200	(32%)
• Frame new walls		
• Patch & repair existing walls		
• Install new millwork		
• Create new dressing rooms		
Mech./electrical/plumbing	\$12,700	(32%)
• HVAC improvements		
• Electrical upgrades		
• Repair water lines/add sink		
Flooring/interior painting	\$9,400	(26%)
• Concrete floor shaving/stamping		
• Interior painting throughout		
Project mgmt./overhead/fees	\$4,000	(10%)
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$38,300</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Design Review: DRB review will not be required as no exterior work is planned for the site.

EBO Program: Any project that is awarded financial incentives from the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) shall include a best faith effort to reach no less than 25% participation by minority and/or women owned businesses (MWBE) in the project's development cost (design and construction hard costs). Compliance with this Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Program is a closing requirement. **If the requirements of the EBO Program are not met, the CCDC will cancel the incentive.**

Outreach & Inclusion Plan: The specific steps required for each applicant to be compliant with the DMC's EBO Program takes into consideration the size, scope of work, and development costs associated with the project. At the time of incentive application, it is typically too early to identify specific contractors or sub-contractors that will ultimately be

involved in the construction. However, the applicant has a clear understanding of the EBO Program and has worked with DMC staff to identify the following key steps that will be included in their Outreach & Inclusion Plan:

- The applicant will use the City of Memphis Business Diversity & Compliance Registry and the resources at the Shelby County Office of Equal Opportunity Compliance to identify qualified general contractors and tradespeople to perform the needed work.
- The applicant will contact a minimum of 3 certified MWBE businesses for each trade or type of subcontractor needed, and provide each a fair opportunity to submit a bid and be considered for the work.
- Once the service providers have been identified, the applicant will submit the form titled “Proposed Utilization Plan” to DMC staff for review and approval. The applicant will also be asked to provide a full record of the outreach steps taken and the results thus far. This documentation can include items such as a phone call log, copies of emails, meeting notes, and similar information.
- After construction has started, the applicant will provide monthly updates to DMC staff detailing the project status and level of MWBE involvement at each major phase of the project.

Minimum MWBE Goal: With an estimated Retail TI Grant budget of \$38,300 a 25% level of MWBE inclusion for that work is approximately **\$8,575**

Location Criteria: First approved by the CCDC in August 2019, the Retail TI Grant program is designed to help grow vibrant and thriving retail in Downtown Memphis. This program supports new retail, creative arts & entertainment, and food & beverage businesses within key corridors and established retail nodes. While not enough money to fund all of the required interior improvements in most cases, the Grant helps bridge the financial gap between property owner and tenant. The Grant was established as a direct implementation strategy based on the recommendations of

the DMC's Retail Action Plan in 2018. The subject property falls within the **South Main Retail Node**.

**Staff Evaluation:**

DMC staff supports the applicant's request. The subject property is a strategically important vacancy in the South Main Retail Node and this project will help to further activate this portion of GE Patterson Ave.

Filling this vacancy will better connect the pedestrian street network in this area by adding a new point of interest and destination within the neighborhood. A key goal of the Downtown Memphis Retail Strategy is to build a strong critical mass of stores and activities within existing retail nodes. This business will further this strategic goal by activating a currently vacant ground-floor retail space in the South Main Retail Node, increasing the range of retail offerings in the neighborhood.

Additionally, the DMC recognizes that increasing the number of women and/or minority-owned Downtown businesses is a vital part of achieving our organizational goal of building a Downtown for Everyone. Approving a Retail TI Grant in this case will directly support the efforts of a local black woman business owner as she makes a considerable investment in the South Main area and brings a vacant space back to life.

**Staff Recommendation:**

**Staff recommends approval of a Retail Tenant Improvement Grant in an amount up to \$30,000, based on approved receipts and subject to all standard closing requirements.**