

Vacant Storefront Activation Program

Applicants that have begun or completed activation prior to project approval from the SSA Commission are ineligible to receive Vacant Storefront Activation Program funds.

Overview

This program provides financial assistance to new or existing businesses opening a new location or expanding operations in a vacant ground-floor commercial space with the Uptown Special Service Area.

Eligible Properties

Only properties within the boundaries of the Uptown SSA are eligible for funds through the Program. See the description below and attached map. The boundaries include:

- *Both east and west sides of North Broadway from Irving Park Road on the south to Foster Avenue on the north*
- *Both east and west sides of Sheridan Road from Irving Park Road on the south to Foster Avenue on the north*
- *Both the east and west sides of Winthrop Avenue from Argyle Street on the south to Foster Avenue on the north*
- *The west side of Clarendon Avenue from Montrose Avenue on the south to Lawrence Avenue on the north*
- *The east side of Clarendon Avenue from Wilson Avenue on the south to Lawrence Avenue on the north*
- *The south side of Foster Avenue from North Broadway on the west to Sheridan Road on the east*
- *Both the north and south sides of Argyle Street from North Broadway on the west to Sheridan Road on the east*
- *Both the north and south sides of Lawrence Ave. from Magnolia Ave. on the west to Clarendon Ave. on the east*
- *Both the north and south sides of Leland Avenue from Racine Avenue on the west to Sheridan Road on the east*
- *Both the north and south sides of Wilson Avenue from Clark Street on the west to Clarendon Avenue on the east*
- *Both the north and south sides of Montrose Avenue from Clifton Ave. on the west to Clarendon Ave. on the east*
- *Both the north and south sides of Buena Avenue from Kenmore Ave. on the west to North Broadway on the east*
- *The north side of Irving Park Road from Kenmore Avenue on the west to Clarendon Avenue on the east*

Funding Amounts

Approved applicants who activate vacant storefronts that follow the guidelines of the Program may receive funding according to the program guidelines.

Eligibility is defined in more detail below, however the funding:

- ***Cannot be granted before the application is approved***
- ***Cannot be used for activations started before the application is approved***

Applications will be considered in the order that they are received until all funding is disbursed for the fiscal year. To maximize the number of eligible projects that receive assistance, the SSA Commission reserves the right to award funding at an amount less than the requested amount.

Program Eligibility

There are various eligibility requirements based on location, type and size of space, and type of business.

To be eligible:

1. The space is a storefront located within the Uptown Special Service Area.
2. The lease must be provided for review.
3. The business must be open to the public at least 25 hours per week.
 - a. *Proof of hours of operation may be requested at any point in time.*
4. The space must have been vacant for a period of at least 60 days.
5. The business must be in compliance of all zoning regulations.

Eligible Items

- a) Commercial lease payments.

Ineligible Businesses

- a) A business that is part of a national or regional chain, unless the business is an independently owned and operated franchise.
- b) Storage.
- c) Businesses engaged in any illegal activity under federal, state, or local law.
- d) A business that has previously received Vacant Storefront Activation Program funding.

Application Process

An application package must be submitted to Uptown United. Incomplete applications will not be considered by the SSA Commission. The package must include:

- Business name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email
- Website and/or Social Media information
- EIN/Federal ID number or Social Security number
- Property owner permission, provided directly by owner
- Minimum one-page statement of the business' intent for the funds, business goals, and operation plan that includes:
 - Detailed information about the business, including products or services
 - A market analysis showing target market, competitions and potential customers
 - Business hours, number of staff and key personnel
 - A marketing plan, showing how business will be promoted
 - Financial plan that includes revenue and expense projections.
- Proof of lease
- Copy of State issued identification card or valid driver's license
- Renderings and floorplans

Review Process

Completed applications must be submitted at least one week prior to the next meeting of the SSA Commission. The SSA Commission meeting dates are posted on the Uptown United website.

After the completed application is received, it will be reviewed by the SSA Commission. This entity will review and accept or reject each application in its sole and absolute discretion. The applicant may be asked to clarify portions of the application if requested by the Commission. The application may be voted on in the first SSA meeting. If the Commission has questions about the application a vote may be postponed until a future meeting.

To determine what activations warrant funding, the following are the criteria for review:

- Proposed activations meet the program guidelines
- Activation provides a positive impact on the beautification of the public way
- The amount of the requested funding
- Applicants who demonstrate that the funding assistance is needed
- Activations throughout the Uptown SSA boundaries to accomplish geographic diversification of limited funding

Within 10 (ten) business days of the Commission meeting at which the application was voted upon, the applicant will be sent a conditional approval letter stating the funding amount he/she can expect to receive for the proposed activation (the “Approval Letter”) or an explanation of why the application was not approved.

VACANT STOREFRONT ACTIVATION PROGRAM

APPLICATION FORM

Proposed Project Address

Number and Street Name (include unit or suite number)

City, State, Zip

Applicant Contact Information

Applicant's Name (individual / business / association / organization)

Contact Name

Address (if different from above)

Daytime Phone

Cell Phone

Evening Phone

Email Address

Property Owner Contact Information

Property Owner (individual / business / association / organization)

Contact Name

Number and Street Name (include unit or suite number)

City, State, Zip

Daytime Phone

Cell Phone

Evening Phone

Email Address

Project Description

Describe the project and attach all necessary photos, plans and permit applications as outlined. Tenant applications must attach written authorization from property owner.

Statement

Describe why this proposed improvement and funding is necessary to your business and the community.

Has this property received any rebates through any other program before? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please describe details, including years, scope of work and granting organizations:

Statement of Understanding

The applicant (undersigned) agrees to fully and timely comply with the guidelines and procedures of the Uptown United Vacant Storefront Activation Program and the outlined specifications as agreed to by the applicant and the local SSA Commission. It is understood by the applicant that they have read the entire Vacant Storefront Activation Program Guidelines and Application and agree to be fully bound by their terms and conditions. **APPLICANT RELEASES AND AGREES TO DEFEND AND INDEMNIFY UPTOWN UNITED (TOGETHER WITH THEIR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND AGENTS), THE LOCAL SSA COMMISSION, AND THE CITY OF CHICAGO FROM ALL CLAIMS AND CAUSES OF ACTION OF ANY KIND (KNOWN OR UNKNOWN) IN CONNECTION WITH THIS VACANT STOREFRONT ACTIVATION PROGRAM.**

Applicant Signature

Date

Applicant Name and Title (please print)

Applicant's SSN or Company's FIN #

*****If the applicant is not the property owner, the following must be completed by the property owner:***

I certify that I am the owner of the property located at _____, and hereby authorize the applicant to apply for and receive funding under the Uptown United Vacant Storefront Activation Program.

Property Owner Name _____

Property Owner Signature _____
Date

Application Checklist

Please use the checklist below to verify that all required materials are included in your application:

- ☐ Completed Application Form
 - ☐ *Project Description*
 - ☐ *Photos of Existing Building*
 - ☐ *Project Plans*
 - ☐ *Supplemental Documents (if necessary)*
- ☐ Owner's Deed
- ☐ Tenant's Lease (if applicable)
- ☐ Owner's Written Consent (if applicable)
- ☐ Lien Report showing property is free and clear of any Liens
- ☐ Certificate/s of Good Standing
- ☐ Applicable City Permits
- ☐ Zoning Approval (If Applicable)
- ☐ Renderings and Floorplans

Vacant Storefront Activation Program Timeline

Below is an outline of steps describing the process for the Vacant Storefront Activation Program.

- STEP 1: Applicant submits completed application and all required documentation to Uptown United.
- STEP 2: Uptown SSA Commission reviews application, and, if funds are available, conditionally approves (or denies) the activation.
- STEP 3: Uptown United sends applicant conditional approval letter (or denial).
- STEP 4: Applicant begins activation, including required permitting.
- STEP 5: Applicant informs Uptown United upon activation and sends proof of lease/rent payment for the activation with photo of activation.
- STEP 6: Uptown SSA Commission reviews activation (including proof of lease/rent payment) and approves (or denies) distribution of rebate funds.
- STEP 7: Uptown United distributes approved rebate funds to applicant.

Uptown Special Service Area

