Community Development Investment Grant

Community development grant helps transform Sheboygan’s downtown into a thriving commercial and residential center

With help from Wisconsin’s Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant program, the City of Sheboygan continues to revitalize its downtown, building a foundation for further economic growth. Through the grant program, which is administered by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), the city received $250,000 towards redeveloping the site of an old department store shuttered since 2014.

The $10.3 million project, developed by Madison-based Oak Brook Corp., includes 80 upscale market-rate apartments, over 4,000 square feet of retail space, and a public plaza for community events that serves as the heart of the city’s Arts and Culture District. In addition to the CDI grant, the City of Sheboygan provided $1.4 million in tax incremental financing to secure the project, which will help spur further growth and improve the quality of life for those who live, work, and do business in Sheboygan.

The new development addresses Sheboygan’s housing shortage, boosts downtown retail and commercial activity, and provides the lifestyle experience young professionals are seeking. The project will benefit the community across-the-board, driving greater interest in the downtown area and helping to attract potential employees and employers to the region.

**Program Objective & Overview**

Wisconsin’s Community Development Investment Grant program helps transform communities across the state by providing matching funds up to $250,000 to support shovel-ready projects that focus on revitalizing a community’s downtown area or commercial center.

The CDI Grant program was created in 2013 to incentivize downtown community development in Wisconsin. Since its inception, WEDC has awarded more than $20 million in grants to 79 communities. That investment is expected to generate over $280 million in planned capital investment across the state.

Grant awards are based on a recipient community’s ability to illustrate the measurable economic impact of the proposed project, including leveraged investment by public and private partners, job creation opportunities, and increased property values.
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**HOW IT WORKS**

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation provides $3 million annually for CDI Grants and limits individual grants to 25% of eligible project costs up to $250,000. In addition, at least 50% of the funds are awarded to cities and towns with a population under 50,000.

Program eligibility requirements under the CDI Grant program include the following:

- Eligible applicants must provide a minimum 3:1 match investment in project costs. No more than 30% of the match can come from other government grant sources.
- Municipalities and other applicants must pass a resolution authorizing the submittal of a CDI Grant application.
- With limited exceptions, applicants may only receive one CDI Grant per fiscal year.
- Eligible projects under the program include the development of significant destination attractions, reuse of underutilized buildings, downtown infrastructure efforts, and mixed-use developments.

Successful grant recipients are required to submit semi-annual fiscal and narrative reports to WEDC until the project is completed. The final reports must include details on numerous metrics, including leveraged investment, increased tax base, and job creation and retention.

**PROGRAM CONTACTS**

For more information about the Community Development Investment Grant program call 855-INWIBIZ toll free or contact a WEDC regional economic development director. Those who wish to apply for a CDI Grant should complete an application through a WEDC regional director. Please review the list of regional directors and the territories they cover at **wedc.org/inside-wedc/contact-us/#regional**.

**RECENT AWARDS**

WEDC recently awarded three CDI Grants to the following communities across Wisconsin to spur economic growth and support downtown development:

- **Beaver Dam** — The city received a $126,100 grant to help finance the redevelopment of a vacant building into a new downtown microbrewery. The grant will support renovations of an existing, vacant building located on a 14,900-square foot lot, which had been a used car sales lot, to make room for a state-of-the-art microbrewery called Ooga Brewing Co.

- **Janesville** — The Rock County community received a $250,000 grant to help finance the construction of a new downtown hotel. The grant will support the new construction of a Cobblestone Hotel & Suites, a 53-room, four-story hotel overlooking the Rock River. The 33,000-square-foot hotel will include an indoor pool, an exercise facility and a restaurant.

- **Fond du Lac** — The city received a $250,000 grant to help fund the renovation of the historic Hotel Retlaw. The grant will support the redevelopment of the property into a full-service hotel providing affordable luxury with modern amenities, a restaurant and a meeting space.

City Green, the public plaza built as part of the Sheboygan project, has become a popular concert venue that hosts the renowned “Levitt AMP Music Series.”

Wisconsin Economic Development Association  
[www.weda.org](http://www.weda.org)  •  [weda@weda.org](mailto:weda@weda.org)