

Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association



Grants & Scholarships

The following programs can be found at Bloomington CiviForm <https://bton.in/CiviF>

2025 Business Economic Enhancement Scholarships -

Scholarships of up to \$1,200 will be awarded for professional development opportunities to further the economic stability of the business or organization that has operated within the Zone for at least 12 months.

- Applicants must own a business or non-profit within the Zone that has operated for at least 12 months.
 - Applications are accepted biannually (February and August) and on a first-come-first-served basis each year, with a lifetime maximum of \$1200.00 per business.
 - The scholarship may be used to pay for economic development classes, business workshops, professional organization membership dues, or conference registration fees for the business owner or any business employee.
 - Applications must be received at least one month before the start of the class(es) or activity for which the scholarship is being awarded.
- After the application is completed, BUEA staff will reach the Applicant requesting proof of payment for the course, workshop, dues, or registration fees or an invoice from the organization conducting the training if you would like the BUEA to pay the organization operating the activity directly.

Resident Economic Independence Scholarship

- For residents who have lived in the Zone for at least 12 months. Up to \$750/semester for two semesters.
- This is a biannual grant cycle. A maximum of ten grants will be awarded in both the spring and fall.
- The spring submission window is from February 15 to July 15, and the fall submission window is from July 15 to December 15.
- Residents who have lived in the Zone for at least 12 months may apply for a scholarship to attend post-secondary classes to further their economic independence. **Check your address here- <https://bton.in/ZEDM>.**
- The scholarship can be applied to any course (college, trade school, or other special training) that advances the applicant's skills as a workforce member.
- The BUEA will pay for two classes, including textbooks, or up to \$750.00 a semester, whichever is less, up to a lifetime maximum of \$1,500.00 in educational assistance.
- Funds are limited and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications must be received at least one month before the start of the class(es) being paid for with the scholarship.



Small Business Safety & Security Grant

This grant aims to improve the Enterprise Zone's overall safety and security. The Safety & Security Grant is for small business owners who want to improve the general security of their businesses in the Enterprise Zone.

A total of \$25,000 will be awarded in the 2025 fiscal year. The maximum award amount will be at the discretion of the BUEA board. However, staff recommends a \$5,000 maximum award per Applicant.

- Application Requirements
 - A cost estimate, a "before" photo, plans, and all other pertinent information regarding project costs.
 - Assessments must consist of breakdowns of materials/product lists.
 - Images/video of "before" status.
 - Describe their business security system project and the contractor's quote or invoice.
 - Applicants must attach proof of business address, i.e., utility bill, the current lease, or deed.
 - Applicant must be able to match at least 25% of the requested funding.
 - Example: If you are asking \$5000, you must be able to show \$1250 of personal financing for the project.
 - A business security system project must have one or more primary purposes:
 - Crime reduction
 - Theft prevention
 - Vandalism prevention
 - An approved security system must be installed within the funding period.
 - Applicant must submit "after" photos and a short report to the board before the termination date of the memorandum of understanding (MOU)
 - Applicants are limited to a one-time-only grant award
 - **This grant may not be used to support the purchase of weapons or devices that may cause physical harm to humans or animals.**
 - **The Board holds the right not to approve any project they deem unsuitable for this grant.**

Business Building Improvement Grant

This grant aims to improve the physical condition of business buildings in the Enterprise Zone and promote economic vitality and beautification of the community in the Enterprise Zone. This grant seeks to assist small business owners in updating and improving internal and external visual improvements, preservation, and structural integrity.

A total of \$25,000 will be awarded in the 2025 fiscal year. The maximum award amount will be at the discretion of the BUEA board. However, staff recommends a \$5000 maximum award per Applicant.

- Application Requirements
 - Applicant must be able to match at least 50% of the requested funding.
 - Example: If you are asking \$5000, you must be able to show \$2500 of personal financing for the project.
 - A cost estimate, a "before" photo, plans, and all other pertinent information regarding project costs.
 - Assessments must consist of breakdowns of materials/product lists.
 - Proof of business address, i.e., utility bill, the current lease, or deed.
 - Images/video of "before" status.
 - Describe their building improvement project and the contractor's quote or invoice.
 - Projects eligible for grant approval include
 - exterior painting/cleaning, historical restoration, awnings, roofs, guttering, replacing windows, and repairing sidewalks. Ineligible projects include new signage.
 - Exterior improvements must follow the style approved in the downtown design plan. If the building is in a historic district, a Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained before starting work.
 - Work on the property may start after board approval.
 - A contractor registered with the city must do construction work and obtain any necessary permits before applying.
 - Applicant must submit "after" photos and a short report to the board before the termination date of the memorandum of understanding (MOU)
 - BUEA can rebate the property owner after work is complete, and the Applicant provides a final bill, copies of canceled checks for the Applicant's half, and an "after" photos of the completed work. However, the Board reserves the right to provide funding if improvements or repairs are in progress.
 - **Applicants are limited to a one-time-only grant award.**
 - **The Board holds the right not to approve any project they deem unsuitable for this grant.**

Accessibility Modification Grant

The Accessibility Modification Grant provides grant-based assistance for businesses to make their small businesses ADA-accessible and promote inclusive practices for people with disabilities. This grant aims to improve the BUEZ's social and physical environment through accessibility modifications in the Enterprise Zone. It intends to help business owners complete ADA modifications that do not meet the requirements due to grandfathered plans. Businesses can use the funding to update their ADA-accessible areas, entrances, signage, low shelves, restroom accessibility, and parking spaces.

A total of \$25,000 will be awarded in the 2025 fiscal year. The maximum award amount will be at the discretion of the BUEA board. However, staff recommends a \$5000 maximum award per Applicant.

- Application Requirements
 - Applicant must be able to match at least 25% of the requested funding.
 - Example: If you are requesting \$5000, you must be able to show \$1250 of personal funding for the project.
 - Applicants must attach proof of business ownership address, such as a utility bill, lease, or deed.
 - Applicants must briefly describe their accessibility modification project and the contractor's receipt or invoice.
 - Eligible projects include improving accessible areas, signage, entrances, low shelves, restroom accessibility, sidewalks, and parking spaces.
 - Work on the property may start after application approval.
 - The application must include a cost estimate, a "before" photo, plans, and all other pertinent information regarding project costs. Assessments must consist of breakdowns of materials/product lists. The owner selects contractors.
 - Applicant must submit "after" photos and a short report to the board before the termination date of the memorandum of understanding (MOU)
 - BUEA can rebate the property owner after work is complete, and the Applicant provides a final bill, copies of canceled checks for the Applicant's half, and "after" photos of the completed work. However, the Board reserves the right to provide funding if improvements or repairs are in progress.
 - **Applicants are limited to a one-time-only grant award.**
 - **The Board holds the right not to approve any project they deem unsuitable for this grant.**

Historic Facade Preservation Grants -

This grant is currently unavailable through CiviForm.

Please contact noah.sandweiss@bloomington.in.gov for information about this program.



Grants of up to \$10,000 with 100% matching required

BUEA allocates a limited annual funding pool to businesses to rehabilitate and preserve historic facades in the Urban Enterprise Zone. Grants are designed to protect and enhance Bloomington's landmark character by preserving and rehabilitating its historic downtown environment and maintaining structurally sound places of business.

Summary:

Grants are awarded at most \$10,000, requiring the Applicant to match at least 100% of the grant award.

I.E., an applicant would require a \$20,000 total facade rehabilitation project cost to be eligible for the entire \$10,000.

- Commercial, non-profit, and industrial properties are eligible for the grant,
- The grant may only be used for the costs associated with actual and approved façade rehabilitation and other expenses relating to the requirement of various building codes.
- Grants are awarded on a rolling basis until annual funds are exhausted.

The Historic Preservation Commission will review all applications before approval. Guidelines are available <https://bton.in/HFGG>.

The Mill Day Pass Program

For residents who live in the Zone. Up to 1-day pass per month through December 31, 2025, to work at the Mill—Bloomington's Center for Coworking and Entrepreneurship, located at 642 N. Madison St. (Just north of City Hall and across from Upland Brewing). Reserve your work area. <https://bton.in/MDPP>



Incentives - Can be found at: <https://bton.in/jp6Q->

Tax Incentives

BUEA offers tax incentives that are among the most immediate and robust economic development incentives. Urban Enterprise Zones are intended to encourage neighborhood development and economic growth through tax and regulatory relief to entrepreneurs and investors who launch businesses in the area. The following describes the tax incentives for involvement, which serve as recruitment tools for the EZs:



Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction

Real Property Tax Investment Deduction:

The Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction is available to businesses within the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Zone that invest in real property and outside the Tax Increment Finance district for companies that make real property investments. Each EZID has a life of 10 years as described in Indiana Code (IC) 5-28-15 and IC Title 6. Tax benefits for employers participating in the Enterprise Zone program include:

Personal Property Tax Investment Deduction:

The EZID personal property tax deduction reduces the increase in the assessed value of a business's tangible personal property investment within the enterprise zone. The deduction may be declared for up to ten years. Qualified investments at an EZ location include:

- The purchase of new manufacturing or production equipment;
- Costs associated with the repair, rehabilitation, or modernization of an existing building and related improvements;
- Onsite infrastructure improvements and
- Costs associated with retooling existing machinery.

How the EZID Works

Participation in the EZID programs requires the annual filing of the forms listed below and the annual payment of the participation fees—a percentage of the tax savings—which support the program's administration on state and local levels and all local programming.

To receive the benefit:

1. Email BU EA@bloomington.in.gov to inquire about your investment.
2. Register your investment with the BUEA by filing an EZB-R form by June 1, the first year of your increase in assessed value, and for each year you wish to claim the benefit.
3. Report your investments by filing the EZ-2 with the Monroe County Auditor's office between March 1 and May 15 annually.
4. You must pay your participation fees annually after the registration year by paying the amount listed on your EZID invoice to the BUEA and the AIEZ (Association of Indiana Enterprise Zones)

Employee Income Tax Deduction (IC 6-3-2-8)

Employees who live and work in an enterprise zone may qualify for an income tax deduction. To qualify, the employee must:

- Work for a business, nonprofit, or government entity in the enterprise zone.
- Spend at least 90% of their work time on tasks related to the business in the zone.
- Perform at least 50% of their work in the zone during the year.
- Live in the enterprise zone.

The tax deduction is the smaller amount of:

- 50% of their income earned in the zone, or
- \$7,500.