

applicants to encourage the hiring of such contractors under the program. [Online access to this directory can be found here.](#)

## **SBIF Program FAQ's:**

### ***Am I in a SBIF district?***

Here are resources available to determine if you are in a SBIF district:

- You can consult the [Chicago Department of Planning and Development zoning map](#). If you are unfamiliar with this tool and how to use it, please see our [instructions page](#) for assistance.
- [Individual maps of TIF districts](#) are made available by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development.
- If you own the property, your Cook County property tax bill will indicate if you are in a TIF district.
- You can submit an inquiry to the SomerCor team at [sbif@somercor.com](mailto:sbif@somercor.com)

### ***Who can apply for a SBIF grant?***

Business and property owners can apply if they are in [SBIF districts](#) in the City of Chicago that are currently accepting new applications for the program. Business owners can own or lease their places of business. Landlords of commercial or industrial properties can also apply. To be eligible:

- **Commercial Business:** Annual sales must total less than \$9,000,000.
- **Industrial Business:** Must have two hundred (200) or fewer full-time equivalent employees.
- **Landlord:** Property owners must have a combined net worth that does not exceed \$9,000,000 and total liquid assets that do not exceed \$500,000. (Examples of liquid assets are: cash on hand, and non-retirement stocks and bonds.) This requirement shall also apply to Industrial Businesses that lease any portion of the property to one or more entities which do not share common ownership with the applicant business.
- **Tenant:** Annual sales of less than \$9,000,000, with express prior property owner approval.

### ***Can I be a start-up or new business?***

Yes, start-ups can apply. Start-up applicants will need to supply a detailed business plan and projections of the business's income and expenses for its first 36 months of operation as part of their application materials. Please note that the City of Chicago reserves the right to impose additional conditions for funding in connection with start-up business applications.

If you have only been in business for 1-2 years, SomerCor requires tax returns and a projection of gross sales to equal three years of data.

### ***Am I eligible if I live outside of Chicago?***

The important consideration is where you have your business/property. To participate in SBIF, your property has to be in the City of Chicago, as the funding source comes from City of Chicago property taxes. If you live in another area, please call your city's planning, economic development, or community development department to see what other programs may be available to assist small business.

### ***What if my building has both business and residential spaces?***

This program is primarily for business use. Business space projects may be eligible. Residential space interior and residential projects are ineligible. Mixed use exceptions: Chicago has many mixed use buildings, with both commercial and residential space. For these buildings, many envelope projects such as roofing, facade improvements, and tuck pointing can be eligible. No second-floor interior work to a mixed-use building shall be considered eligible if the property is classified as a "Class 2-12" type property ("Mixed use commercial/residential building with apartment and commercial area totaling six units or less with a square foot area less than 20,000 square feet") by the Cook County Assessor for property tax purposes.

### ***What is the maximum grant amount allowed under (SBIF)?***

- \$250,000 maximum assistance per industrial property
- \$150,000 maximum assistance per single owner/tenant commercial property or landlord
- \$250,000 maximum may be granted per multiple owner/tenant commercial property, with \$75,000 maximum assistance per tenant/landlord

Applicants may receive one or more grants up to their maximum program assistance. Once this maximum is reached, the applicants will need to wait three years to reapply.

### ***How is the SBIF grant reimbursement percentage determined?***

Your reimbursement percentage will be determined according to your *appropriate* application type (Landlord, Tenant, Owner-occupied, Industrial). Applicants cannot opt to apply under an application type that does not correspond to the actual nature of the applicant's control of the project property or the organization or operation of the business. Factors that determine reimbursement percentage and related financial eligibility criteria are **business gross sales/not-for-profit gross receipts, landlord net worth, landlord liquidity, and number of full-time equivalent employees**, depending upon application type.

- **Commercial Business (Tenant Applicant)** – based on gross sales/gross receipts for non-profit
  - \$0-\$3M = eligible for 90% reimbursement
  - \$3-\$6M = eligible for 60% reimbursement
  - \$6-\$9M = eligible for 30% reimbursement
- **Commercial Business (Landlord Applicant/no interest in the business leasing the space)** – is based on net worth with a liquid assets cap of \$500,000 per individual
  - \$0-\$3M = eligible for 90% reimbursement

- \$3-\$6M = eligible for 60% reimbursement
- \$6-\$9M = eligible for 30% reimbursement
- **Commercial Business (Owner-Occupied Property) –**
  - The above-mentioned schedules for both net worth AND sales AND all requirements for Landlord and Commercial Tenant types also apply. If the applicant should fall within different eligibility ranges for net worth and sales then the applicant will be eligible for the lesser of the two percentages.
- **Industrial Business (for both Building Owner or Tenant Business) –**
  - Eligible for 50% reimbursement with 200 or fewer full-time employees

***What can I do through the SBIF, and what costs are eligible for reimbursement?***

Project costs that are eligible under the SBIF program include expenses related to: renovation and repair of commercial and industrial buildings (or the commercial portion of a mixed-use building); alterations needed for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; facade repair and restoration of historic buildings; MEP improvements; and improvements necessary for environmental remediation. The program can reimburse for qualified permanent work expenses as well as some of the associated project “soft costs” such as project-specific expenses for architectural work. A more complete list of eligible and ineligible project types and costs can be found on the [SBIF Eligibility page](#). All external work listed on the application must comply with [City’s Design Guidelines](#).

Any work started before receipt of a conditional commitment letter from the City of Chicago’s Department of Planning and Development is not eligible for grant funds. Projects completed outside of the formal grant process are not eligible for grant funds; grants cannot be retroactively awarded for projects completed outside of the formal grant process. New construction is not eligible for grant funds.

***How do I pay back the money?***

The funds provided by the City of Chicago through the SBIF program are reimbursement grants. As such, the funds are not repaid to the City of Chicago by the applicant.

***What will my responsibilities be to the city once I receive the money?***

Once the applicant receives the grant, he or she must provide minimal information to SomerCor annually. If the applicant owns the property, they must continue to own the property for three years. If applicant leases the property, they must not relocate the business outside of the TIF district for three years. If the applicant is a tenant, the lease term must have more than three years remaining.

***Will there be enough SBIF funds for all applicants?***

Each Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district that has the SBIF program authorized in it has limited funds reserved for the program. If demand for the SBIF funds is greater than the available funding supply, then a lottery will be conducted to determine the order in which each grant

application may be accommodated. If any surplus funds become available, they will be allocated to waitlisted applicants.

***What about Scofflaw (City Debt)?***

Each individual who is applying for a grant and has an interest as an owner, tenant, partner, member, or board member (in the case of not-for-profit entities) in the business that operates at the project property or in the ownership of that property (for owner-occupied applicants) may not have any unpaid parking tickets, water bills, past due license fees, or other indebtedness owed to the City of Chicago. No conditional commitment for funding or reimbursement for completed work shall be made in connection with a property for which Cook County property taxes are past due. Additionally, all such individuals must be current on all child support payments (if applicable) and must submit a satisfactory Economic Disclosure Statement and Affidavit.

***Is there SBIF funding in my area?***

Every SBIF area has its own budget that the City refills if it has TIF funds available and if there is a demonstrated need for more grant money. Please check with SomerCor 504, Inc. to see if there are funds in your SBIF. We also maintain an interested party list for funds, which you can send an email to the SomerCor team at [sbif@somercor.com](mailto:sbif@somercor.com). When more funding becomes available, or the City allocates more funds, we will let you know. The interested party list helps the City of Chicago gauge demand for additional funding in particular SBIF areas.

***What if I am in a TIF and it is not a SBIF?***

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is the mechanism that funds the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF). If you are in a TIF district and it does not have a SBIF, please contact your alderman. Your alderman’s phone number can be found in the zoning map information ([click here](#)). You can also contact the project manager from the Department of Planning and Development.

**Application Process – Getting Started:**

- 1) [Confirm your business is in a SBIF District](#)
- 2) [Check which SBIF Districts are open](#)
- 3) [Review SBIF eligibility requirements](#)
- 4) Review SBIF program rules
- 5) [Click here to fill out application](#) and email to [sbif@somercor.com](mailto:sbif@somercor.com)

## **SomerCor 504, Inc. SBIF Contact and Mailing Information:**

Applicants are encouraged to contact the SBIF Team with questions about the SBIF Program.

<b>SBIF Team Member:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b>
<b>Silvia Orozco</b> (hablo español)	(312) 360-3334	<a href="mailto:sorozco@somercor.com">sorozco@somercor.com</a>
<b>Savannah Allen</b>	(312) 360-3327	<a href="mailto:sallen@somercor.com">sallen@somercor.com</a>
<b>Anastasia Williams</b>	(312) 360-3336	<a href="mailto:awilliams@somercor.com">awilliams@somercor.com</a>
<b>Shalonda Fisher</b>	(312) 360-3331	<a href="mailto:sfisher@somercor.com">sfisher@somercor.com</a>

**Applications should be submitted by email to:** [sbif@somercor.com](mailto:sbif@somercor.com)

### **SomerCor Office and Mailing Address:**

SomerCor 504, Inc.  
Attn: SBIF Department  
601 South LaSalle Street, Suite 510  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

**Fax:** (312) 757-4371

Applications can be submitted via e-mail, fax, U.S. Mail or other courier service (FedEx, UPS, local courier, etc.), or hand delivery at SomerCor's office. Applicants are encouraged to contact SomerCor to confirm receipt of their application after submission. All applications must be received by SomerCor by 5:00 p.m. Central Time on the application acceptance period "close" deadline date in order to be considered for the SBIF Program.