Business Façade Grant Program Guidelines

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of the City of Winter Park established the Business Façade Grant Program to provide a financial incentive to property and business owners to renovate and reinvest in the exterior of their business or commercial property. The program specifically encourages redevelopment and reinvestment for commercial properties located in the Winter Park CRA district of the City.

ELIGIBILE APPLICANTS

- The grant applicant must be a property owner or a business owner leasing a storefront;
- The business must be located within the boundaries of the Winter Park CRA (see map);
- If applying as the tenant, an affidavit must be signed by the property owner consenting to the improvements (see application);
- Proposed project must be a small business as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (For more information visit www.sba.gov/size;
- Business may be an individually owned franchise as long as it meets all other criteria;
- Tenant must have at least two years remaining in lease at location of proposed project;
- Exterior Improvement Program Grant can only be used once per building; regardless of ownership;
- Buildings with multiple occupants may be eligible on a case by case basis;
- The project applicant must owe no outstanding property taxes, fees, judgment, or liens to the City of Winter Park or Orange County and have no outstanding code violations.

Ineligible Applicants: National corporate franchises, government offices and agencies (non-governmental, for-profit, tenants are eligible), businesses that exclude service to minors, properties primarily in residential use, properties exempt from property taxes.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The Exterior Improvement Facade Grant program is funded through Community Redevelopment Agency funds. The CRA will match the Owner/Lessee up to fifty percent (50%) of the total cost of eligible improvements up to $30,000. Project cost must exceed $2,500 of eligible improvements to be considered for façade grant. All work must be done on the exterior of a street facing side of the building. Grant funds cannot be used on work already completed. Eligible work must be completed **after** an applicant's request has been reviewed and approved.

Eligible work: Rehabilitation of building facades visible to the street or public right-of-way, including:

- storefronts;
- ledges;
- gutters and downspouts;
- signs and graphics;
- exterior lighting;
- canopies and awnings;
- painting and masonry work.

Following repairs are allowed as long as they are part of work which is directly visible from public right-of-ways and specifically approved by the CRA:

- landscaping and irrigation;
- fences;
- seal coating, re-striping of parking lots and bike racks;
- public-facing, small-scale utility improvements, such as mop sinks, condensate discharge drainage connections, and others as may be provided for within the city code;
- New construction may be considered on a case-by-case basis if the applicant is upgrading the current façade of a property.

Ineligible Activities:

- roofs;
- structural foundations;
- billboards;
- security systems;
- non-permanent fixtures;
- interior window coverings;
- personal property and equipment;
- security bars; razor/barbed wire fencing;
- sidewalks and paving;
- all necessary government approvals, building permits, and taxes;
- services performed by a non-licensed contractor
- work performed prior to grant award

AWARD TIMELINE

Applications will be collected quarterly beginning October 1st. Businesses may apply during any quarter of the fiscal year, but are encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible to ensure funds are available for commitment.

First time applicants are encouraged to participate as they will be given priority over businesses who have previously participated in the CRA Business Façade Program. Staff will also review safety repairs and total leverage of CRA funding to determine award.

AWARD REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement shall be limited to no more than 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements, not to exceed $30,000 per storefront. Larger buildings with more than one storefront and/or more than one side visible (on a corner) may be considered for a larger grant on a case by case basis by the CRA Director. Any projects totaling less than $2,500 in qualified improvements are not eligible.

Approved applicants may request up to 50% of the estimated awarded grant funds, with proof of paid invoice. The remaining grant funds will be paid once the project is complete. Grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as funding remains available in the program.

The CRA reserves the right to refuse reimbursements as a whole or in part for work that is not completed within 12 months. The CRA cannot reserve funds indefinitely. Grants may be subject to cancellation if not completed or significant progress has not been made by the completion date. Requests for extensions will be considered only if made in writing and progress towards completion has been demonstrated.

If all program funds have been committed, the owner/lessee may still submit an application, complete approved façade work, and be reimbursed for that work if funding is approved and available. Because budget availability varies each year, the CRA cannot guarantee funding will be available or that any applicant will be reimbursed. Applicants who submit a completed application and are on the waiting list may be eligible for reimbursement if funding becomes available up to one year after their application submittal date. Work completed in advance of funding availability must be maintained in like-new conditions and match with the scope of work submitted with the application in order to receive reimbursement. Only applicants that have previously applied and been placed on the waiting list prior to beginning any exterior improvement under this program may be eligible for funding.

Multi-Tenant Building: Business tenants in a multi-tenant property may apply to the program as long as the tenant has a clearly definable independent entrance into the storefront that is clearly visible from public rights-of-way (ex. strip-mall tenants). Business tenants in multi-tenant buildings that do not have independent storefronts are not eligible to apply, however the property owner may still apply if they meet the eligibility requirements. Multi-tenant property owners may still apply if they meet all other eligibility requirements. Property owners will not be able to apply if other tenants in the same property have previously used the program. If no other tenant in the property has utilized the program then the property owner may apply as the applicant and receive up to $30,000 for the entire property.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING Applicants are required to get three (3) competitive bids for every type of proposed work. Please be advised, applicants are not permitted to use their own business as one of the required bids. The CRA will match up to 50% of the cost up to $20,000. All contractors must be insured and licensed by the State of Florida. All construction contracts will be between the applicant and contractor.

APPROVALS

The CRA has the sole authority to determine eligibility of proposed work and confirmation of completed work. Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of funding. Participants will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals, including any needed by City departments or boards and including, but not limited to, building permits and any other necessary permits. All work must comply with city, state and federal regulations.

CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT

Accepted applicants must enter into a contractual agreement with the CRA prior to disbursement of grant funds.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Application packages must include documentation that illustrates the visual impact of the project and its cost.

Failure to provide required information will delay the review and/or approval process.

The applications must include the following attachments:

1. Complete application form
2. Copy of current business license
3. Copy of current property insurance
4. Written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct exterior improvements *(if necessary)*
5. Digital photographs of existing conditions of project
6. Written description of project improvements including material list and color selections
7. Simple sketch of improvement project
8. Three competitive bids for each type of work proposed

Submit complete applications to:
Community Redevelopment Agency
Attn: Exterior Improvement Grant Program
401 Park Avenue South
Winter Park, FL 32789

For more information about the CRA's Business Façade Program, please contact our office at 407-599-3225.