



CITY OF TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

The City of Tallahassee Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Commercial Façade Improvement Program provides CRA grant funds, along with private investments, for general improvements to the exterior of commercial structures located within the boundaries of either of Tallahassee's two community redevelopment areas: the Greater Frenchtown/Southside Community Redevelopment Area or the Downtown District Community Redevelopment Area. Only commercial structures located within either redevelopment area are eligible to apply for grant funds under this program. If you are uncertain if a commercial structure is located within the boundaries of either redevelopment area, please contact CRA staff at the telephone number listed at the end of these guidelines.

The goal of the commercial façade improvement program is to increase commercial occupancy rates and property values in the redevelopment areas. To do this, the program assists commercial property owners and tenants in restoring or renovating the exterior of their building, thereby reducing blighting influences, improving the area's physical characteristics and enhancing the visual quality and attractiveness of the environment, which will lead to increased occupancy and property values.

Eligible applicants can receive grant funding up to \$50,000 on a one-to-one match with equal applicant funding for façade improvements on commercial structures. The façade improvements must be consistent with the Redevelopment Plans for each redevelopment area, and the regulations set forth in the City of Tallahassee's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning and Land Development Regulations. In addition, if the property is locally designated as historic and is zoned under the Historic Preservation Overlay (HPO), the proposed façade improvements must be approved by the Tallahassee-Leon County Architectural Review Board, which will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. For more information on the review of historic properties, please contact the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation at 850-488-7334.

The CRA staff will review applications for completeness and a funding recommendation. The CRA Executive Director may approve grant applications of \$10,000 or less; applications in excess of \$10,000 will be forwarded to the CRA Board for funding approval. Grant funds will be distributed upon completion of improvements.

Grant funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications must be approved by the CRA before work begins on improvements.

What Can Program Funds Be Use For?

1. Façade improvements, such as storefronts, display windows, painting (in conjunction with other improvements), and exterior lighting;
2. Removal of elements which cover original architectural design and details;
3. Replacement of existing signs with new signage, if attached to the building;
4. Addition and/or replacement of awnings/doors/windows;
5. Overall replacement of architectural elements that have structural problems;
6. Painting as part of a comprehensive improvement project;
7. Electrical work directly related to the exterior of the building or the installation of approved signage; and
8. Professional design and engineering services related to structural renovation, new construction and signage.

What Can't Program Funds Be Used For?

1. Physical or visual removal of architecturally important features;
2. Installation of aluminum or vinyl siding;
3. Painting, when not associated with other improvements;
4. Permitting fees;
5. Labor performed by a non-licensed contractor;
6. Improvements constructed prior to execution of final agreement with the CRA (At the discretion of the CRA Executive Director or Board, structural repairs directly related to the building's façade that were completed within six (6) months prior to the date of the grant application **MAY** be used as part or all of the applicant's required match);

7. Routine maintenance activities that are part of normal property ownership;
8. The repair of any code violations; and
9. Improvements on a property that has any judgment liens, is not current on all mortgage and tax obligations, and has any code violations.

CRITERIA FOR PROJECT SELECTION

1. Building must be within the boundary of either the Greater Frenchtown/Southside Community Redevelopment Area or the Downtown District Community Redevelopment Area.
2. Applicants must demonstrate that all necessary financing required to complete the project has been secured.
3. Applicants must have received CRA Executive Director or Board approval prior to commencement of construction.
4. All necessary permits and approvals must be obtained from the City of Tallahassee Growth Management Department before work is commenced. All work is to be performed to the satisfaction of the City of Tallahassee Building Inspection Offices.
5. A licensed contractor must perform the work.
6. Applicant must agree to maintain the improvements for at least 5 years.
7. Property must be free from any judgment liens and all mortgage and tax obligations must be current.
8. There may be no more than one application for project funding per fiscal year. A “project” is defined as a single or set of enhancement/renovation activities for an eligible property. The total amount of grant funds available for any one property under this program is \$50,000. Any subsequent applications for the same property in future years will be treated cumulatively for purposes of determining funding eligibility.

Grant funds are limited and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event of competing applications for the limited funds, CRA staff will assess applications using the following criteria:

1. Consistency with the goals and objectives of the Community Redevelopment Plan for the appropriate redevelopment area;

2. Adjacency to a recent or proposed redevelopment project;
3. Project will result in the occupancy of a presently vacant building;
4. Level of applicant match leveraged against CRA funds; and
5. Receipt of previous façade improvement grant awards (first time applicants will have priority over repeat applicants).

GRANT STRUCTURE

1. All grants will be treated as five-year, zero interest, deferred loans, and will be subject to an agreement and restrictive covenant (the “Grant Agreement”).
2. The amount of the deferred loan will be amortized in monthly installments over a five-year (60 month) period beginning one month after the receipt of a Certificate of Occupancy for the renovation/improvement by the City’s Growth Management Department.
3. The monthly installments will be automatically forgiven without any action by either the Applicant or the CRA as they become due, as long as the property is maintained as a commercial structure. Should the character of the property change to something other than commercial in nature during the deferred loan period, the outstanding balance of the deferred loan will become due and payable.
4. The deferred loan may be subordinate to other loan commitments made by the applicant, however, it may not be subsequently further subordinated after closing without the written approval of the CRA.
5. The property may be sold during the deferred loan period; however, should this occur, the remaining balance of the deferred loan will either become due and payable or may transfer to the new owner, at the option of the CRA.
6. Any deferred loan of more than \$10,000 will be secured by a mortgage and Grant Agreement filed with the Clerk of Court. Prior to closing, the CRA, through the City Attorney’s Office, will acquire mortgagee title insurance, the cost of which will be deducted from the grant proceeds to be disbursed to the applicant. If a tenant is able to secure written approval from the land owner to make the proposed façade improvements, but not for a mortgage on the property to secure the deferred loan, the tenant may secure the note through either a Letter of Credit or a Performance or Surety Bond, subject to the review and approval of the CRA Executive Director. If not secured by a mortgage on the property, then a notice of the Grant Agreement will be filed with the Clerk of the Court.
7. Any deferred loan of less than \$10,000 is not required to be secured by a mortgage. Instead, a notice of the Grant Agreement will be filed with the Clerk of

the Court. Prior to closing, the applicant will provide the CRA with an ownership and encumbrance report, the cost of which shall be paid by the applicant or deducted from the grant proceeds to be disbursed to the applicant.

8. Prior to the CRA Board considering an application in excess of \$10,000, the CRA, through the City Attorney's Office, will contract for a title search to be performed on the subject property. The cost of the title search shall be paid by the applicant or deducted from the grant proceeds to be disbursed to the applicant.
9. All owners, authorized corporate officers, or partners must sign this application. A partner or officer must personally sign for the grant in the case where the applicant is a partnership, corporation or a professional association. This does not apply to recognized non-profit organizations.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A property owner and/or tenant interested in participating in the Commercial Façade Improvement Program must submit a signed and completed application, along with supporting documents, to the City of Tallahassee's Community Redevelopment Agency, Mailbox A-17, 300 South Adams Street, Tallahassee, Florida, 32301. Applicants are required to submit quotes from three (3) licensed contractors with the application.

Applications will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with program criteria. Applications that are incomplete may be returned for additional information. Projects that do not comply with the program criteria will not be considered for funding. The funding awarded will be based on the lowest qualified bid. The applicant may elect to choose a contractor other than the one with lowest qualified bid but shall be responsible for all costs exceeding the lowest qualified bid. In all cases, the contractor must be licensed, insured and have worker's compensation insurance.

It is recommended that applicants retain the services of a registered architect, or similarly qualified design professional to prepare plans, drawings and construction specifications for their project. Grant requests for more than \$10,000 will require the submission of a rendering in an electronic format that shows the anticipated façade improvements. The electronic rendering will help both the CRA staff and Board to better visualize the extent of the proposed improvements. The rendering does not have to be prepared by a registered architect, but must provide a reasonable representation of the proposed improvements. Fees for services provided by a registered architect or similarly qualified design professional may be counted towards the applicant's program match.

The CRA will not be responsible in any manner for the selection of a contractor. An applicant should pursue all activities necessary to determine contractor qualifications, quality of workmanship, and reputation. The applicant will bear full responsibility for reviewing the competence and abilities of prospective contractors and secure proof of their licensing and insurance coverage.

Applications can be obtained from the City of Tallahassee Community Redevelopment Agency within the Department of Economic and Community Development, 1st Floor, Renaissance Building, 435 North Macomb Street, or from the City's website: www.talgov.com/ecd then selecting "Community Redevelopment", then "Commercial Façade Program".

Pre-Application Meeting

If desired, CRA staff will review the applicant's conceptual plans in an informal setting, including discussion of the eligibility criteria, program requirements, proposed project scheduling, and consistency of the proposal with the intent of the program. At this stage, staff can offer assistance with the completion of the application form and provide limited technical and architectural guidance on the project proposal. At the conclusion of the pre-application meeting, staff will provide the applicant with a general determination as to whether the proposed project is likely to qualify to receive program funds and whether the applicant is sufficiently prepared to move on to the application stage.

Required Submissions

A more comprehensive list of the required submissions can be found within the application form. Those items required for submission include:

1. A completed and signed application form.
2. Color photographs of the existing building exterior showing all sides of the building, with emphasis on the area to be improved.
3. Sketches or conceptual drawings of the anticipated façade improvements. On applications requesting more than \$10,000 in grant funds, these sketches or conceptual drawings must be submitted in electronic format.
4. Three (3) bids from licensed contractors detailing the following:
 - a. Description of the materials to be used and the construction procedure;
 - b. Itemized cost estimate of the project;
5. A legal description of the property.
6. Proof of property ownership or, if a tenant, a copy of the lease;
7. Tenants must provide written documentation verifying the property owner approves the proposed enhancements and will sign the restrictive covenants and/or mortgage. If the owner is willing to approve the proposed enhancements but is not willing to sign on a mortgage to secure the deferred loan, the tenant may

secure the note through either a Letter of Credit or a Performance or Surety Bond, subject to the review and approval of the CRA Executive Director.

8. Documentation from all lending institutions verifying all mortgage payments on the property are current and that the lending institutions will provide updated information upon request by the Community Redevelopment Agency;
9. Documentation demonstrating all property tax payments are current;
10. If the property is locally designated as historic and is zoned under the Historic Preservation Overlay (HPO), the Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Tallahassee-Leon County Architectural Review Board (for more information on the review of historic properties, please contact the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation at 850-488-7334); and
11. Proof of property insurance.

Application Approval

The CRA Executive Director will approve or deny grant applications of \$10,000 or less. Projects in over \$10,000 will be forwarded to the CRA Board with a recommendation from CRA staff for funding approval or denial. All applicants will receive written notification regarding approval or denial of their application. If an applicant's proposal is approved by either the Executive Director or the CRA Board, the applicant will receive written notification of the approval, which will include a funding agreement listing the amount of matching funds that are approved.

Documentation of Applicant's Required Match

The applicant will be required to document the type and source of his/her matching funds on the application submitted to the CRA. Verification of the funding sources will be required before final approval of the grant application.

At the discretion of the CRA Executive Director or Board, structural repairs directly related to the building's façade that were completed within six (6) months prior to the date of the grant application **MAY** be used as part or all of the applicant's required match.

Construction Start

After the funding agreement has been executed, the applicant may award the construction contract and secure all necessary construction permits. The owner/tenant must issue a "Notice to Proceed" to the contractor and apply for a building permit within 60 days of executing the funding agreement. Construction must begin within 90 days of the funding agreement and be completed within 12 months of the agreement. Extensions may be

granted at the discretion of the Executive Director of the CRA, contingent upon the applicant demonstrating just cause for such an extension.

Modifications to the approved final plans or changes to the construction documents which produce visible differences in the approved façade design will require review and approval by CRA staff and/or Board. Failure to receive such approval shall invalidate the funding agreement and the agreement will be deemed terminated. In the event the agreement is terminated, and if any grant funds have been disbursed to the applicant by the CRA as provided below, the disbursed funds shall become immediately due and payable to the CRA.

Disbursements

Generally, approved projects will receive reimbursement funding upon completion of the project. For projects in excess of \$10,000 (grant and applicant match combined), where the applicant cannot secure full funding for the project, the Executive Director of the CRA may approve the partial payment of grant funds once a project has reached agreed-upon milestones. In these cases, the applicant and the CRA will reach an agreement before construction begins on the terms and conditions of such a milestone and the amount of the partial payment. However, grant funds cannot be used to reimburse the applicant for any work done on the building prior to date of a fully executed Grant Agreement between the applicant and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

Funds will be disbursed by a check payable to the applicant (1) upon certification of completion by the City Building Inspector, or as agreed to with the CRA Executive Director and (2) CRA staff verification that the work was completed as proposed in a satisfactory and professional manner. Funds will not be disbursed on projects that are not in accordance with the approved plans.

The City's Growth Management Department, Building Inspection Division will make the final determination as to when the project is complete. Applicants must provide verification, satisfactory to the CRA, of all project costs, including contractor invoicing, and evidence of payment of funds for reimbursement and match, before grant funds can be disbursed.

APPLICATION PROCESS SUMMARY

1. Applicant submits a complete application to the CRA office;
2. CRA staff reviews application for completeness, accuracy and eligibility;
3. CRA staff presents recommendation to the CRA Executive Director and/or Board, as appropriate;
4. Upon approval, the applicant will be notified in writing of the amount of the grant awarded and the documentation that must be provided before funds are released;

DISCLOSURES

The CRA expressly reserves the right to reject any or all applications or to request additional information from any and/or all applicants. The CRA retains the right to amend the program guidelines and application procedures without notice. The CRA also retains the right to display and advertise properties that receive grant funds.

The closing costs associated with the grant (title search and recording fees) will be deducted from the disbursement amount of the approved grant amount, which will be based on the lowest price quote. At the option of the applicant, the applicant may pay these closing costs directly.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions on how to complete the application form or the appropriateness of a proposed project should be directed to CRA staff at (850) 891-6500.

June 20, 2011



APPLICATION

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

I. APPLICANT AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

Date of Application: _____

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Business: _____

Business Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Type of Business: _____ Parcel ID Number: _____

This property is located within the:

Greater Frenchtown/Southside Community Redevelopment Area

Downtown District Community Redevelopment Area

ZONING DESIGNATION - This section must be reviewed by the Land Use and Environmental Division of the City's Growth Management Department (850-891-7100):

Use is allowable: _____ Use is not allowable: _____

Growth Management Planner/Reviewer and Date: _____

BUILDING PERMIT - This section must be reviewed by the Building Inspection Division of the City's Growth Management Department (850-891-7000):

Building Permit(s) will be needed: Yes ___ No ___

If yes, what permits will be required? _____

Building Inspector/Reviewer and Date: _____

Are there any liens or existing code violations on the property? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, briefly explain (attach additional pages if needed): _____

II. PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (if different from Applicant)

Name of Property Owner: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Business Address: _____

III. PROJECT FINANCING INFORMATION

Total Project Cost: _____ (Attach at least 3 bids from a licensed contractor)

Bid One: Contractor Name: _____ Bid Amount: _____

Bid Two: Contractor Name: _____ Bid Amount: _____

Bid Three Contractor Name: _____ Bid Amount: _____

Amount of Grant Funds Requested: _____ (Maximum funding request cannot exceed 1/2 the cost of the proposed project, up to a maximum of \$50,000)

How will applicant's portion of the project be financed? Verification of funding sources will be required before final approval of the grant application. _____

IV. PROJECT SUMMARY

Please provide a summary of the proposed project and how the requested funds will be used. Be specific in describing the nature of the project and address the improvements that will be made and the timetable for completing the proposed improvements. Attach additional pages if necessary. Note: A site visit with the applicant may be necessary to understand the scope and nature of the project.

IV. ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS (required)

1. Color photographs of the existing building exterior. Need to show all sides of the building, with emphasis on the area to be improved.
2. Sketches or conceptual drawings of the anticipated façade improvements. On applications requesting more than \$10,000 in grant funds, these sketches or conceptual drawings must be submitted in electronic format.
3. Three (3) bids from a licensed contractor detailing the following:
 - a. Description of the materials to be used and the construction procedure;
 - b. Itemized cost estimate of the project;
4. A legal description of the property.
5. Proof of property ownership or, if a tenant, a copy of the lease;
6. Tenants must provide written documentation verifying the property owner approves the proposed enhancements and will sign the restrictive covenants

and/or mortgage (if property owner is not willing to sign the restrictive covenants, tenant must provide either a Letter of Credit or a Surety Bond to secure the deferred loan);

7. Documentation from all lending institutions verifying all mortgage payments on the property are current and that the lending institutions will provide updated information upon request by the Community Redevelopment Agency;
8. Documentation demonstrating all property tax payments are current;
9. If the property is locally designated as historic and is zoned under the Historic Preservation Overlay (HPO), please attach the Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Tallahassee-Leon County Architectural Review Board (for more information on the review of historic properties, please contact the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation at 850-488-7334); and
10. Proof of property insurance.

V. CERTIFICATION

Please read the following and sign below. **All owners, authorized corporate officers, or partners must sign this application.**

The information contained in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge. Applicants understand that personal, business and/or property information may be requested pursuant to this application and hereby give their consent for such information to be provided. The CRA retains the sole decision as to whether this grant application is approved, disapproved, or modified.

Applicant agrees to accept future maintenance and other associated costs occurring after the completion of the project for not less than five (5) years.

Name (print)

Name (print)

Title

Title

Signature

Signature

Date

Date