

**City of Lake Dallas
Business Improvement Grant (B.I.G) Program
Guidelines**

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation (CDC) has implemented a Business Improvement Grant (BIG) Program that provides technical and financial assistance to property owners seeking to renovate or restore their exterior signage, lighting or commercial building façades. The BIG Program's objectives are to improve the physical appearance of businesses and enhance the city's commercial corridors.

The BIG Program offers a 1:1 (50%) matching grant of up to \$10,000 for the funding of well-designed improvements. Improvements may include the restoration of architectural details, better windows and doors, and well proportioned signage and lighting. City staff will be available to provide assistance to applicants through the conceptual stage at no cost to the applicants.

Projects in the city's Main Street/Downtown Overlay district may be eligible for 2:1 (66%) matching grant of up to \$10,000.

II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following criteria must be met for participation in the Business Improvement Grant Program:

1. Applicant(s) must be the commercial property owner located within the city limits of Lake Dallas.
2. Preference will be given to independent businesses not required by contractual arrangement to maintain standardized décor, architecture, signs or similar features.
3. Nonconforming signage on property, if applicable, must be permanently removed as part of the improvement.
4. Property owners must be up to date on all municipal taxes, and have no outstanding code violations prior to participation in the program.
5. Applicant(s) must comply with all Federal, State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code and zoning requirements.
6. Applicant must enter into an Economic Development Agreement with the CDC.

III. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Improvements to be funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building as well as, to the extent appropriate, with other buildings along the street on which the participating storefront is located. Buildings with significant architectural qualities are strongly encouraged to restore and maintain these features.

Improvements for buildings not having such architectural features should still be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to substantially enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes and conform to the City's targeted image for the area.

A. Eligible Façade/Signage Improvements

Storefronts should be oriented to the pedestrian and provide visual interest both day and night. Effort should be made to facilitate access into the store and to create a store identity unique to Lake Dallas and/or the respective neighborhood. The following improvements are encouraged:

1. Restoration of details in historically contributing or significant buildings, and removal of elements which cover architectural details.
2. Window display areas which are appropriately scaled and which facilitate night viewing.
3. Window replacement and window framing visible from the street, which is appropriately scaled to the building.
4. Additional signage that is attractively integrated into the architecture of the building, including the window area, awnings or canopies, and entryways.
5. Lighting that is visually appealing and appropriately illuminates signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of a building façade.
6. Awnings or canopies that can be both functional and visually appealing.
7. Curbing, irrigation, approved trees, landscaping beds (not including planting material) or other landscaping features attached to the building where appropriate, not to exceed twenty percent (20%) of the project budget.
8. Cleaning, repainting or residing of building.
9. New storefront construction, appropriately scaled within an existing building.
10. Removal of architectural barriers to public accessibility.

Other improvements can be made with written approval if they meet the objectives of the Storefront Improvement Program.

B. Prior Improvements

Alterations and improvements made prior to approval of the BIG Program application by CDC are not eligible for reimbursement.

C. Alterations

The applicant must agree not to change or alter the improved façade without prior written approval from the Community Development Corporation for three (3) years from the date of the rebate check issued under the Business Improvement Grant Program. The applicant agrees to return a pro-rated amount of the grant money received if the improvement is removed within three (3) years.

IV. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

A. Financial Assistance

Funding offered is a matching grant in which the Business Improvement Grant Program reimburses the applicant fifty percent (50%) of total project costs, up to a \$10,000 maximum match for façade improvements.

Projects in the city's Main Street/Downtown Overlay district may be eligible for 2:1 (66%) of total project costs, up to a \$10,000 maximum match for façade improvements.

Upon completion of the project the City Manager will review the project. Receipts for labor and materials should be submitted to the city staff for review. A reimbursement check will only be issued after the project is determined complete and all receipts have been reconciled by the Lake Dallas Main Street Program.

B. Technical Assistance

City staff can provide guidance on façade improvements specific to individual storefronts. City staff can provide limited conceptual design assistance. The applicant will still be expected to hire his/her own licensed architect, if necessary, to carry forth this conceptual design to completion of construction.

Early meetings with city staff are encouraged to help avoid misunderstanding as to the eligibility of grant proposals.

C. Application and Information

If you wish to participate in the Storefront Improvement Program, please contact the City of Lake Dallas City Manager's Office, by phone at (940) 497-2226.

V. PROCEDURES

All prospective applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below.

1. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Lake Dallas Community Development Coordinator for initial project discussions.
2. Applications are submitted to the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation.
3. City staff will review application to determine grant eligibility. Staff will meet with the applicant at least once prior to the application being submitted to the Community Development Corporation
4. Application is reviewed by the Community Development Corporation.
5. Approved application received a notice to proceed from city staff.

6. City staff monitors and works with applicant through the construction phase.
7. Grants are issued after city staff has certified the work has been completed.

The Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.

VI. General Conditions

1. It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant shall be solely responsible for all safety conditions and compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, ordinances and other applicable regulations. Neither approval of a grant application nor payment of the grant upon completion of the project shall constitute approval by any City department or staff of the project, nor shall approval of such grant application or payment of the grant upon completion constitute a waiver by the City of any safety regulation, building code, ordinance and other applicable regulation.
2. It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant is solely responsible for overseeing the work, and will not seek to hold the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation, Lake Dallas Main Street Program, the City of Lake Dallas, and/or their agents, employees, officers, and/or directors liable for any property damage, personal injury, or other loss related in any way to the Storefront Improvement Program, and by submission of an application, the applicant agrees to indemnify the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation, Lake Dallas Main Street Program, the City of Lake Dallas, and/or their agents, employees, officers, and/or directors from any claims or damages resulting from the project, including reasonable attorneys; fees.
3. The applicant shall be responsible for maintaining sufficient insurance coverage for property damage and personal injury liability relating to the Store Front Improvement Program.
4. The applicant authorizes the City of Lake Dallas to promote an approved project, including but not limited to displaying a sign at the site during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in material and press releases.

VII. ADJUSTMENTS and TERMINATION

The applicant understands that the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation and the City of Lake Dallas reserves the right make changes in the conditions of the BIG Program as they determine in their sole discretion as warranted at any time, including for applications already pending.

If the applicant seeks to change the scope of their project after a grant has already been approved, the applicant must meet with the City Manager. The applicant must have written staff approval on all modifications to remain eligible for grant funding. All work for approved projects must be complete within one year of the date of the signing of the BIG Program agreement, unless an extension is granted by the Community Development Corporation.

The City of Lake Dallas has the right to terminate any agreement under the BIG Program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or if the project has been started prior to an executed agreement with the City of Lake Dallas.