

TOWN OF HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program Guidelines 2023

The Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program encourages property/business owners to renovate, restore, and improve buildings including both interior and exterior spaces. It is intended to provide financial assistance for significant improvements. The goal of the program is to encourage the growth of a vibrant and thriving retail climate within the Highland Redevelopment Area, as well as attract retail growth, additional business traffic and catalyze investment through improved aesthetics of aging commercial properties. By making noticeable enhancements within the Highland Redevelopment Area, the urban environment will improve and thereby impact the overall downtown revitalization efforts of the community.

Grants will be awarded for up to 30% of the approved project improvements total. Projects over \$15,000 will take priority, however, the Redevelopment Commission will review any and all projects regardless of the amount being requested. Each recipient can apply for up to \$40,000, which is the maximum amount that may be given to an individual business within ten (10) year. However, if the subject property changes ownership, and the new owner(s) intend(s) to change the character of the business/use of the subject property, an application can be considered within said ten (10) year time limitation. Reimbursement for the Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program is made following an application procedure, project approval, final construction, final inspection, and the delivery and review of all applicable receipts and/or paid invoices for work and/or supplies.

The Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program will award up to \$100,000 in total grant money in any given year as decided in that year's Redevelopment budget approved by the Town Council. Grant funds may vary year to year and will be awarded at the discretion of the Highland Redevelopment Commission. Generally, a business will only be eligible for one (1) grant per year, however the Redevelopment Commission maintains the right to make allowances and exceptions, including to award multiple grants, depending on available funds.

Property Requirements:

1. Property must be located in the Highland Redevelopment Area.
2. Building(s) must be over 35 years old (Built before 1988).
3. Owner must be current with property taxes.

Eligible Improvements Include:

Exterior

1. Building frontage enhancements including restoration of original architecture or new design that complies with current design standards, as well as Highland Municipal Code, Section 214.108: RD- Redevelopment District, Town ordinance, and building code, as well as ADA guidelines.
2. New or restored cornices, decorative detail, or awnings that comply with the previously mentioned standards
3. Exterior lighting that complies with Town standards.
4. New signs and window display area, so long as they comply with Town standards and the local Sign Ordinance.
5. Painting/Cladding Improvements that comply with Town design standards
6. Doors/Entryways and Windows
7. Roofing
8. Landscaping as part of the streetscape
9. Architectural fees

Interior

1. Painting (including clean up)
2. Upgrade to energy efficient lighting fixtures
3. Electrical work
4. Flooring, including new installation or repair/restoration of current flooring
5. Ceilings and walls, including new installation or repair/restoration
6. Doors, trim, woodworking
7. Hazardous materials abatement
8. Plumbing, only as to non-cosmetic replacement and/or revisions to comply with the current building codes.
9. Compliance with ADA standards
10. Historic restoration of original features/architecture
11. Installation of appliances, including commercial kitchen appliances, as well as furnaces/boilers, hot water heaters, air conditioners, and HVAC systems.

12. Energy efficient insulating materials and the installation of same
13. Architectural fees

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds:

1. Acquisition of property
2. Building permit or inspection fees
3. Demolition
4. Repairs or new projects that do not comply with Town standards
5. Sidewalks, paving, or parking lot improvements
6. Fences or gates
7. Work provided by owner of the building or business, even if they are a contractor
8. Working capital or refinancing existing loans
9. Routine maintenance
10. Inventory
11. Furniture (chairs, couches, display racks, etc.)
12. Temporary fixtures including cubicles
13. Office equipment (computers, printers, copiers, etc.)
14. Renovation of a space on a speculative basis to attract new tenants
15. Moving or relocation expenses

Program Guidelines:

1. No work that has already been started will be eligible for funding through this grant.
2. For Interior improvements to be eligible for reimbursement, exterior work must be completed concurrently or prior to any interior work.
3. The applicant must be the owner of the building, or if leasing, then the applicant must have written permission from the building owner for the proposed work.
4. If the applicant is leasing, the current lease term must be a minimum of five (5) to ten (10) years, depending on the age of the business.
5. Grant funds may only be used for commercial portions of mixed-use buildings.
6. If a recipient breaks or violates the lease term, a repayment of grant dollars will be due based on the number of years remaining in the lease.

7. Recipients must join the Highland-Griffith Chamber of Commerce.
8. Recipients must submit a cash donation of \$100 or more to a local 501(c)(3) organization located in the Town of Highland, the School Town of Highland, or the Highland Main Street Bureau.
9. Whenever possible, local (Lake County) contractors, tradespeople, and materials should be used for completing work. All contractors and tradespeople should be licensed in their field, as required by the Town of Highland.
10. Any and all significant and material changes to original grant projects must be approved by the Highland Redevelopment Commission, otherwise funding will not be provided for those projects.
11. Projects must be completed within one (1) year of approval. After this time, the applicant is required to reapply unless the Redevelopment Commission approves a written request for an extension .

Application Process:

1. Applicants must complete the attached form and submit it for approval, along with the following required supporting documents:
 - a. Project scope of work, including architectural renderings, color samples, product specifications/cut sheets and/or any other manufacturer product information
 - b. Photos of existing building and close-up photos of areas to be improved
 - c. Professional cost estimates from contractors, architects, and tradespeople, for both materials and labor. There shall be a minimum of two (2) estimates for each project unless an exception is made by the Redevelopment Commission for extraordinary circumstances.
 - d. A copy of your lease agreement and written permission from the owner of the building, if applicable.
2. The applicant must obtain all required building permits from the Town of Highland Building and Inspection Department.
3. Upon completion of all approved work and required inspections, the following documents must be submitted:

- a. Copies of all receipts and paid invoices
- b. Proof of charitable donation

COMPLETE APPLICATIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO:

Redevelopment Commission Offices 3333 Ridge Road, Highland IN 46322

Any questions please call (219) 972-7598 Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director

Email: mbecerra@highland.in.gov

**TOWN OF HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program Application**

Applicant Name: _____

Applicant Address: _____

Business Name: _____

Business Owner: _____

Business Owner Address: _____

Building Owner (if business is in a leased property): _____

Building Owner Contact Information: _____

Property Address: _____

Parcel ID number (18-digits): ____ - ____ - ____ - ____ - ____ . ____ - ____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Contact Email Address: _____

Estimated Start Date for Project: ____ / ____ / ____

Estimated Completion Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Total Cost of Project: \$ _____

Owner Commitment: \$ _____

Commercial Property Improvement Grant Commitment (30%): \$ _____

Please include required attachments:

- a. Project scope of work, including architectural renderings, color samples, product specifications/cut sheets and/or any other manufacturer product information
- b. Photos of existing building and close-up photos of areas to be improved
- c. Professional cost estimates from contractors, architects, and tradespeople, for both materials and labor. One (1) alternate estimate must be provided, with a minimum of two (2) estimates for each project
- d. A copy of your lease agreement and written permission from the owner of the building, if applicable.

Check here to certify that you have read and understand the information provided in this document regarding the Highland Redevelopment Commission's Commercial Grant Improvement Program and all information you are providing is true to the best of your knowledge.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____