



COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANTS

Revised July 26, 2023



OVERVIEW

For many years, Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has offered programs like this to encourage, cure, or prevent slum and blighted conditions impacting our community. When leveraged, matching grant programs can spur private investment.

Fort Myers CRA's Program Goals:

- To cure or prevent blighted and slum conditions within all CRA redevelopment areas.
- To increase the property values in all redevelopment areas.
- To fill vacant or underutilized spaces within all CRA redevelopment areas.
- To encourage adaptive reuse and revitalization of commercial corridors within all CRA redevelopment areas.
- To improve the curb appeal of commercial corridors within all CRA redevelopment areas.

FUNDING*

The grant funds should enhance the project's quality, the overall curb appeal of the property, and ultimately, the property values along the corridor. This program's desired outcomes and objectives are to encourage improvements that may not have occurred without the additional grant funds.

Funding through this program is subject to funding availability and the discretion of the Fort Myers CRA Board of Commissioners. The maximum potential grant is split between two tiers.

- The first tier available is for small-scale projects and covers 75% of the eligible expenditures, not-to-exceed \$50,000.00.
- The second tier available is for larger projects and covers 50% of the eligible expenditures, not-to-exceed \$200,000.

* Funding through this program, if approved, shall only be in the form of a reimbursable matching grant. Once the award amount is determined the award amount is final. All disbursements of grant funds are made following written request and submission of supporting backup materials, e.g., after-photos, receipts, paid invoices, check, or credit card receipts, and following CRA verification of completion of work and, if applicable, closed permits

CONSIDERATION FACTORS

- Visual Impact on the Corridor
- Impact to expenditure
- Impact on property values
- Level of consistency with the plan
- Amount of private investment
- Availability of CRA Funds

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. A pre-application meeting with CRA staff to determine preliminary eligibility and application requirements. Gather necessary material & documentation.
2. If needed, a pre-application meeting with city staff for permit requirements, which the applicant will arrange.
3. Present if required to the CRA Advisory Board and CRA Board of Commissioners.
4. Secure permits as required.
5. Complete Work. Submit a letter requesting disbursement and supporting documents (e.g., after-photos, proof of expenses: receipts, paid invoices, check receipts, etc.)

APPLICANT/PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for funding through this program, a project must meet the following criteria to be considered for a matching grant:

- **Ownership:** Applicant must be the property owner(s) or a tenant with at least a five (5) year lease. If the Applicant is a tenant, they must have written permission from the property owner(s) to apply (please ensure that the Owner's affidavit section of the application is completed).
- **Location:** The project must be located within one of the redevelopment areas shown on the map (see next page). Priority will be given to buildings or properties which directly front a major thoroughfare.
- **Type of Business:** Retail, commercial, and mixed uses are preferred. Non-conforming uses in the redevelopment area shall not be eligible.
- **Code Enforcement:** Applicants must verify that no code enforcement actions are currently active against the Property. The Applicant shall also be subject to all applicable requirements of the City's Land Development Regulations for site development in effect at the time of development. Applicants will also be responsible for obtaining all appropriate permits and inspections associated with the construction process.
- **Property Taxes:** Property taxes, including both City and County, must be current.
- **Incomplete Applications:** Incomplete applications will not be considered.

NONDISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

The Commercial Property Improvement Program shall be available to anyone meeting the program qualifications, and no one shall be denied the benefits of the said program because of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, family status, or veteran/military status.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

The following documents and items must be submitted and/ or completed before the CRA will consider this application for consideration for funding:

- Fully executed Grant Application and typed scope of work letter to Fort Myers CRA detailing work, items, and materials that funding will cover and other information pertinent to your request.
- Fully executed and notarized copy of the Owners' Affidavit form, including property description and property address. If the forms are prepared and signed by a representative of the Owner, a legal Power-of-Attorney document must be submitted with the application.
- Conceptual renderings of the building façade; and photographs of the front, rear, and both sides of the building and Property as they exist today (pictures are to be uploaded in .png or .jpg format). The entire building must be in the photo that you submit.
- Two – Three (2 – 3) Quotes/Estimates for each proposed improvement being applied for.
- Additional information may be requested from the Applicant, based upon the proposed improvements.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

The following expenditures would be considered eligible for reimbursement under the Matching Grant Program:

- Removal and/or repair or replace deteriorated exterior building materials such as plywood, metal, glass, or stucco.
- Painting building exterior.
- New or replacement woodwork or architectural details on the exterior.
- Exterior signs (including the removal of old signs and installation of new signs).
- Awnings (including the removal of old awnings or installation of new ones).
- Exterior landscaping, planters, irrigation, and screening.
- The lighting of the exterior.
- Brick or textured pavement (exterior).
- Professional design services for exterior improvements.
- Parking lot improvements.
- Courtyard and outside dining design & development (does not include outdoor equipment).
- Dumpster enclosures.

INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

The following expenditures would not be eligible for reimbursement under the Matching Grant Program:

- Improvements made before grant approval.
- Interior renovations, including fixtures, equipment, or inventory.
- Professional design services for interior improvements.
- Roof repairs.
- Refinancing existing debts.
- Removal of curb cuts.
- Non-fixed improvements.
- Sweat equity payments.
- Business Payroll.
- General maintenance.
- Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (HVAC, security systems, piping, etc.) Utilities.
- Legal fees.
- Work performed that is not consistent with the Design Guidelines for the CRA according to the Redevelopment Plan and Fort Myers Land Use and Development Regulations or not consistent with the approved project plan.
- Improvements to the following are ineligible for funding: discouraged or prohibited uses, government-owned property, and non-conforming uses.

DISCLAIMER

The CRA Board reserves the right to modify or alter the list of eligible and ineligible expenses on a project-by-project basis.

The application and reference guide is available on the Fort Myers CRA Web Page: <https://www.fortmyerscra.com/incentives/commercial-property-improvement-matching-grant>

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT GUIDELINES

2023

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