

# 2022-24 ARPA Version

## Building Improvement Grant Program

### Guidelines and Overview

#### **Purpose:**

The Dallas City Council in 2022 chose to allocate a portion of its American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding in the amount of \$200,000 during fiscal years 2022-23 & 2023-24 toward a revised Building Improvement Grant Program, modeled after the successful Urban Renewal program of the same name. This program will keep intact many of the same goals, principles and criteria of the previous program, while introducing some new elements. This new program will strive to carry out the goals and objectives outlined in the Dallas Downtown Urban Renewal Plan. Financial assistance is available for projects within the Urban Renewal District, meeting the following goals of the Urban Renewal Plan:

- Goal 1: Promote development of a unified and cohesive downtown.
- Goal 2: Promote a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses oriented to pedestrians.
- Goal 3: Promote high quality design and development compatible with the historic architectural theme of Dallas' Central Business District.
- Goal 4: Increase employment and business activity in the downtown.

The following new Goals are added:

- Goal 5: Aid downtown businesses with pandemic recovery.
- Goal 6: Increase the tax base in the downtown and throughout the Urban Renewal District.

#### **Roles:**

1. **Applicant** – The property owner or tenant of the building where the project is to occur. If the applicant is the tenant, an application shall include property owner consent.
2. **Grant Administrator** – The City Manager or designee shall be the Grant Administrator, and is the public contact for information about the program. The Administrator is responsible for assembling city staff to review grant applications for compliance with applicable provisions of City and State codes and ordinances.
3. **Scoring Committee** - Grant Administrator or designee, plus two Dallas City Councilors selected to score eligible grant applications.

#### **Grant Eligibility:**

##### A. Approval Criteria

1. The applicant must be the property owner or a tenant with permission from the owner.
2. No delinquent bills, charges, or taxes due to the City.
3. The project must meet all state and local building codes and zoning requirements.
4. Projects must be located in the Dallas Urban Renewal Area and must result in permanent improvements to **commercial** buildings. Residential uses may exist on floors above the street level, but residential uses on the street level are not eligible.
5. The project and property are not tax exempt.

##### B. Eligible Activities include but are not limited to:

1. Exterior painting consistent with the approved historic color palette, IF painting is a part of a larger project; painting alone is NOT an eligible activity
2. Signs

3. Alteration, replacement, or repair to exterior facades, including windows and doors
4. Exterior lighting, IF this is a part of a larger project; exterior lighting alone is NOT an eligible activity
5. Utility infrastructure (e.g. plumbing, electrical and mechanical)
6. Roof repair or replacement
7. Awnings, or other pedestrian weather protection measures
8. New construction or structure additions
9. Seismic upgrades requiring a structural permit
10. Interior structural improvements, IF it can be demonstrated these improvements will help current or future tenants with profitability, pandemic recovery or if improvements are related to upper story reutilization

C. Targeted Activities

1. Projects will receive additional consideration if one or more of the following activities are functions of the application:
  - **Upper story reutilization.** Project must be for a currently unused space above street level and must lead to occupancy.
  - **Vacant building reutilization.** Project must be for a currently unused structure or a portion of a structure of at least 1,000 square feet and must lead to occupancy.
  - **New construction on vacant land or as a building addition.** Project must be for a new structure or an addition to an existing structure of at least 1,000 square feet and must lead to occupancy.
2. Additional consideration will be given to applicants where the majority owner has obtained a Minority/Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) Certification through State of Oregon.

D. Grant Awards and Matching Funds

Grant awards are up to \$20,000, and require 2/3 private matching funds. Matching funds must be in cash (no in-kind match like volunteer work is allowed.) Higher grant amounts may be considered for Targeted Activities but would still retain the 2/3 private match requirement.

E. The minimum total project value for eligibility is \$10,000.

**Grant Requirements (minimum):**

1. Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis only.
2. Grant recipients are required to sign a Grant Approval Agreement prepared by the city, prior to commencing work. Work performed prior to signing the agreement is not eligible for reimbursement.
3. Projects must be completed within 12 months of signing the Grant Approval Agreement.
4. At least one (1) competitive bid must be submitted for service estimates that exceed \$500. Cost estimates are to be itemized.
5. If painting is subject to grant reimbursement, applicants must select color combinations from the city recognized palette – Historic Colors of America – Color Combinations.
6. The City will award no more than one grant to any one property owner during any one fiscal year. The same property owner may become eligible for grant approval in the subsequent fiscal year, if all work associated with a prior grant is complete and has received final inspection approval from the City.

**Grant Application Submittal**

1. City staff, under the direction of the Grant Administrator, will receive applications in the following schedule:
  - a. **Year One: Open: May 2, 2022; Close: June 17, 2022**
  - b. **Year Two: Open January 9, 2023; Close: February 10, 2023**
  - c. Additional grant cycles may be announced if funding is available and unallocated.
2. Applications must meet applicable building design standards (currently under Chapter 2, Section 2.3.080 of the Dallas Development Code).

- a. In cases where the applicant's plans do not meet applicable design standards, applicants will be afforded an opportunity to adjust plan elements accordingly for compliance with the standard(s). Plans that do not comply with the design standard(s) will not be awarded a grant.

#### **Grant Application Evaluation**

1. The Grant Administrator will inform all grant applicants of application complete/incomplete status within one week of receiving the application.
2. Once an application is deemed complete, the application will be scored by the Scoring Committee.
3. The Scoring Committee will make a decision based upon the approval criteria and a standardized scoring form, based on the Eligibility and Requirements listed in this policy and will award additional scoring for applicants which meet the Targeted Activities listed above. The Scoring Committee may impose conditions of approval, which shall be included in the Grant Approval Agreement.

#### **Fund Allocation – this Program is scheduled to receive an annual funding allocation of \$100,000 for two consecutive fiscal years.**

#### **Performance Evaluation**

1. Grant Administrator is responsible for monitoring the progress of work performed under grant approval and for trouble-shooting problems as they arise.
2. If Building Permits are necessary through the City or County, the project must receive final inspection approval from the City and/or County Building Official before grant funds are issued.
3. If an applicant is seeking grant award consideration under a Targeted Activity based on tenant occupancy, the applicant must provide proof of occupancy at the time of grant disbursement. Disbursements may be withheld until proof of occupancy is provided.
4. City staff, under the direction of Grant Administrator, will determine finished project compliance with plans associated with grant approval. Funds are then to be issued within 30 days from the date paid invoices and receipts for work performed are received.
5. For projects that are performed by the applicant or that do not use a licensed contractor, only material costs will be eligible for reimbursement. For the purpose of this section, shipment cost, tools/machinery and labor are not "material costs" and will not be reimbursed.