

Minor Improvement Grant Program

Guidelines and Overview

Purpose:

The Dallas Urban Renewal Agency has created a Minor Improvement Grant program 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 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: Enhance the pedestrian environment on streets, in public parks and greenspaces, and other public gathering spaces.
- Goal 4: Promote high quality design and development compatible with the historic architectural theme of Dallas' central business district.
- Goal 5: Increase employment and business activity in the downtown.

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 lead public contact for information about the program. The Grant Administrator is responsible for assembling city staff to review grant applications for compliance with applicable provisions of City and State codes and ordinances.

Grant Eligibility:

To be eligible for a Minor Improvement Grant the project shall meet the following:

1. Be located inside the Urban Renewal District.
2. The applicant must be the property owner or a tenant with permission from the owner.
3. No delinquent bills, charges, or taxes due to the City.
4. The project must meet all state and local building codes and zoning requirements.
5. The project and property are not tax exempt.

Grant Requirements:

1. Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis only.
2. Projects must be completed within 12 months of signing the Grant Approval Agreement.
3. The maximum Minor Improvement Grant award is \$1000.
4. There is no private matching funds required.
5. 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.
6. Only one Minor Improvement Grant will be awarded to a property during any one fiscal year. The same property may become eligible for grant approval in the subsequent fiscal year, if all work associated with the 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 from the start of each fiscal year until funds, as budgeted for the grant program, during the same fiscal year, are no longer available. City letters that commit payment (reimbursement) of funds to grant recipients after work is completed shall be the means for determining the amount of funds that remain available in the program for each fiscal year.
2. The Grant Administrator will consult with the Planning Director to ensure materials submitted comply with the applicable building design standards (currently under Chapter 2, Section 2.3.080 of the Dallas Development Code).
 - a. In cases where the applicant's materials are not shown to meet applicable design standards, applicants will be afforded an opportunity to revise their application accordingly for compliance with the standard(s). Applications that do not demonstrate compliance with the design standard(s) are precluded from receiving grant approval until exception or adjustment to the standard(s) are approved by the city through the appropriate process acknowledged by the Dallas Development Code.

Grant Application Evaluation:

1. Grant Administrator will inform all grant applicants of application complete/incomplete status within two weeks of receiving the application.
2. Grant Administrator will approve and award projects that meet the eligibility requirements, subject to fund availability.
3. If grant approval is contingent upon receiving a Building Permit from the city, the Grant Approval Agreement shall describe a maximum period of six months to obtain a permit before commencing work.

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 a Building Permit is necessary through the city, the project must receive final inspection approval from the City Building Official before grant funds are issued.
3. City staff, under the direction of Grant Administrator, will determine 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.