



COMMERCIAL FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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1. OVERVIEW

The intent of the Commercial Façade Grant Program is to support the revitalization of the commercial corridors in the FPRA district by stimulating private investment in improvements that enhance the appearance of buildings and properties and eliminate blight and non-conforming design standards. This program is designed to encourage redevelopment of the FPRA by enhancing its visual aesthetics which will lead to increased property values, tenant occupancy, economic development, and job creation. This program will complement other revitalization efforts to ensure the maximum leverage of resources and support local businesses.

It is the intent of this program to encourage improvements to private properties that go well beyond what is required under the City of Fort Pierce Land Development Code to enhance the form, function, and design quality of this redevelopment district.

The FPRA reserves the right to approve or deny any Commercial Façade Grant Program application and to deny payment at any time if, in its sole and absolute discretion, it determines that the business will not advance the goals and objectives established for redevelopment of the FPRA District.

2. FUNDING

The Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program offers financial assistance in the form of a reimbursable, matching (50%) grant up to \$25,000 to the property or business owner for eligible expenses associated with improving the external appearance of their business and to encourage businesses to invest in their operations. Grants cannot be awarded retroactively for work that has already been completed.

Grant funding examples:

<u>Eligible Project Cost Contribution</u>	<u>FPRA Contribution</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
\$30,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
\$15,000	\$7,500	\$7,500
\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500

3. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The Commercial Façade Grant program is available to fund eligible exterior improvements on commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties.

- To be eligible the building must be located within the FPRA District and be commercially zoned.
- Residential and governmental facilities do not qualify for this program.
- Application will be rejected if the property has any judgement liens, code violations, or delinquencies in mortgage or tax obligations.
- If the Applicant (Applicant is defined as the entity that is completing the application) is not the building and property owner, the building and property owner must agree in writing to allow and support the application as part of the application process (per Property Owner Affidavit).

- Project must have proper City permits and FPRA approval prior to beginning work. Any application where work has started prior to receiving permits and approvals will be rejected.
- A project timeline must be provided with the application. The Project must be started within six (6) months from the date of FPRA Board approval and completed within 12 months of building permit issuance. Failure to do so, without an approved deviation by the FPRA, will result in termination of the grant.
- Business must meet City of Fort Pierce Business Tax Receipt requirements.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Ensure that your property is located within the FPRA District.
2. Review program guidelines and eligibility requirements.
3. Complete the [Pre-Application Form](#).
4. A staff member will contact you within ten (10) business days of receiving your Pre-Application Form to determine your eligibility and provide information on the grant application.
5. Complete Grant Application and attach all required documents. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and will NOT be evaluated until all requirements are met.
6. Staff will evaluate application based on the provided evaluation criteria. If application receives less than 60 out of 100 points, it will not be eligible for funding.
7. The CRA Advisory Committee will review rankings and make recommendation to FPRA Board. FPRA Board will make final determination and execute grant agreement.
8. Applicants will receive written notification of approval or denial of funding.

*To request a paper application in person or in the mail, please call 772-828-1861 or email mgarcia@cityoffortpierce.com

5. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

The following documentation must be attached to your application.

Pre-Application

- Map of project location.
- Two (2) color photographs of the exterior of the property in its current condition.
- Project concept, rendering or any other relevant materials that convey the physical improvements proposed to be made.

Grant Application

- Proof of building ownership
- Copy of signed multi-year lease (including written permission from the property owner to make changes outlined in the project, see Property Owner Affidavit), or copy of Deed showing ownership of the property by the business owner.
- A minimum of two (2) cost estimates from different licensed contractors. These cost estimates MUST be for the same improvements. Estimates should be broken out in detail, especially if any non-eligible improvements are being

completed, as this allows FPRA to compare based on only grant eligible improvements being performed.

- Proof of funds to fully fund the project.

6. ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS:

Eligible improvements are restricted to work done on the exterior of the building and associated elements that are visible from the corridor. A Corridor can be a public road or public thoroughfare for pedestrian traffic. All work must be performed to applicable codes.

Examples of eligible improvements are listed below; however, this list is not exhaustive:

- Signs - including removing the old and the design, production, and installation of new signs or renovation of existing.
- Awnings/Canopies - including the removal of old awnings and canopies and the design, production, and installation of new awnings and canopies.
- Façade - includes work performed on the exterior storefront of a building such as cleaning masonry (high pressure water or steam - sandblasting is prohibited on masonry structures), painting, re-pointing (filling in or repair to joints), woodwork, window and/or door replacement, and other repairs (that are not maintenance related) or rebuilding historic storefronts. As used in this document a storefront is defined as the front side of a store or store building facing a transit corridor.
- Walls, fencing, and landscaping - includes work that removes and replaces or adds appropriate fencing and landscaping to hide incompatible uses or negative site elements such as storage yards, outdoor fabrication, work area, or dumpsters.
- Removing and disposing of old façade coverings - (i.e. vinyl and aluminum cladding, window boards).
- Architectural fees - (not to exceed 10 percent of Project amount).
- Outdated security features - removing rollup metal security doors and metal window grates.
- Removing excessive window signage - reduce window signage to allow 95% window transparency.
- Original building elements - restoring original decorative building elements.
- Construction of pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as benches, shelters, bike racks and bike lockers.
- Art Installations - Art installations or works of art created by artists exhibiting the highest quality of skill and aesthetic principles and includes all forms of visual art, specifically murals.

7. INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Examples of ineligible improvements are listed below; however, this list is not exhaustive:

- New construction.
- Interior improvement (even if visible from exterior).
- Exterior improvements visible less than 24 hours per day.
- Features designed to be installed temporarily including seasonal planting or other seasonal landscaping.
- Features that do not meet the applicable provisions of the City of Fort Pierce Land Development Code.

- Activities that are primarily for maintenance for example: painting, asphalt sealing, landscape maintenance, power washing, and other maintenance-type activities are not eligible for reimbursement. This list is not exhaustive. If painting, power-washing, brick repair, or similar cosmetic work is proposed to take place in conjunction with significant exterior enhancements, then those activities may be eligible for the incentive.
- Permit fees and taxes.
- Improvements made prior to grant approval.
- Refinancing existing debt.
- Sweat equity payments (i.e. reimbursement for applicant's own labor and performance of renovation work or new construction).
- Improvements that are required as a result of a violation notice, or citation are not eligible for grant funding.

8. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The funding assistance provided under the Commercial Façade Grant Program is solely on a reimbursement basis. The FPRA has the exclusive authority to approve or deny program applications based on its determination as to the benefits to the FPRA produced by requested projects. The FPRA may impose any conditions of approval it deems suitable to protect the interests of the agency, including a duly executed contract.

There is no guarantee that funding will be available for every application submitted, including those that meet the required criteria.

The FPRA is a public agency and is governed by the "Florida Public Records Law" under Florida State Statutes, Chapter 119. Any documents provided by the Applicant(s) may be subject to production by the FPRA upon receipt of a public records request, subject to any exemptions provided by Florida Law.

9. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The applicant shall incur all initial project costs and may receive reimbursement only after all improvements have been completed in accordance with the grant award.

Grant funds will be disbursed upon the receipt of a finding of project completion by the FPRA. The finding of project completion will be granted when the FPRA has received the following package:

- Written notification from the Owner that the project is complete.
- Copies of all required permits and occupancy certificates.
- Copies of paid invoices and evidence of payment (cancelled checks)

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	POINTS
<u>Visual Impact</u> The project's ability to aesthetically transform the building. Does the project eliminate blight? Does the project raise the visual appeal of the FPRA?	<u>50 points possible</u>
<u>Activation</u> Will this project activate a vacant building or portion of a building?	<u>20 points possible</u>
<u>Type</u> Business type has been identified as <u>targeted tier</u> in the Retail & Business Study	<u>15 points possible</u>
<u>FPRA Plan</u> How does this project meet the goals and objects of the FPRA Plan ?	<u>15 points possible</u>

11. TENTATIVE TIMELINE

The tentative timeline for the Commercial Façade Grant application and award process is listed below. These dates are subject to change.

- a. **Pre-application period:** October 20, 2021 until November 24, 2021
 - i. This period may be extended based on number of applications received.
- b. **Application period:** December 8, 2021 until January 26, 2022
- c. **CRA Advisory Committee:** March 2, 2022
- d. **FPRA Board:** April 12, 2022

Commercial Façade Grant Process

