

Clawson DDA Business Assistance Grant Program

June 2009

The following Business Assistance Program and application supersedes any and all previous grant programs

Overview

The Business Assistance Program provides financial assistance to property owners and/or leaseholders within the DDA district. The primary intention of the program is to improve the physical appearance of businesses and enhance Downtown Clawson. Grant funds are made available through Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) dollars collected by the Clawson Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA will annually establish a budget to commit funds for the program. Applications will be accepted throughout the year. Once budgeted funds, for that year, are expended no further applications will be accepted.

Goal of the Program

The goal of the program is to achieve quality design and encourage economic investment within Downtown Clawson. The Clawson DDA believes that by providing incentives to spur revitalization and reinvestment in structures within the DDA district, it will create a more attractive downtown and improve economic vitality as well as greatly complement the goals of the Master Plan and Framework Design Plan.

Program Descriptions

Technical Assistance Grant

A Technical Assistance Grant provides a 50-50 matching grant (not to exceed \$500) for businesses interested in developing a marketing plan, utilizing new window display techniques, making architectural design changes to their building or creating a business website. This grant is intended to assist a business owner to identify a professional resource and for professional consultation.

Physical Improvement Grants

1. **Facade Improvement Grant** - The Facade Improvement Grant provides funds for front, side and rear facades which are visible from a public street or municipal parking lot. The program provides a 50-50 matching grant up to \$5,000 for front or side facades and up to \$2,500 for rear facades. Large scale projects will require a licensed architect and contractor to refine conceptual designs and to implement City approved plans.
2. **Sign Grant** - The Sign Grant provides a 50-50 matching grant (not to exceed \$1,500) for businesses, established prior to 2009, which are replacing non-conforming signage. Signage that has received a variance will be considered on a case by case basis.

Clawson DDA Business Assistance Grant Program

These competitive grant programs are set up as matching grants where the business or building owner will spend \$1 and the DDA will match it with \$1 up to one half of the project expenditure or the limit of the program. All programs reimburse the applicant after the project is successfully completed.

All improvements must be initiated within (60) days and completed within (6) months of commitment of funds. If the applicant has not met these requirements, the DDA will re-evaluate the status of the project. An extension may be considered if substantial progress can be documented.

At its discretion, the DDA reserves the right to cancel the funding commitment if the applicant fails to meet the requirements or makes changes to the project as approved.

Eligible Applicants: Property owners or leaseholders of commercial/income producing property within the DDA boundaries. Physical Improvement Grant consideration where the leaseholder is the applicant, requires written & notarized permission from the owner.

Eligible Properties: All existing commercial or mixed use buildings located within the DDA boundaries. Property (real and personal) taxes, utilities and other city accounts must be current in order to be eligible for consideration. Business owners must have a valid Business License in the City of Clawson.

Awards for funding can be made in several yearly project allocations, but cannot exceed \$7500 over any five year period.

Where a building under one ownership is divided into more than one unit for purposes of commercial tenancy, each separate unit which has an individual storefront facade and an independent ground floor access shall be eligible.

Evaluation Criteria: The DDA's decision to accept an application will be based on available funds, the merits of the proposed project and the impact of the project to Downtown Clawson. The following issues will be taken into consideration when reviewing applications:

- Significant improvement of the visual appearance of the property
- The level of financial participation of the property and/or business owner
- Compatible with the City of Clawson Code of Ordinances and the Clawson DDA Restoration guidelines

Throughout the evaluation process an awareness of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards of Rehabilitation will be maintained.

Clawson DDA Business Assistance Grant Program

The DDA retains the right to recommend approval of an entire request, to approve portions of a request, suggest and/or ask for changes/additions to a request before recommending approval, or to deny any request or portion thereof.

Eligible Facade Improvements: All grant funded improvements must be permanent and fixed in type and/or nature. Improvements must meet all of ordinance & code requirements including zoning, building and safety codes. The applicant must obtain all necessary permits and pay any corresponding fees.

The DDA Board of Directors reserves the right to determine the eligibility of all items in a project's scope of work. Eligible items include, but may not be limited to:

- facade rehabilitation
- exterior masonry cleaning and/or repair
- pointing of brick/mortar joint repair
- storefront repair or rehabilitation
- patching and painting of facade walls
- exterior painting
- window and/or door replacement/repair
- lighting
- hardscape elements and awnings

It is not the intent of the program to subsidize routine building maintenance projects such as painting. Rather, the purpose of the program assistance is to alter and improve the overall appearance of a building facade.

Facade Guidelines:

- Changes to the facade of a building should either:
 - partially or fully restore the historic appearance of the building based on actual evidence, including photographs and/or written documentation
 - represent a treatment that blends into and is compatible with the building and adjoining buildings

- Changes to the facade of the buildings should not remove, alter, damage or cover up significant architectural features of the building that are original to the building or that reflect a major alteration that is itself architecturally significant

- Any grant for surface cleaning must ensure the gentlest means of cleaning are used and environmental permits are obtained if removing lead based paint or discharging paint materials into the City's storm sewer. Cleaning methods that damage the historic building materials, particularly sandblasting, shall not be undertaken.

Maintenance Agreement: Any improvements that have been made through the Facade Grant Program must be maintained by the Applicant and may not be removed

Clawson DDA Business Assistance Grant Program

or significantly altered for a minimum of five years, in accordance with the Facade Grant Maintenance Agreement that must be executed following the approval of a grant award.

Application Requirements: Application must be completed and approved prior to project commencement.

Submit with application:

- completed grant application form
- architectural plans and/or sketches and specifications needed to understand the scope of the project
- color schemes proposed for the exterior improvements
- proof of payment of property (real & personal) taxes, utilities & other city accounts
- if business owner, must have valid city business license
- evidence of ownership or copy of executed lease and written consent from owner
- provide copy of certificate of property & liability insurance
- provide three cost estimates from licensed contractors - not obliged to take lowest
- copies of building permits required for the proposed work

Submit upon project completion:

- waivers of lien from contractors
- copies of paid invoices
- approval of City inspectors, if applicable

Contact Information: For additional information about the Business Assistance Grant Program call the DDA office at 248-435-5299 to ask questions or set up an appointment.

Program Amendments: The DDA Board, by majority vote, may amend the details of the Business Assistance Program as it deems necessary.