

COMMERCIAL EXTERIOR GRANT







Overview

The goal of the Commercial Exterior Grant is to support revitalization of commercial and mixed-use properties within the City of Tampa's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Redevelopment Areas with eligible building façade and exterior site improvements. The intent is to enhance the appearance of buildings and properties thereby eliminating or reducing slum and/or blight and non-conforming design standards. It is also designed to increase property values by encouraging improvements and spurring private investment within each of the Redevelopment Areas.

This is a matching reimbursement grant providing a maximum 50% reimbursement for eligible improvements that must include the building's street-facing side. Grant maximums are dependent on the budget for the Redevelopment Area in which the property is located (**see table below**). On a case-by-case basis, projects implementing the design resulting from the use of a Pre-Development grant may be eligible to receive 60% reimbursement. All commercial grants, except for Special Projects, may be stacked, up to a maximum of three grants. A single expense shall only be reimbursed from a single grant.

CRA Area	Maximum Grant Amount
Central Park	\$50,000
Channel District	\$50,000
Downtown	\$50,000
Drew Park	\$50,000
East Tampa	\$75,000
Tampa Heights/Riverfront	\$20,000
West Tampa	\$75,000
Ybor I	\$75,000
Ybor II	\$50,000

Who Can Apply:

Property or business owners, as defined in the Commercial Grants Policy Section II.2.1, who hold a commercial lease within CRA area boundaries can apply. The property owner must execute a Grant Agreement and Restrictive Covenants applicable to the maintenance of the improvements and future use of the property for a period of five (5) years commencing upon the disbursement of the grant funds (if receiving a Legacy Credit, see Section II.1.1 of the Commercial Grants Policy). The Restrictive Covenants will be recorded in the Public Records of Hillsborough County.

How to apply:

Prospective applicants must schedule a pre-application meeting with the Economic Development Division prior to submitting a grant application. Appointments may be requested by calling (813) 274-8325 or by submitting an online request on the CRA website (<https://www.tampa.gov/cras/community-redevelopment-areas>). **No grant application shall be accepted for review until after a pre-application meeting with the Economic Development Division has occurred.**





Applicant/Property Eligibility

1. Property must be located within the boundaries of a CRA.
2. Property must include commercial use, as defined in the Grants & Funding Policy. Mixed-use buildings, considered 'storefront/residential' as defined in the Grants & Funding Policy, must include a floor area of commercial use equivalent to at least 20% of at least one standard-sized story. Mixed-use property reimbursements shall be limited to the commercial space improvements only.
3. Applicant, owner and property must be current on all mortgages, business taxes, and property taxes.
4. Non-tax generating properties.
5. Business owners (commercial tenants) applying on their landlord's behalf must submit an Owner Affidavit with their completed application (affidavit shall be provided at the pre-application meeting).
6. Current and future use(s) of the property must be permitted under City of Tampa Code of Ordinances, and all proposed improvements must either be in conformance with City Code or any City Code violations must be corrected prior to disbursement of the grant.



Ineligible Applicants/Properties

1. Residential properties with no commercial uses.
2. Multi-Family developments.
3. Properties in foreclosure, delinquent on mortgages, or delinquent in business taxes or property taxes.
4. Governmental entities and non-tax-generating properties. In the event the property is sold or transferred to a governmental or tax exempt entity within five years of the disbursement of grant funds, the grant recipient shall reimburse the CRA the grant award.
5. Adult uses as defined by the City Code.
6. Bars, lounges and nightclubs.
7. Projects permitted or commenced prior to review and approval of the grant request by the CRA.

The CRA reserves the right to deny funding to applicants who are delinquent on payments of City fines or fees, if unresolved Code Enforcement issues exist and will not be resolved with the proposed project and those out of compliance with the terms of their grant award.



Application Requirements

1. Completed/Executed Application Form.
2. Proof of Ownership.
 - Recorded warranty deed.
 - If tenant: executed commercial lease between the property owner and the business owner and an executed Owner's Affidavit by all owners.
 - If Applicant is a corporation, limited partnership, or limited liability company: Sunbiz information evidencing that the entity is active and listing the registered agent and authorized persons for that entity.
3. Consent to Restrictive Covenants.

4. Detailed Project Scope identifying all proposed improvements.
5. Certificate of Appropriateness (Historic Preservation and/or Barrio, if applicable).
6. Photographs of the existing building and the proposed project area.
7. Three (3) itemized estimates or contract proposals. Evidence that a minimum of three (3) itemized estimates for the work has been requested from properly licensed general contractor (GC) or tradesmen if no GC is required or contracted.
8. Contract with a properly licensed and qualified general contractor or tradesmen. CRA Director approval is required to use a contractor or tradesmen who didn't submit the lowest bid.



Eligible Improvements

1. All projects must include building façade improvements.
2. Improvements must comply with all applicable laws and regulations and be properly permitted in accordance with the City of Tampa's Code of Ordinances.
3. Expenses must be related to the direct labor, equipment or material associated with the eligible improvements to be counted towards the overall project cost.
4. Eligible improvements include but are not limited to:
 - a. Building Facades:
 - i. Work performed on any exterior storefront of the primary building including cleaning/repairing/installing masonry, window or door replacement, patio repair, foundation/stabilization and other repairs or rebuilding historic storefronts.
 - ii. Electrical/lighting, plumbing, utility work and connections.
 - iii. Weatherization and removal of undesirable features.
 - iv. Upgrades to bring the building up to ADA Compliance.
 - v. New Installations: Grease Traps/Interceptors, Fixed Decorative Features, and Solid Waste Management Systems.
 - vi. Limited Roof repairs that do not involve major structural repairs to a roof, 40% or more of re-roofing or the replacement of a roof.
 - vii. Awnings/Canopies: Removal of old and the design, production, and installation of a replacement awning/canopy. Installation of new awnings/canopies are not eligible.
 - b. Site Improvements
 - i. Upgrades to bring the site up to ADA Compliance.
 - ii. Removal of undesirable features/structures.
 - c. Signs: Removal of old and the design, production, and installation of new signs.
 - d. Ancillary expense, listed below, are only eligible in addition to one or more of the above improvements and are capped at 20% of the overall grant reimbursement.
 - i. Painting
 - ii. Fixed Decorative Features
 - iii. Solid Waste Management Systems
 - iv. Walls/Fencing/Landscaping (site preparation, soils and hardscapes)/Irrigation/Dumpster Pads (replacement)

- v. Parking Lot/Driveway/Pedestrian Improvements
- vi. Fees: Architectural/Engineering Fees are eligible, up to a maximum of \$10,000
- vii. Art Installations or works of art created by artists exhibiting the highest quality of skill and aesthetic principles including all forms of visual art, especially murals. All final designs and estimates must be approved by the CRA Arts and Cultural Project Coordinator, in advanced, to be eligible for reimbursement.

The improvements listed below are specifically ineligible for reimbursement:

1. Interior improvements (even if visible through windows).
2. HVAC installation or repair
3. Major structural roof repairs and/or complete roof replacement.
4. Installation of seasonal planting or other seasonal landscaping, plants, mulch and decorative gravel and stones.
5. Inventory, fixtures, non-fixed equipment and furniture.
6. Non-fixed improvements.
7. New Construction unless to support ADA required improvements.
8. Permit/Impact/consulting fees, code enforcement fines, and/or taxes or license fees.
9. Sweat equity payments (for example: reimbursement for applicant's own labor and performances of renovation work or new construction). The selected contractor shall have no affiliation with the applicant and/or property owner.
10. Other improvements, required for redevelopment of the property with the sole intention of complying with minimum City of Tampa's Building Codes.
11. Improvements commenced prior to receiving written grant approval.



Process

Grants shall be awarded on a first-qualified, first-awarded basis while fiscal year funds are available. Applicants may utilize the maximum allowable grant across each Redevelopment Area. Any work, including pulling permits, must begin after the grant award letter has been issued unless utilizing a Pre-Development grant in which case, only permits may be acquired. Failure to follow the process shall render your application ineligible for grant funding/reimbursement.

CRA staff shall provide an application, and any other necessary forms, following a successful pre-application meeting. Within ten (10) business days of application receipt, CRA staff will review applications for completeness and accuracy and notify the applicant regarding any deficiencies or issues with the application; additional information may be requested. Applications are considered submitted once all required documents have been received. Incomplete applications will only be held open for a maximum of 60 days after initial submission. After 60 days, if the application remains incomplete, it will be withdrawn by staff. Thereafter, an Applicant will have to reapply for a grant by submitting an entirely new grant application for the project, including any documents originally submitted by the Applicant in connection with its initial application.



Selection Criteria

CRA staff shall review all complete applications and score them based on the grant award criteria and issue an approval or denial letter.

Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Points
Private Contribution towards Project Cost	20 total maximum points
Less than \$10,000	5
Between \$10,000 and \$49,999	10
Between \$50,000 and \$99,999	15
Greater than \$100,000	20
Location	25 total maximum points
Collector Roadways	5
Arterial Roadways	10
Corner Property	15
Historic Preservation	10 total maximum points
Historically Contributing Structure	10
Potential Enhancement	45 total maximum points
Principle Building Improvement	15
Building Improvements with Limited Site Area	20
Implementing design from Pre-Development	20
Building and Site Improvement	25
Bonus Points	55 total maximum points
Horizontal Mixed Use	5
Legacy Property Owner	5
Preservation of Buildings 50 years or older	5
Stacking Exterior & Interior Grants	10
Using a certified SLBE Contractor	15
Vertical Mixed Use	15
100 points total (before bonus)	

Applications must score at least 60 out of 100 points to be approved. Applications that score less than 60 points shall be denied. Written notification of the approval or denial shall be provided. Applications that are denied may be appealed (see section II.3.9 of the Grants & Funding Policy) to the CRA Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The applicant shall be notified in writing of the Board's decision within five business days.



Disbursement of Funds

Applicants shall incur all initial project cost and receive reimbursement after the project has been completed in accordance with the grant guidelines. Grant funds shall be disbursed upon a finding of project completion. The finding of project completion shall be made once staff has received, reviewed and approved the following items:

1. Written notification that the project is complete.
2. Copies of all required permits and occupancy certificates.
3. Copies of invoices for all improvements and evidence of payment (canceled checks, lien waivers, receipts, etc.).

Requests for reimbursement shall be reviewed as a single package. Once the request for payment has been submitted, the CRA shall no longer consider any additional receipts/expense. Grant funds are provided at the discretion of the CRA Board and the findings within the recommendation do not create an entitlement to funding.



Expiration of Grant Award

Applicants must receive a building permit within six months from the date of grant approval. Project completion must be within eighteen months of the issuance of a building permit. Reimbursement must be requested within thirty days of project completion which shall be no later than eighteen months from the issuance of a building permit or by the completion date specified in the grant agreement, whichever comes first if notification of project completion is not received from the applicant. A six-month extension to either the permit or the completion deadline may be granted at the discretion of the CRA Director in his/her sole discretion and is not guaranteed. Additional extension requests, due to issues with obtaining permits, will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be approved by the CRA Director in his/her sole discretion unless such extensions are required under Florida law.



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Grants Pre-Application
Meeting



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[\(813\) 274-8325](tel:(813)274-8325)



tampa.gov/CRAs

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The Tampa Community Redevelopment Agency prides itself in working closely with residents, local businesses, community stakeholders, and the private sector to be a leader in redeveloping and sustaining all communities located within our CRA boundaries.

JANUARY 2026