

Community Redevelopment Agency: Facade Improvement Grant Program

The Lake Alfred Community Redevelopment Agency's Facade Improvement Grant Program seeks to partner with individuals, businesses, and the nonprofit community to promote investment in the CRA area. The program incentivizes property owners and tenants to renovate and update the exteriors of properties located within the CRA, specifically in the downtown area, by providing financial assistance. The program is designed to provide a matching reimbursement grant to make these exterior and facade improvements. By offsetting the cost of these projects, the CRA hopes to incentivize visible improvements that will improve building and site aesthetics thereby improving the marketability and value of existing properties while also attracting new businesses, residents, and visitors to the area.

The program is designed to work in conjunction with the City's Downtown Overlay District in the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) that has specific site and design standards that are required based on the level of renovation taking place on a downtown business. To accomplish the goals of the program, the CRA will provide grant funding based upon the following guidelines and requirements:

General Guidelines:

- Funds shall be allocated based upon the application submittal and review period as approved by the Board and subject to the limits of the program and the annual budget allocation.
- The program is a grant award on a reimbursement basis. Grant funds can reimburse for up to 50% of eligible project costs, with the grant award not to exceed \$50,000 (i.e. on a \$100k of eligible expenses). The reimbursement will be limited to 50% of the actual eligible and verified costs that were incurred up to and not to exceed the grant amount awarded.
- Notwithstanding the previous, Interior or exterior ADA accessibility improvements are eligible at a 100% reimbursement rate up to \$25,000. ADA improvements above \$25,000 are eligible for a 50% match up to the full grant award.
- Each grant will be limited to one property (even if multiple buildings, businesses, and/or tenants are present).
- Each property is eligible to receive the maximum grant funding of \$50,000 through this program once every five years.
- Grants are intended for rehabilitation and restoration only. New construction is ineligible; see below for eligible (and ineligible) improvements.
- Grant applications should be submitted prior to work commencing to ensure funding is available and the work is eligible. Grant applications received for expenses incurred more than a year prior (determined by the date of the invoice/receipt) to the application deadline will be ineligible for the program and not considered by the Board.
- Proposed improvements that require permits may be issued prior to the grant being awarded. This application may be submitted and reviewed concurrently with the permitting process and the grant application may be considered as long as the proposed work is eligible to be permitted.
- The Applicant shall incur all eligible costs and may receive reimbursement only after all eligible improvements have been completed; subject to verification by staff and inspection. If the work is tied to a building permit, the building permit must be inspected and completed.

- All projects are to be completed and final reimbursement request submitted with all required documentation no more than two years from the date of the approval of the grant.
- All applicants that are awarded a grant acknowledge that “cash receipts” will not be accepted due to auditing standards. Eligible reimbursements must have been paid for by check, money order, or credit card. Verification of payment must be submitted with the reimbursement request.
- All work must be engineered and receive permitting as required by the existing regulations on the type of work being performed.

Property Eligibility Requirements:

- The Property must be located within the CRA boundary.
- Properties within the Downtown Overlay District, as defined by Section 2.3.2.F, and properties that are not exempt from paying property taxes to the City will be given priority.
- Properties may include commercial businesses; civic, educational, non-profit organizations, and faith-based organizations; and/or multi-unit residential buildings (as defined in Section 3.6.6 of the ULDC).
- Single-unit, attached and detached, residential buildings (as defined in Sections 3.6.7 and 3.6.8 of the ULDC) are eligible for CRA funding through the CRA Residential Facade Improvement Grant Program.
- Applicant must be the owner of the property or a tenant with written and notarized consent by the owner.
- The owner will release, hold harmless, and indemnify the CRA and City for work being performed on their property that is associated with this program in a form, format, and/or manner that is approved by the City Attorney.
- Applicants and/or property owner must have a valid Lake Alfred tax receipt.
- The property and use must be conforming, AND consistent with the Future Land Use and Zoning classifications.
 - If nonconforming elements are present the renovation/redevelopment should reduce or eliminate the nonconforming elements.
 - Under no circumstance may a nonconformity be created or expanded.
- Property taxes to both the City and County must be current.
- The Property or uses must not have active or pending building code or code enforcement violations.
- The Property or tenants must not have outstanding utility balances or outstanding code enforcement liens.
- The Property may not receive more than the maximum grant award in any aggregated five (5) year period.

Eligible Improvements:

- Architectural Treatments & Façade Articulations on exterior walls. Code reference: 2.3.2.L.2 & 3.
 - Application of primary or secondary materials such as stucco or split face block
 - Horizontal banding or kickplates
 - Architectural molding, decorative framing, cornices, etc.

- Increased transparency (additional or faux windows)
- Signs, Lighting (and associated electrical), and Landscaping
 - Removal of old sign and the design, production, and installation of new signs
- Screening enhancements such as dumpster or utility enclosures, walls, or buffers. Code reference: Code reference: 2.3.2.L.7.
- Low Impact Design strategies such as pervious pavement or green roofs. Code reference: 2.3.2.L.9.
- Pedestrian walkway enhancements such as awnings, canopies, or cantilevered roofs. Code reference: 2.3.2.L.10.
- Porches, Stairs, Railings, Windows. Replacement is eligible but should have an upgraded aesthetic beyond simple replacement.
- Minor exterior repair such as Painting/Pressure Washing is eligible but is limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant amount.
- Associated demolition for eligible improvements.
- Interior or exterior ADA accessibility improvements
- Parking lot improvements (i.e. paving if previously unpaved, LID improvements, cross-connection).
- Roof repair & replacement is only eligible if there is a tangible upgrade (i.e. from shingle to metal).
- Properties outside of the Downtown Overlay District will be expected to provide architectural treatments and façade articulation improvements as if they were located within the Downtown Overlay District.

Ineligible Improvements:

- New construction (or additions).
- Impervious parking lot re-paving (except as noted above).
- Interior work (even if visible through windows); unless ADA accessibility improvements.
- Roof repair or replacement (except as noted above).
- Permit fees and engineering fees. In-Kind or Sweat Equity payments (i.e. reimbursement for applicant's own labor).
- Improvements that are required as a result of a violation or citation.

Application:

- Complete Grant Application Form and include/attach the following:
- Copy of Deed/Proof of Ownership; and Notarized owner authorization (if a tenant is implementing the project).
- Complete, written description of all rehabilitation work.
- Project Schedule with an anticipated timeframe for improvements and associated budget.
- Photographs of the existing building and proposed project area.
- Should include schematic drawings illustrating proposed work or pictures with project description outlined and detail of materials, colors, and other specifics.
- A quote for the work to be performed by a licensed contractor (Owner performed work (a.k.a. "Sweat Equity" costs) will not be credited).

- Evidence of available private funds to pay for the rehabilitation (i.e. letter from bank)
- Proof of insurance coverage
- Anticipated Timeframe for improvements

Application Process:

- Completed application packets are to be submitted to the City's Community Development Department:
Community Development - City Hall
120 East Pomelo Street
Lake Alfred, FL 33850
- City staff will review the application for completeness. Additional information or clarification may be necessary.
- If complete, the application will be sent to the Review Committee for evaluation and feedback. Additional information or clarification may be necessary to determine if an application is sufficient to be transmitted to the Board.
- The standard application process will formally open on October 1st of each fiscal year and will close on December 31st. Any application received during this time period will be reviewed and presented concurrently to the Board in the following quarter (January, February, or March). Applications received after the formal application period closes will be considered on a first come first serve basis and be limited to remaining funds, if any.
- Approval of the application and funding amount awarded is determined by the City of Lake Alfred's Community Redevelopment Agency Board.

Reimbursement Process:

- Upon full completion of the improvements, the applicant shall submit an itemized reimbursement request with all necessary supporting documentation and copies of receipts for eligible improvements identified in the grant award.
- Itemized receipts must clearly demonstrate that the contractors and/or suppliers have been paid in full by the applicant and that the costs incurred are tied to the project (i.e. address, job number, project name, etc.).
- Copy of the release of contractor lien on the property.
- Final inspections must be completed on building permits associated with the improvements on the property.
- Only one reimbursement check will be processed for any one applicant. There will be no partial reimbursements.
- Final (and only) reimbursement request with all necessary supporting documentation shall be submitted no later than two years from the date of the grant being awarded.