

**City of Lake Dallas**  
**Business Improvement Grant (B.I.G.) Program Guidelines**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Development Corporation Act, Chapter 501-505 of the Texas Local Government Code, authorizes the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation (LDCDC) to provide economic development grants for land, buildings, equipment, facilities, expenditures, targeted infrastructure, and improvements found by the corporation's directors to promote new or expanded business development. To this end, the LDCDC has implemented a Business Improvement Grant (BIG) Program. The Program provides technical and financial assistance to real property owners seeking to renovate, restore or add exterior signage, lighting, building façades, or premises improvements at a specific business location. The primary objective of the BIG Program is to promote business development by enhancing the City's commercial corridors through improving the physical appearance of storefronts and the premises of individual businesses.

The BIG Program offers a 1:1 (50%) matching grant up to \$10,000 for the funding of well-designed improvements. Improvements may include the restoration of architectural details, installation of new windows and doors up to current energy code, and well-proportioned signage and lighting. City staff will be available to provide assistance to the applicant through the conceptual stage at no cost to the applicant.

Projects in the City's Downtown Overlay district may be eligible for 2:1 (66%) matching grant up to \$10,000.

**II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To be eligible for participation in the Business Improvement Grant Program, an applicant and the applicant's project must comply with the following criteria:

1. Applicant must be the owner of the commercial real property to which the proposed improvements will be made.
2. The business storefront must be located within the Lake Dallas city limits.
3. Nonconforming signs located on the applicant's property, if any, must be permanently removed as part of the improvements to be made on the property, unless the sign(s) can be established as being historically significant.
4. Applicants must be current on the payment of all ad valorem and local sales and use taxes owed to the City by the applicant or any business entity owned or controlled by the applicant, including those which may be owed with respect to property or businesses that are not the subject to the grant application.

5. The applicant shall have no pending investigations and/or complaints for violations of city ordinances relating to operation and/or condition of the property at the time of application other than those that will be specifically addressed/mitigated by the proposed project.
6. The applicant must be willing to enter into an Economic Development Agreement with the LDCDC setting the terms and conditions of the grant.
7. An applicant shall not have been awarded a BIG Program grant for the same physical address less than three years after the date the reimbursement check was issued for a previous BIG Program grant.

### **III. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES**

Improvements to be funded by a Program grant must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building as well as, to the extent appropriate, with other buildings along the street on which the participating storefront is located. Owners of buildings with significant architectural characteristics are strongly encouraged to restore and maintain those features. Improvements for buildings not having such architectural features should still be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to substantially enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes and conform to the City's targeted image for the area.

#### **A. Eligible Façade, Premises, and Signage Improvements**

Storefronts should be oriented to the pedestrian and provide visual interest both day and night. Efforts should be made to facilitate access into the building and to create a business identity unique to Lake Dallas and/or the respective neighborhood. The following improvements are grant eligible:

1. Restoring details of historically-contributing or significant buildings and removal of elements which cover architectural details.
2. Replacing, adding, or repairing window display areas which are appropriately scaled and facilitate night viewing.
3. Window replacement and window framing which is visible from the street and appropriately scaled to the building.
4. Replacing, repairing, or adding exterior signs that is integrated into the architecture of the building, including the window area, awnings or canopies, and entryways.
5. Replacing, repairing, or adding exterior light fixtures that appropriately illuminate signs, storefront window displays, walkways, and recessed areas of a building façade.
6. Replacing, repairing, or adding awnings or canopies.

7. Installing curbing, irrigation, approved trees (from the Lake Dallas approved tree list), landscaping beds, or other landscaping features attached to the building, where appropriate. All newly-installed landscapes must have underground or drip irrigation or a water harvesting system.
8. Cleaning, repainting, re-bricking, or re-siding of the building.
9. Constructing a new, appropriately-scaled storefront on an existing building.
10. Removing or altering architectural barriers to public accessibility unless removal or alteration significantly changes the historic facade.
11. Installing screening, gates, and dumpster revetments. All installations must comply with construction standards established by the Lake Dallas zoning ordinance. Additionally, fences shall be constructed with the structural members/framing/poles facing the interior of the commercial property, and wood fences and gates are required to be sealed from the elements.

**Other improvements will be considered with written approval from the City Manager if they meet the objectives of the Business Improvement Grant Program and are project-eligible per statute and program purpose.**

#### **B. Prior Improvements**

Alterations and improvements made prior to entering into an Economic Development Agreement with the LDCDC are not eligible for reimbursement.

#### **C. Alterations**

The applicant must agree not to change or alter the improvements without prior written approval from the LDCDC for three (3) years from the date the reimbursement check is issued under the Program. The applicant agrees to return a pro-rated amount of the grant money received if the improvement is removed or altered within three (3) years.

### **IV. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE**

#### **A. Financial Assistance**

Funding offered is a matching grant in which the LDCDC reimburses the applicant fifty percent (50%) of total project costs, up to a \$10,000 maximum match for eligible exterior improvements.

Projects in the city's Downtown Overlay district may be eligible for sixty six percent (66%) of total project costs, up to a \$10,000 maximum match for eligible exterior improvements.

Upon completion, the City Manager will review the project. Receipts for labor and materials should be submitted to city staff for review. There will be no reimbursement for work performed by the business or property owner or for work that is reimbursable under insurance. A reimbursement check will only be issued after the project is determined complete and all receipts have been reconciled by the Lake Dallas Business Improvement Grant Program.

The LDCDC reserves the right to award an amount less than the full amount for which an applicant may be eligible. The award of grants by the LDCDC pursuant to the Program is discretionary and, notwithstanding the eligibility of an applicant to apply for a grant pursuant to the Program, no applicant is entitled to be awarded a grant pursuant to the Program.

#### **B. Technical Assistance**

City staff can provide guidance on improvements specific to individual storefronts. City staff can provide limited conceptual ideas, but the applicant will be expected to hire his/her own licensed architect or designer for actual detailed concept plans and designs.

#### **C. Application and Information**

If a real property or business owner wishes to apply for a Business Improvement Grant, he/she must contact the City of Lake Dallas City Manager's Office at (940) 497-2226.

### **V. PROCEDURES**

All applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below.

1. Applicants must meet with City staff for initial project discussions prior to submitting a grant application.
2. Completed applications with all required documents must be submitted to staff.
3. Staff will review the application packet to determine completeness.
4. Staff will meet with the applicant at least once prior to the application being submitted to the Community Development Corporation.
5. The application is reviewed by the LDCDC Board in a LDCDC meeting. The applicant is required to attend the meeting to present the applicant's project and answer questions.
6. If the application is approved, the city attorney will draft an agreement to be signed by an authorized representative of the LDCDC, the owner of the property, and, if determined appropriate, the business owner if the business owner is a tenant of the property being improved.

7. After the agreement has been signed by all parties and returned to the City, and all necessary permits have been issued, project work may begin.
8. A reimbursement check will be issued after the project is determined complete and all receipts have been reconciled by the Lake Dallas Business Improvement Grant Program.
9. All work for approved projects must be commenced within ninety (90) days after the effective date of the Economic Development Agreement and must be completed within one year of the effective date of the Economic Development Agreement, unless an extension is granted by the LDCDC board. Grant extension requests must come through the City Manager's Office.

**The Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.**

#### **VI. General Conditions**

1. The applicant shall be solely responsible for all safety conditions and compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, ordinances, and other applicable regulations. Neither approval of a grant application nor payment of the grant upon completion of the project shall constitute approval of the project by any City department or staff, nor shall approval of such grant application or payment of the grant upon completion constitute a waiver by the City of any safety regulation, building code, ordinance, and other applicable regulation.
2. The applicant shall be solely responsible for overseeing the work, and will not seek to hold the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation, the City of Lake Dallas, and/or their agents, employees, officers, and/or directors liable for any property damage, personal injury, or other loss related in any way to the Business Improvement Grant Program. By submission of an application, the applicant agrees to indemnify the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation, the City of Lake Dallas, and/or their agents, employees, officers, and/or directors from any claims or damages resulting from the project, including reasonable attorneys' fees.
3. The applicant shall be responsible for maintaining sufficient insurance coverage for property damage and personal injury liability relating to the Business Improvement Grant Program.
4. The applicant authorizes the City of Lake Dallas to promote an approved project, including but not limited to displaying a sign at the site during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in material and press releases.

#### **VII. ADJUSTMENTS and TERMINATION**

The applicant understands that the Lake Dallas Community Development Corporation and the City of Lake Dallas reserve the right to make changes in the conditions of the BIG Program as they determine in their sole discretion as warranted at any time, including for applications already pending.

If the applicant seeks to modify their project plan after a grant has been approved, the applicant must meet with the City Manager. Any changes to the plan must be presented to the City Manager prior to any work being performed in order for the project to remain reimbursement eligible. If the modification is a change of scope, i.e. the addition or deletion of a project element(s), the City Manager shall place the item on a future LDCDC agenda for reconsideration. Minor modifications to the project plan such as changes to the construction materials or the color palette may be approved by the City Manager. City Manager-approved changes shall be documented and attached to the signed Economic Development Agreement. All work for approved projects must be completed within one year of the effective date of the Economic Development Agreement unless an extension is granted by the Community Development Corporation.

The City of Lake Dallas has the right to terminate any agreement under the BIG Program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or if the project has been started prior to an executed agreement with the City of Lake Dallas.