



Downtown Improvement Grant Application

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Program Overview

The primary objective of the Downtown Improvement Grant (DIG) is to provide incentives to improve the exterior of buildings within the Main Street District of Elizabethton. This program will encourage the improvement of downtown buildings, the improvement of commercial sales and, as a result, local sales tax collection in downtown, the enhancement of the marketability of the downtown buildings, and the attraction of new businesses and shoppers to the downtown area.

Eligible Properties

Conforming service, retail or mixed-use properties with an active ground floor area* that is accessible to the street and is located within the Main Street District are eligible for the DIG. The boundary for the district is illustrated as Exhibit A on the following page. Non-conforming structures and buildings with non-conforming uses are not eligible for the grant program.

Timeline

Applications will be available on **Monday, January 29, 2024** and will be accepted for review until 4:00pm on **Friday, March 1, 2023**. Completed grant applications will be considered and awarded by no later than **Monday, March 18, 2024**. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Partial funding may be awarded due to funding limitations; thus, applicants should prioritize phases within their application. Only one application per building will be accepted. All proposed work must be able to be completed no later than **Monday, June 2, 2025**.

Only apply for this grant if you are committed to completing all aspects of the project and requesting reimbursement by the designated deadline and using the entirety of the matching grant requested in the application.

Project Requirements

In order to be eligible for the DIG, applicants must either receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Elizabethton Historic Zoning Commission if located in the Historic Zoning District **or** receive preapproval from the City staff. Please contact Logan Engle, Assistant City Manager, at 423.542.1503 or lengle@cityofelizabethton.org to confirm eligibility.

The level of funding for each grant will be based upon the availability of funds and the scoring of each project. Eligible properties will be considered for reimbursement at 75% of the cost of renovations associated with eligible DIG improvements. Grant funds may also be used toward the expenses of architectural or engineering design work needed for the appropriate rehabilitation of the exterior at 75%.

Only work that begins after an award and a DIG agreement has been executed will be eligible for financial reimbursement.

Grants will be evaluated based on the project need, existing facade condition, and other related impacts associated with the building and its proposed restoration.

Grantees must comply with the City of Elizabethton purchasing policy, which may require a competitive bid process, which means the grantee may have no control over the contractor selected for the project.

Eligible activities: masonry repairs and repointing bricks; the repair, replacement or preservation of historically significant architectural details; the removal of reconstruction of false fronts; exterior painting and stucco (only includes currently painted, excluding murals); installation, replacement, an repair of awnings and canopies; windows, signage, door, or cornice repair or replacement; the repair or replacement of gutters and down spouts; decking and stairs; design or architectural fees; and visible electrical /mechanical equipment enclosures. Signage is allowed that meets the requirements set forth by the City sign ordinance.

Ineligible activities: any improvements made prior to the grant award; landscaping; roofing; parking lots; interior renovations; temporary, portable, or non-permanent improvements; new construction; property acquisition; expansion of building areas; the conversion of use; working capital; any labor completed by the property/business owner unless supported by a second quote; the refinance of existing debt; payment of delinquent taxes; mechanical/HVAC systems; security systems; and trash /mechanical enclosures.

- Active ground floor area (for the purposes of this policy) shall be defined as the ground floor of a building that encourages interactions with sidewalk users on a pedestrian level though the use of large facade windows with displays or workers available for public viewing, sidewalk merchandise or cafe areas, or having the main public entrance on the street and unlocked to the public during open hours. Example businesses include retail, entertainment, personal or business services (excluding offices).



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Application & Project Process

Step 1: Complete an application and include the required attachments as listed on the DIG application form.

Step 2: Submit a hard copy of the completed grant application to the City of Elizabethton's Planning Department, City Hall, 136 South Sycamore Street, Elizabethton, TN 37643. **Complete all information requested on the grant application attached. Failure to provide complete and accurate information shall disqualify an applicant from the DIG program.**

Step 3: The application will be evaluated, and notification of approval will be given on or before Monday, March 18, 2024. Please note that if your building is located in the City of Elizabethton's Historic Zoning District, additional review time may be needed, and the project may be required to seek approval from the Historic Zoning Commission prior to award of the DIG.

Step 4: All work affiliated with the grant must be completed by Monday, June 2, 2025. Any changes necessitated while the project is under construction must be approved by the City of Elizabethton prior to installation. All construction must be done in accordance with applicable codes. It is the responsibility of the building owner, tenant, or their designee to obtain any applicable building permits. All construction management shall be the responsibility of the applicant. The purchasing policy of the City of Elizabethton will take precedence with this grant.

Step 5: The improvements will be inspected by the City of Elizabethton to verify that the submitted plan has been followed and construction completed satisfactorily. All work must be performed in a professional and workman-like-manner. The City reserves the right to withhold reimbursement payment should the final inspection reveal that the work performed was not completed in a professional and workman-like-manner, has not successfully passed all applicable inspections, and/or has not been complete to the extent that had been proposed in the grant application.

Step 6: The applicant must submit to the City all project receipts and proof of payment. The City will submit to the State for reimbursement. Turnaround should be within 30 to 45 days, but this is not guaranteed.

When filing reimbursement:

- Provide the City color photographs of all completed work;
- Submit to the City all receipts and/or canceled checks as proof that contracted improvements have been paid. This shall include an affidavit certifying that all suppliers and contractors have been paid and that there are no liens on the project. All paid receipts must include name, address, phone number, and license number of the contractor. The City reserves the right to verify all costs associated with renovation work for which reimbursement is requested; and
- Request an inspection by City staff to ensure that all work conforms to the work proposed and is completed as approved.

Property Lien & Release

To prevent the owner from selling the property and profiting from the DIG-funded improvements, the owner acknowledges that he/she must repay the program if the property is sold within five years. A deed restriction document will be recorded at the Carter County Register of Deeds. Part of the owner's obligation is forgiven each year as follows:

0-12 Months - 100% Repayment
After 1 Year - 80% Repayment
After 2 Years - 60% Repayment
After 3 Years - 40% Repayment
After 4 Years - 20% Repayment
After 5 Years - Release of Lien



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APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Years Owned _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Current Use of Building _____

Applicant Signature _____

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Please include **one** contractor's written estimate and supporting documentation with this application. It is suggested the estimate be increased by 20% when determining the total project cost to allow for contingency.

Must submit a separate application for every property

Total Project Cost _____

Grant Request (maximum \$50,000 or 75% of total cost) _____

Matching Funds (minimum 25% of total cost) _____

Submit the completed application in hard copy format to the address below.
Projects must meet all eligibility requirements to be scored.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date of Application _____

Approval Date _____

Historic Code _____

Amount of Grant _____

CONTACT

Logan Engle, Assistant City Manager

lengle@cityofelizabethton.org

423.542.1503

136 South Sycamore Street

Elizabethton, TN 37643



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Project Information

Complete the below questions. Additional pages may be attached.

A. Provide a detailed description of your proposed project.

B. Will the project address existing facade deterioration? If so, please describe the existing condition(s) of the structure and your proposed method of correction.

C. Will the project preserve any exterior historic architectural elements or restore architectural elements to be removed? If so, please describe how (including preservation elements to be utilized).



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D. Summary of type of improvements proposed (check all that apply):

- Repainting Paint Removal Awnings Storefront Windows
- Doors Exterior Cleaning/Repainting Signage Cornice/Parapet
- Other (specify) : _____

E. Historic Impact

- **Approximately what year was the building constructed?** _____
- **Can you provide a brief history of the building including any major modifications since construction? For example: prior uses, significance in city history, prior significant owners, etc.**

F. Financial Commitment

- **Do you have the ability to provide a minimum of 25% of renovation cost as the match? Yes ___ No ___**
- **Could you provide more than 25% if it improved your chances of selection for the grant? If so, how much above the 25% would you be able to provide?**
- **Grant recipients will be expected to maintain their properties in the future. What is your plan to ensure the building exterior remains in good condition?**

G. Is your business a Main Street Elizabethton member? Yes ___ No ___

Required Attachments

- A. Proof of Owner Permission for Project attached (if the applicant is not property owner): ___ Yes ___ No
- B. Color photo(s) of existing and improved (after) Building Exterior attached: ___ Yes ___ No
- C. Color Samples & Product specifications attached: ___ Yes ___ No
- D. Sketch or drawing of the project (stamped drawings required for structural changes): ___ Yes ___ No
- E. Proof all taxes, insurance, and mortgage payments are current: ___ Yes ___ No
- F. Consultation with Appropriate Staff: ___ Yes ___ No
- G. Certificate of Appropriateness, if located in Historic District: ___ Yes ___ No



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Project must meet all eligibility requirements, and application must be complete to be scored. Incomplete applications will not be scored.

Statement of Understanding and Certification

I, (We) as applicant /owner of record make this application to the Downtown Improvement Grant Program for matching funds to be used for exterior improvements to the building listed on this application. I agree that I understand the following requirements and guidelines regarding my application:

- Participation in the program requires me to follow program guidelines that govern improvements made under the program, including those improvements made with my portion of the project cost.
- I am willing to comply with the program guidelines and timelines and provide required documents and materials.
- I understand that the guidelines are in addition to, and do not override, local, state, and federal regulations.
- I further declare that I understand that this is a reimbursable grant program, meaning that successful applicants must undertake and incur the costs for grant funded projects prior to receiving actual grant funds.
- I understand that work must be completed and consistent with the approved scope of work prior to reimbursement.
- I understand that all improvements I make must be in compliance with city code, adopted building code, and zoning regulations.
- I understand that, if required, I must comply with the City of Elizabethton purchasing policy, which may require my project to be competitively bid. I understand this may mean I have no control over the contractor selected to complete my project.

Building Owner Signature(s):

Date:

