



2024 Storefront Improvement Program Overview

1. What is the Evans Storefront Improvement Program?

This year's program offers two separate opportunities:

- a. Commercial businesses and/or property owners may qualify for a reimbursement of up to \$5,000 per property for costs associated with improvements made to the exterior of a commercial building and/or lot. Improvements must be visible from the public right-of-way and other public areas. This program is intended to support existing businesses and to assist in the attraction of new companies with the improvements to the exterior of commercial storefront buildings and lots, improving the appearance of the Evans community.
- b. New for 2024 is funding to assist restaurant owner/operators with the installation of under sink grease traps as needed to comply with new regulations impacting commercial sanitary sewer customers. Up to \$500 will be awarded to assist businesses or a property owner to provide grease trap equipment and installation.

2. Who can apply for funding?

Applicants must be a City business licensed storefront commercial business and/or property owner located within the City of Evans generating sales, use and/or property tax revenue. If the applicant is a commercial tenant, the property owner must authorize the application. Not-for-profit organizations, religious institutions, home-based businesses or residential living facilities do not qualify. Tenants must have a minimum of two years remaining on their lease or provide evidence of an option to renew.

Only properties within the Historic Riverside or Highway 85 Corridor Redevelopment Areas (Page 7) will be considered between January 1 and June 1, 2024. Properties outside of these areas will be considered after June 1, 2024. Applications regarding grease interceptors anywhere within City limits will be considered throughout the calendar year. Funding is limited.

Once all funds are committed no additional projects will be approved during that calendar year. If an approved project falls through, the next eligible application will be considered and notified of available funds.

3. Are projects that have already been started or completed still eligible?

No. Work started or completed prior to program approval is ineligible. Projects that have already submitted plans and application for building permits are eligible as long as no work has begun prior to obtaining 2024 Storefront Improvement Program approval and return of the Letter of Commitment.

4. What types of improvements are eligible for funding?

Storefront improvements are generally intended to fund exterior improvements. The grant does not include interior improvements, furniture or non-fixed improvements. The grant may be used for some property maintenance, such as paint, asphalt resurfacing, and roofing; however, trash removal is not included. Maintenance may be considered for grant funding only if at least one material improvement is included as part of the application. Seasonal or annual plant material will not be eligible (i.e. flowers planted and replaced or removed at end of season); trees, grasses, shrubs, and perennial plants are eligible. Health and safety improvements will take precedence over aesthetic enhancements.

For the restaurant operator grants, funding of up to \$500 is intended to cover the purchase, installation and permitting of grease traps that comply with applicable laws and regulations. Future maintenance will be the responsibility of the restaurant operator or landlord.

5. Are there any design guidelines?

Yes. Projects must conform to City of Evans building, fire, zoning and development codes. All required plan review and building permits must be obtained by the applicant prior to the work being performed. Contract work must be performed by a licensed contractor in the City of Evans. The applicant must ensure compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations.

Note: If a submittal requires Site Plan Review and or Use by Special Review application in accordance with the City of Evans Land Development Code, the project may not be able to meet timelines for program. Applicants should consult Economic Development Staff for further direction.

6. Should project fees, permits and taxes be included in the request?

Yes. Project related expenses such as sales and use taxes, permits, and project design review fees may be included in the total grant request. Contractors will be required to itemize fees and applicable taxes in their bid proposals and invoices.

7. Do I have to use a contractor and obtain bids? Applicants for the Storefront Improvement Program are required to use a licensed contractor to complete work under the program and obtain itemized bids from at least two (2) contractors for projects valued at \$500 or more. If multiple contractors will be used (ex. one for concrete work and another for signage) two separate bids for each component of work should be submitted.

Applications for program work not exceeding \$500 may be done by the applicant if the work does not involve electrical, plumbing and/or heating and ventilation and the intent is clearly indicated in application. Receipts for materials shall be submitted at the end of the project; only materials costs will be covered, not applicant's own labor.

To support local contractors, applicants are encouraged to solicit quotes from Evans-based businesses. If an Evans-based contractor is hired, or purchases made at an Evans business, reimbursement will be awarded up to 60% or the program maximum of \$5,000, whichever is less. Non-Evans contractor work will be reimbursed up to 40% or the program maximum of \$5,000, whichever is less. Applicants are encouraged to obtain lien waivers upon payment of contractor(s).

Examples:

Project value is \$8,000

Evans-based Contractor reimbursement (60% up to \$5,000) is \$4,800

Non-Evans-based Contractor reimbursement (40% up to \$5,000) is \$3,200

Project value is \$13,000

Evans-based Contractor reimbursement (60% up to \$5,000) is \$5,000

Non-Evans-based Contractor reimbursement (50% up to \$5,000) is \$5,000

8. How does the application process work?

Upon receipt of a completed Storefront Improvement Program Application, City staff will review the application to confirm it meets the program guidelines. Application

approval may come with a specific set of requirements or conditions to be determined by staff.

9. How are projects selected for funding?

Qualified applications will be reviewed and approved based on the following criteria (all projects being equal, the first application will have priority):

- Funding availability
- The property must be located in an Evans Redevelopment Area (Page 7) for applications submitted prior to June 1; applications for properties elsewhere within the City of Evans will be reviewed in order received and considered for funding after June 1, subject to availability of funds
- Improvements are eligible under the program criteria
- Applicants qualify as a licensed storefront commercial business or property owner that generates sales, use and/or property tax revenues (not-for-profit organizations, religious institutions, home-based businesses or residential living facilities do not qualify)
- Leasing businesses/tenants must have a minimum of two years remaining on their lease or an option to renew
- Completed Application in addition to required attachments per checklist
- Reimbursement request not exceeding \$5,000
- Conformance with the laws and regulations of the City of Evans

10. What happens after a project is selected for funding?

Once the project is approved the applicant will receive a Letter of Commitment from the City of Evans indicating the specific amount of grant funding and information on other requirements. The applicant must sign and return Letter of Commitment within 30 days of date of letter. The approved project must begin within 60 days of submitting the signed Letter of Commitment. Within six (6) months of signing acceptance letter, or December 23, 2024, whichever occurs first, the applicant shall complete the approved improvements, pay the contractor and submit the Storefront Improvement Program Request for Reimbursement with applicable documentation as noted on the reimbursement application. An additional one (1) month to complete work and pay contractor may be requested in writing and subject approval for good cause. **Failure to abide by deadlines may lead to revocation of program approval.**

Example Timeline:

February 1 Project approved by the City of Evans and Letter of Commitment is provided to applicant dated February 1.

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|------------|---|
| March 3 | Applicant submits signed Letter of Commitment to City of Evans |
| May 2 | Work must begin on approved project |
| November 2 | Work on approved project, payment of contactor and submittal of Storefront Improvement Program Reimbursement Request and materials must be complete and submitted to the City of Evans Economic Development office. |

11. What other responsibilities does the applicant have?

The applicant or its contractor is responsible for obtaining all approvals and permits and any other requirements for the work to be done. The applicant is responsible for paying the full amount for the cost of the work to the contractor(s); the City of Evans will reimburse the applicant in accordance with the program (see Question #13 below). The applicant is responsible for compliance with all applicable safety standards and conditions. The applicant also agrees to maintain the improvements.

12. What happens if my application is denied?

If the application is denied, a letter will be sent to the applicant with an explanation for the denial. If an application is denied, a new application may be submitted any time after the initial application was denied and will be reviewed in the order received.

13. How am I reimbursed once the project is completed?

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and cannot be issued until the project has been completed. Before funds are released, applicants will submit a Storefront Improvement Program Reimbursement Request form, proof of payment to applicable contractors and at least two color photos of the completed project. Approval by City building officials and submission of Certificate of Occupancy, if applicable, is necessary. A City representative will review the completed project to determine if the actual work complies with the approved grant. Once work has been approved a check will be sent to the applicant.

14. How will the City of Evans promote this project?

The City of Evans may promote an approved project by numerous means including, but not limited to, displaying a grant program sign or sticker at the site during and after construction, and the use of photographs and descriptions of the project in City of Evans communication materials.

15. Do I have to report this as income on my taxes?

Yes. The City of Evans is required to report to the IRS any grant money awarded to a business above \$600 as income. A completed W-9 form shall be submitted with the Storefront Improvement Program Application.

16. Can I reapply for additional funds?

Businesses and property owners may apply for future Storefront Improvement funds no sooner than two years after previous program approval of the same property.

For additional information contact:

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The City of Evans reserves the right to make changes to the terms and conditions of the Storefront Improvement Program as warranted.

Attachment 1

