



City of Emporia Emporia Redevelopment & Housing Authority FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



Background:

The Enterprise Zone Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program is an initiative of the City of Emporia and Emporia Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ERHA) aimed at enhancing the physical appearance and economic viability of properties and businesses within the Enterprise Zone area. The City of Emporia and ERHA have allocated a total of \$25,000 for the program. A 1:1 match from the property owner or tenant is required. Grants may not exceed \$5,000 per property per fiscal year.

Program Objectives:

The purposes of the FIG are:

1. To improve the aesthetic appearance of the exterior facades of existing buildings and businesses in the Enterprise Zone area;
2. To restore the unique historic character of buildings in the Downtown District and Enterprise Zone area; and,
3. To encourage private investment in eligible properties and businesses;

Eligibility:

The following individuals are eligible to apply for and receive grant funds:

- Property owners of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties in the EZ area.
- Tenants of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties in the EZ area.
- Definition of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties tied to State RPIG requirements.

Eligible Improvements:

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

- Repairs/improvements to existing exterior building facades
- Installation, repair or replacement of exterior signage
- Exterior cleaning and painting
- Parking lot improvements
- Repair/replacement of windows and exterior doors
- Landscaping improvements
- Hardscape improvements
- Canopy or awning installation/repair
- Exterior lighting installation/repair
- Preparation of architectural and construction plans
- Any other improvements visible from public view (excludes roofing improvements)

Application Process:

1. Applicant submits required grant application and supporting documentation to the EZ Administrator.
2. EZ Administrator reviews application with applicable staff.
3. EZ Administrator informs applicant of funding status and assists applicant with obtaining all required zoning and building permits. Zoning and building permit fees shall be waived.
4. Applicant may commence work only after the application has been approved by the ERHA Executive Director and all zoning and building permits have been obtained.

Reimbursement Process:

1. Applicant completes work.
2. Applicant submits all paid invoices and receipts to the EZ Administrator.
3. EZ Administrator reviews documentation to verify expenditures.
4. Staff conducts an inspection of the work completed.
5. Staff will disburse funds to applicant after verification of all expenditures and work completed.

General Conditions:

- City/ERHA funding requires a 1:1 match from the property owner or tenant not to exceed \$5,000 per property per fiscal year.
- Grants will be available on a first come, first served basis.
- Applications must be submitted to the EZ Administrator and approved before work commences. Applications received after work commences shall be considered on a case by case basis, subject to available funding. In order to be considered for funding, work must have been completed within the previous 120 days.
- Applicants must adhere to all zoning and building permitting requirements and obtain all required permits before commencing work.
- Applicants must complete work within 120 days after notification of grant and permit approvals, unless otherwise approved.
- Grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis only after submission and verification of paid invoices and receipts.
- Only projects utilizing a licensed contractor will be eligible for reimbursement of labor costs. Projects not completed by a licensed contractor are eligible for material costs only. Work completed by the property owner or tenant is not eligible for reimbursement of labor costs.
- Tools may not be purchased with grant funds. Tool rental is allowed.
- Applicant must be current on all taxes and fees owed to the City. If a tenant applies, the property owner must also be current on all taxes and fees owed.
- Grant funds may be utilized to correct City issued property maintenance violations. However, the proposed work must correct all property maintenance violations to the satisfaction of the City. Funds will not be disbursed to unless all property maintenance violations have been corrected.
- Staff has the authority to interpret guidelines and impose additional conditions as deemed necessary.

For more information please contact:

Beverley Hawthorne
Community and Economic Development Manager
201 South Main Street
P.O. Box 511
Emporia, VA 23847
Phone: (434) 634-5056 Fax: (434) 634-0003
Email: bhawthorne@ci.emporia.va.us