



BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANT (BIG) PROGRAM Guidelines

Opelousas Downtown Development District (ODDD), with support from the City of Opelousas, and Opelousas Main Street (OMS), is excited to launch the **Building Improvement Grant (BIG)** program. This program is designed to assist property and business owners in rehabilitating commercial buildings for the purpose of creating a positive visual impact, stimulating private investment, complementing other community development efforts and preserving the city's historic identity and cultural assets.

ABOUT THE BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The BIG program is a reimbursement grant program that gives business/property owners an incentive to renovate and rehabilitate their building located within the designated ODDD (see map.) Preference will be given to applications whose buildings are located within the Main Street District. The program will set \$10,000 in funds aside to fund approved projects. The maximum amount that can be applied for is \$2500. Grant award amounts must be matched dollar for dollar by the recipient. An applicant is only allowed one grant per fiscal year.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS:

Building Improvement Grants are awarded for tangible and permanent building improvements, inclusive of the following:

- 1. Restoration/Renovation of building**
- 2. Awnings (without signage)**
- 3. Brick cleaning or re-pointing of brick and other masonry**
- 4. Accent Lighting**
- 5. Removal of deteriorating or inappropriate materials visible from the street**
- 6. Window restoration**
- 7. Door replacement**
- 8. Restoration of original exterior/interior architectural features**
- 9. Outdoor dining, fencing**
- 10. Interior work related to ceiling repair, electrical, plumbing**
- 11. Work on roofs, cornices, gutters and down spouts**
- 12. Cleaning, preparation and painting of walls and trim**
- 13. Labor (other than the applicant)**

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

1. Labor by the Applicant
2. Billboards/ Advertising
3. Parking Lots
4. Expansion of the building
5. Temporary, portable, or non-permanent improvements
6. Property acquisition
7. Improvements in progress /completed prior to approval
8. Signage

APPLICATION GUIDELINES:

- An individual interested in applying for a BIG shall complete and submit an application to the ODDD office or emailed to Opportunitystlandry@stlandryed.com
- All Applicants must currently own or be leasing the property at the time of the application, and have permission from the owner (if Applicant is not owner).
- In-kind services or labor provided by the applicant cannot be charged against the grant.
- Applicant is responsible for contacting the City planning & zoning department for applicable permits and inspections.
- Grants must be matched dollar for dollar by the recipient.
- Applicant must adhere to all city codes and design standards.
- Grants will not be revised once approved due to changes in the scope of work or costs.
- ODDD retains discretionary authority to deny any application.
- If renovations are completed by two parties (business and property owner) funds will only be distributed to one applicant per business address per year.
- Property for which grants are being applied must be commercial and within the ODDD.
- Applicants for projects within the Opelousas Historic District must submit a signed Letter of Appropriateness from the Opelousas Historic District Commission before the project can begin. The commission meets on the first Thursday of the month.
- Grant will be awarded as a reimbursement after completion of project and all proper inspections.
- All applicant's ad valorem tax assessments must be current.
- Grant recipients will be responsible for reporting grant funds for taxes.

PROCESS:

- A total of \$10,000 is available in grant funds. A total of \$2500 is available for funding to each applicant. Grants are required to have a 1:1 dollar match.
- An applicant may apply for a grant from \$500 to up to \$2500, but please note that the business/organization must spend an equal amount or more on the project.
- The Applicant will complete an application and submit to the ODDD.
- If approved, the Applicant will receive a Letter of Commitment specifying amount of grant and time frame in which work must be completed.
- Projects that began before the Letter of Commitment was issued will be disqualified from the grant program.
- The Applicant is responsible for contacting the program administrator once the work is completed.
- The applicant must provide proof of payment for all eligible expenses listed on the application. If work is deemed in compliance, the Applicant will receive grant funds via a check within 14 days of completion.
- Applications will be reviewed by BIG program review committee. Members will consist of representatives from the following: Opelousas Downtown Development District, Opelousas Main Street, Opelousas Historic District Commission, LA Dept of Historic Preservation, and Opelousas City Council.
- ODDD members are not eligible to apply.
- **Grant applications are due by July 1, 2021.**

CHECK LIST AND REQUIRED ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:

- ___ 1. Approval of Opelousas Historic Main Street Commission. (If Applicable)
- ___ 2. Approval of ODDD- Main Street (If Applicable)
- ___ 3. Signed bids of work to be performed
- ___ 4. Photographs of building and photographs of proposed materials to be used
- ___ 5. Drawings/illustrations of proposed work on buildings
- ___ 6. Completed application
- ___ 7. Signed grant program agreement

Timeline - 2021

June – Grant is announced

July 1 – Grant applications are due

August – Grant Review Committee Meets

September– Award Letters sent and work may begin

Dec 1 – All projects must be completed and invoices submitted.