

City of Horicon

Building Improvement Grant Program

Date: April 25, 2023

The purpose of the Building Improvement Grant Program is to assist business and property owners in making lasting improvements to buildings and sites for the benefit of current and future occupants, and to improve the overall quality of the buildings in downtown Horicon, more specifically defined as the parcels and buildings within or immediate adjacent to the boundaries of Tax Increment District No. 6 (TID #6). Accordingly, the Program prioritizes those improvements that are not tenant-specific although the City recognizes that some tenants will require a substantial investment in permanent improvements specific to their operations. The cost of such improvements, then, may be used as part of the required match for the grant.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Downtown property owners of commercial/mixed-use structures (including multifamily residential) and non-residential building tenants with leases of more than three years in length (with property owner approval) are eligible for funding. Buildings used exclusively as single-family or duplex residences, regardless of owner or renter occupancy, are ineligible for funding. Governmental entities, religious institutions, nonprofits, and public/quasi-public authorities also are ineligible for funding.

Grant Amount

Grants may be provided in an amount up to 25% of total project costs, up to a maximum City contribution of \$20,000. Improvement grant funds may be provided in addition to, or independent of, Façade Improvement Grant funds subject to review and approval of separate application(s) for each program.

Should a comprehensive rehabilitation project also include exterior elements eligible for funding under the Façade Improvement Program, the City reserves the right to waive the multiple application requirements listed above; consider the appropriate source of funding for such elements independently; and/or count such elements against the minimum cost requirements under the Building Improvement Grant Program. However, a separate application fee shall be required for each program from which funding is requested.

Improvements Eligible for Direct Grant Assistance

Improvements to the following building and site elements, and those the City finds to be substantially similar to those listed, are eligible for direct funding from the Building Improvement Grant Program provided such improvements generally are not tenant-specific and are likely to benefit/serve future building occupants:

- Building structural elements such as foundations, load bearing walls, floor and roof joists, roof decking (but not coverings), sub-flooring, etc.
- Electrical, plumbing, HVAC systems
- Hazardous materials abatement
- Energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy systems
- Exterior windows and doors
- Life/safety improvements
- Accessibility improvements
- Elevators
- Restoration of historic elements
- Other improvements as necessary to create a marketable “white box” space
- Demolition and site preparation
- Building additions
- Excavation, fill, grading, retaining walls and stormwater management
- Parking, walkways, and patios
- Trash enclosures
- Other improvements as necessary to create upper floor residential units in applicable building

Improvements Not Eligible for Grant Funding but May Be Counted Toward Matching Requirements

Improvements to the following building and site elements, and those the City finds to be substantially similar to those listed, are not eligible for funding under the Building Improvement Grant Program, but their costs may be included in calculating the required matching expenses provided such improvements are generally permanent in nature and not intended/designed to be removed when the current/proposed occupant vacates the space.

- Wall and floor coverings (paint, wallpaper, paneling, tile, carpeting, etc.)
- Roof re-shingling or membrane repair/replacement
- Non-emergency lighting
- Cabinetry, built-in shelving and counters/desks
- Walk-in freezers and coolers
- Façade improvements not covered by a City Façade Grant
- Trees and shrubs
- Fencing and privacy walls

Improvement not Eligible for Grant Funding and Not Counted as Match

Improvements to the following building and site elements, and those the City finds to be substantially similar to those listed, are not eligible for funding under the Building Improvement Grant Program or to be included in calculating the required matching expenses as such improvements are either tenant-specific or non-permanent in nature and not likely to be available or of benefit to future occupants.

- Removable display fixtures (shelving, racks, display cases, etc.)
- Furniture of any type
- Computers, cash registers, audio/video equipment, and office equipment
- Appliances
- Equipment and supplies used for routine cleaning and maintenance
- Dishware, kitchen supplies
- Linens and window coverings
- Art work
- Storage sheds
- Vehicles of any type
- Machinery and equipment specific to a particular type of business

Grant Performance Requirements

Within six months of City Council approval, applicants must enter into a grant agreement with the City, obtain a building permit, and commence work. Projects should be completed within twelve months from the date of City Council approval, including final inspection and issuance of an occupancy certificate by the City Building Inspector. Extensions to the completion period may be granted for inclement weather, or the ordering of special building materials. The applicant must request an extension from the Program Administrator in writing. The Program Administrator will notify the applicant in writing of its approval or denial.

Funding-eligible improvements must be in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation for Historic Preservation (as applicable), as well as the City of Horicon

Zoning Code, Building Code, and Façade Grant Design Guidelines (as applicable). The applicant shall continually maintain the property in compliance with all applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations and as necessary to prevent deterioration of the property and to present an attractive appearance, and shall assist and actively cooperate with the City to ensure the applicant's contractors also comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The applicant also shall be subject to other Ongoing Responsibilities for property insurance and maintenance per terms of an approved grant agreement.

In order to qualify, the applicant cannot start on the project until after receiving all necessary approvals and permits.

Program Administration

The Office of the City Clerk has been appointed to administer the Building Improvement Grant Program and assist with processing applications through the grant review and approval process. Please see the Façade/Building Improvement Grant Form for additional terms, conditions, and information on the application review procedure. Projects also will be subject to review and approval for code compliance by the City Plan Commission, and/or City Council.

Grant Program Application

A non-refundable application fee of \$100 must be paid to the City of Horicon at the time of application submission. Payment can be made via check or money order in-person at City Hall or via mail. All mailed application fees must be postmarked to the attention of the Office of the City Clerk. All applications and accompanying documentation must be submitted in their entirety electronically in PDF or JPEG form to the Office of the City Clerk. The applicant must be in good standing with the City of Horicon, with current taxes paid in full and no outstanding building code violation citations, and must provide proof of property and liability insurance prior to the start of the grant performance period. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis within a calendar year, subject to funding availability.

The final amount of any awarded grant program funding is determined by the total amount of expenditure described in each application. The program is a reimbursement and will not provide recipients with any award until the project is completed. Receipts for all eligible expenditures must be provided upon project completion in order to reimbursement to occur. All eligible expenditure receipts must be submitted at one time after project completion. Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 60 days of project completion.

All questions should be directed to Program Administrator and City Clerk/Treasurer, Kristen Jacobson, at kjacobson@horiconwi.gov.