



Storefront Improvement Program Policy & Application

Storefront Improvement Program

A TAX INCREMENT FINANCE PROGRAM

Program Description

The purpose of the Storefront Improvement Program is to encourage businesses and property owners within the Downtown and East University Avenue TIF Districts to improve their storefronts, making these areas more attractive to shoppers and growing their vitality and economic performance. The program reimburses owners of commercial buildings and businesses up to 50% for ground floor and 25% of upper floor façade improvements, for a maximum reimbursement of \$10,000 for a single commercial building.

Intent

The City of Champaign is interested in preserving the character of our commercial streets, particularly as it relates to restoration of historic buildings to their original appearance. The Storefront Improvement Program is intended to provide funding to help building/business owners improve the overall physical appearance of the exterior of their buildings/businesses with a particular emphasis on the ground floor storefront. By improving individual storefronts, the program will help revitalize and beautify the entire Downtown and Midtown commercial districts, enhance the pedestrian-scale streetscape and ensure that exceptional design solutions are introduced within the districts while preserving the unique character and qualities of our buildings.

Eligible Applicants

- Owners and tenants (with the owner's written consent) of street level commercial or retail property built before on or 1940 and located within the Downtown or East University Avenue Tax Increment Finance Districts.
- Applicant must be operating legally in accordance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations and current with all city taxes, fees and licenses.

50% Eligible Expenses

- Restoration or replacement of storefront to traditional or historic appearance (*period storefronts may be returned to a non-original state if historical evidence shows the façade in question is from an historically significant time period, ex. 1950's architectural glass façade replaced 1870s cast iron façade*)
- Exterior building lighting
- Restoration of architectural glass
- Reopening of bricked or boarded up windows (including transoms)
- Cast iron and tin restoration and repainting
- Installation of exterior entry equipment to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

25% Eligible Expenses

- Masonry/Brick tuck pointing
- Building cornices on primary façade facing a public street
- Paint removal and brick restoration (excludes new paint)
- Window replacement to traditional double hung windows or match to buildings historical appearance (only eligible on primary facades facing a public street)
- Approved chemical paint removers
- Restoration or recreation of awning structures (minus any advertisement cost)
- Restoration or recreation of historic projecting or painted wall signage native to the building (including Theater Marquees, and painted historical advertisement)

Ineligible Expenses (Include but not limited to)

- Roof replacement
- Rear or secondary façades (that don't face public street)
- Routine Maintenance (pressure washing, etc)
- Security roll-down grates or window bars
- Closing any existing openings
- Brick sandblasting
- Non-traditional building materials (ex. EFIS - Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems)
- Any improvement not related to the historical appearance of the building

Application Process

An application will only be reviewed after receipt of all application materials listed below. Applications will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed until all of the following information is received. The application must be received and approval letter issued before work commences.

1. Meet with Planning staff to review the scope of the project and receive a copy of the program application.
2. Submit completed application in its entirety in hard copy or digital version to Planning Department (102 North Neil Street – 3rd Floor). Items included in application include:
 - a. Complete photo documentation of existing building condition
 - b. Design drawings of proposed improvements
 - c. Estimates from licensed contractor detailing on-site labor, offsite material and fabrication cost. *Note: because Tax Increment Finance funds are used in this program, applicant must pay prevailing wage for all labor associated with this project.*
 - d. Estimated timeline of construction
3. Once application is received, a team of City of Champaign staff members will review the application for compliance with the program. Following that review they will issue one of the following:
 - a. An award letter and notice to proceed
 - b. Letter requesting more information be provided

- c. A letter of denial explaining the committees actions (*you may revise your plans and resubmit*)
4. Approved applicants should proceed with the agreed upon scope of work and in compliance with any special conditions set forth in the award letter. *Note: Applicants who wish to change the scope of the work or who wish to use a new contractor must submit new estimates and a revised proposal for review and approval.*
5. If the project requires a building permit you must receive that permit before work begins. (*contact the Building Safety Division of the Champaign Fire Department for application*)
6. Upon Completion of the project, applicants must:
 - a. Compile all invoices
 - b. Verify payment for work completed (canceled checks, front and back) or credit card statements. *Note: no cash payments will be deemed eligible for reimbursement*
 - c. Copies of any required permits (electrical, building, etc)
 - d. Color photographs of completed work

Payment Process

City staff will review the completion documents and compare the work completed to the original cost estimates. Based on that reconciliation, a check will be ordered in the amount of 50% of the eligible cost (not to exceed \$10,000 for a building). The check will be mailed approximately three weeks following submittal.

Additional Notes

- Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis until the total program budget is exhausted.
- The amount that the program is able to approve for reimbursement will not always be equal to 50% of the eligible cost or the maximum amount due to availability of funds and restrictions in how program funds can be spent.
- Projects listed as local landmarks, within a historic district or on the National Register of Historic Places must adhere to the design and regulatory procedures spelled out in their designation. For local landmark buildings and those in historic districts will require a certificate of appropriateness from the Planning Director or Historic Preservation Commission.

Additional Funding Opportunities

- Illinois Green Business Association – This local not-for-profit will conduct energy audits to assist you while making improvements to your building or business.
- Ameren *Act on Energy* Program – This program can assist with upgrades to lighting or other energy efficiency improvements to your building. www.actonenergy.com
- Buildings constructed before 1936 are eligible for a 10% *Federal Historic Tax Credit*. Buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are eligible for the 20% credit. Buildings must be for non-residential uses and certain requirements apply while using these programs. For information visit the National Parks Service website at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>
- City of Champaign *Enterprise Zone* Benefits may apply to your project. This includes abatement on the City and County portions of your sales tax bill for all materials purchased in Champaign County for the project.

Because our TIF districts are within the Enterprise Zone, you are NOT eligible for the property tax abatement portion of the program. Contact the City Manager's office for details (217) 403-8710 or <http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/city-manager/economic-development/enterprise-zone/>

Program Application

Property Information

Street Address City STATE ZIP

Property Owner/Company Name Name of Business(s) at Address

Applicant Information

Name Business Tax ID # or SSN#

Street Address City STATE ZIP

Contact Person

Name () - phone number email address

Street Address City STATE ZIP

Project Description

Has this property received Tax Increment Financing Funding in the past 5 years? Yes No

Is this property a City of Champaign Local Landmark or located within a Local Historic District? Yes No

Is this property listed on the National Register of Historic Places? Yes No

Work Summary (submit copy with application and another version with final receipts)

<i>Task</i>	<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Date of Completion</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Actual Cost</i>	<i>Paid in Full? Yes or No</i>	<i>Documentation Provided? Yes or No</i>
<i>Ex. Tuckpointing</i>	<i>Stone Repair Inc.</i>	<i>8/15/12</i>	<i>\$9,000</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
TOTAL						

**Attach all quotes to this document before submitting*

Ground Floor Estimated Cost \$ _____ X 50% = Estimated Grant Award \$ _____ or \$10,000 max

Upper Floor Estimated Cost \$ _____ X 25% = Estimated Grant Award \$ _____ or \$10,000 max

TOTAL \$ _____ or \$10,000 max

Office Use Only

Application Submitted _____	Project Approved _____ Signature _____ Date _____
Approved Grant Amount \$ _____	
Notice to Proceed Issued _____	
Final Receipts Received _____	
Payment Issued _____	

Applicant Disclosure Statement

I _____ (Applicant) assert that the preceding information is true and correct.

Applicant fully understands that all work must comply with the Storefront Incentive Program guidelines and be approved by the City of Champaign prior to any work commencing. The project is not considered approved until the Applicant receives an approval letter from the City of Champaign Planning Department. If the project has changes after the applicant has received a letter of approval, applicant must resubmit all changes and have them approved before work continues. If changes are not approved, the applicant will not receive a reimbursement of eligible expenses.

Applicant agrees to comply with all City of Champaign building codes.

Applicant agrees to submit detailed cost documentation, including cancelled checks/credit card receipts and invoices once the project has been completed and upon request prior to project completion.

Applicant agrees to allow onsite inspections of the work by City of Champaign staff.

The applicant understands that the City of Champaign may change the requirements of the Storefront Incentive Program at any time. The City of Champaign is not responsible for work being completed.

Applicant (please print name) _____ Date _____

Applicant Signature _____

Property Address _____

Owner Disclosure Statement

Required if applicant is not the property owner of the parcel being improved

I _____ (Owner) certify that I, owner of the property at _____ give _____ (Applicant) authority to implement the described improvements at the property. I further acknowledge that the City of Champaign assumes no liability in the event of any dispute between the Owner and Applicant concerning any building improvement work undertaken by the tenant as a result of the tenant's participation in the Storefront Improvement Program.

The Owner understands that the City of Champaign may change the requirements of the Storefront Incentive Program at any time. The City of Champaign is not responsible for work being completed.

Applicant (please print name)

Date

Applicant Signature

Property Address

Application Check List

- ___ Complete Application
- ___ Photos of existing building and area surrounding proposed project
- ___ Historic Photos of the Building at various stages of its life (speak to City Staff if photos cannot be found)
- ___ Detailed plans, drawings of proposed improvements
- ___ Project Specifications
 - List of Materials to be Used
 - Color Samples
- ___ Detailed Cost Estimates
- ___ Permits (copy of all applicable permits that apply if they have been secured)
- ___ Disclosure Statement (owner statement if different from applicant)
- ___ Work Summary Worksheet

Applicant (Please Print)

Applicant Signature

Date

Appendix A – Building Façade Terminology



Illinois Historic
Preservation Agency

ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING

