



Commercial Signage Grant Program

The Commercial Signage Grant can be used toward the design, purchase, and installation of a commercial sign. Funds may also be used towards the purchase and installation of awnings, when awnings include a logo and/or business name. Properties eligible for this program must be located in a TIF District or the Philo Road Business District.

What is the Commercial Signage Grant Program?

The Commercial Signage Grant Program provides matching grant funds to businesses to enhance their store fronts with the addition or improvement of commercial signage. Established using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to provide matching grants to business and commercial property owners who wish to renovate, enhance, and improve highly visible buildings along commercial corridors within the TIF districts. The primary objective of the Commercial Signage Grant Program is to promote and assist in supporting the City's businesses by providing grants for replacing and/or adding new signage to commercial storefronts that contribute to the vitality of the area.

What is the maximum grant amount?

Businesses that meet the criteria may receive a \$3,000 grant. Funding will be matched by 50% of total project cost up to \$3,000 maximum funding availability. For instance, a project requesting a \$2,000 grant award will require a minimum \$4,000 total project cost. Permit costs are not eligible for use as an award or match.

Minimum Requirements:

- The new or expanding business must be located within the boundaries of an eligible district. The business must either own the building or have a signed lease for at least a full year of tenancy and provide a copy of the lease/contract to the City.
 - At staff discretion, subleases or contracts for exclusive tenancy may be considered eligible when such agreement is for at least one full year of tenancy and when such agreement is entered into by a business that is both legally distinct from and has proprietors, operators, branding, and merchandise that are all different from the primary lease holder, property owner, and any other grant recipients in adjacent or nearby locations.
 - Co-tenants under the same lease or contract are not eligible for multiple Commercial Signage Grants.
 - A single business entity operating at adjacent or nearby locations is eligible for only one grant.
- An individual person or business entity may only receive one commercial signage grant within a five year period.
- Grants are only approved in writing by the TIF Administrator upon review of a formally submitted, complete application. No verbal commitment to funding will be recognized. Verbal or written feedback on a business's general eligibility or comments on a draft application shall not be construed as approval or disapproval of an application.
- The City must receive a current W-9 from the business to award the grant.
- The City must receive proof of payment and receipts for eligible expenses equal to twice the amount of the grant awarded.
- The premise must have a valid Certificate of Occupancy for the applicant's proposed use.
- The premise must obtain a permit for Permanent Signage.

The following shall be eligible for funding through the program:

- Signage; must be a professionally produced, meet the requirements of the landlord if renting;
- Awnings and canopies (when including logo and/or business names); and
- Professional architectural/design/contractor fees for eligible projects.
- Multiple signs for the same business are eligible up to the maximum grant amount

The following shall not be eligible for funding through the program:

- Signs resulting in noncommercial message, fluttering devices/banners, billboards, moving/rotating signs, temporary signs, reader boards, anything that flashes or adds glare onto public ways or adjacent properties;
- Buildings and signs for residential and non-profit uses; and
- Non-permanent or temporary signage.

Important information concerning payments:

- Any work billed, or materials invoiced, before the date that the Signage Grant application is approved by the City of Urbana will NOT be available for grant funding.
- Any payments presented must have a proof of price and a transaction. This can be through invoice, credit card receipt, or a copy of a valid check or money order.
- The City shall only pay 50 percent of any payment presented, up to the approved grant amount.
- Payment of the grant will not be made until the project is completed.
- Payment will be made within 90 days of reimbursement submission.
- Projects must be completed within six months of being awarded a grant. Failure to meet this timeline may result in nullification of the grant contract.

How do I apply?

- Contact the Economic Development Division to discuss whether this grant is a good fit for your business.
- Fill out the attached application form and submit it to the Economic Development Division. ***All grant applications are subject to the availability of funding.***

Sign Regulations

- For more information see Zoning Ordinance [Chapter IX Sign and OASS Regulations](#)



Application Form – Commercial Signage Grant Program

All applications are subject to the availability of funding.

TIF District /Philo RD Business District

This business is or will be located in a TIF or Business District: Central 2 4 Philo Rd

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

*Please attach a completed **W-9 form** in addition to this application.*

Business Information

Business Name: _____

Business Address: _____

Brief Signage Description: _____

*Please attach **two competitive contractors** and a detailed description in addition to this application.*

Business Owner Information

Applicant is also an owner of the property? Yes No (choose one)

(All beneficial owners of a Land Trust, members of a Limited Liability Company or a partnership must be listed.)

Owner Name(s): _____

Organization Name(s): _____

Owner(s) Phone Number: _____

Owner(s) Email Address: _____

Disclosure of Previous Incentives

Has the business owner or any beneficiaries of this project received any financial incentive or tax abatement from the City of Urbana in the last five years? Yes No (choose one; if yes, please attach a description)