



City of Leesburg, Florida

Facade Sign and Landscaping Grant

Information & Application

FAÇADE SIGNAGE AND LANDSCAPING GRANT

PURPOSE

1. The City of Leesburg's Façade, Signage and Landscaping Improvement Grant Program (FSL Grant) is a program designed to encourage private investment in visible exterior property, building and sign improvements that enhance the value of commercial/residential property; while meeting the intent and mission of the City to improve the aesthetics and ambiance of specific major corridors. The program may provide as much as \$20,000. Funds appropriated annually by the City Commission and funding shall be available on a first come first serve basis. However, the program may be subject to the availability of funds, as determined by the City Commission.
2. FSL Grants must support the goals of the City Commission and be in compliance with corresponding building signage, architectural standards and other City regulations.
3. Applicants are reminded that grant awards made are discretionary in nature and should not be considered an entitlement by the applicant. All grant criteria contained herein are guidelines for awards and successful applicants may receive any amount up to the maximum award. Should an application meet all grant criteria, a grant may or may not be awarded at the City Commission's discretion due to a number of circumstances such as funding limitations, competing applications, and/or competing priorities.

SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. The FSL Grant Program is available to businesses and/or building owners that are located with the target districts, as specified in Exhibit "A". These districts include areas within the City's CRA boundaries that have frontage on roadways to include U.S.27, U.S. 441, Main Street, plus all properties fronting Dixie Avenue and South Street. Businesses applying for the FSL Grant must be properly licensed through the City's Occupational Licensing Division and applicants must be a permitted/conforming use within the district.
2. Applications will not be accepted from property owners (and tenants of the property owners) who are delinquent on their property taxes. Applicants must not have any outstanding code liens or code violations that cannot be remedied with this grant assistance.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The FSL Grant Program shall provide matching funds for exterior (street side) improvements that are consistent with and further the implementation of the Land Development Code, respective CRA Redevelopment Plans and the City Comprehensive Plan. Funds may be used for the following improvements:

1. Replacement of windows and doors;
2. Exterior painting or siding as part of an overall façade renovation program. For example, painting is an eligible expense when done in conjunction with other major exterior improvements such as roof line changes, dormers, gable.
3. New signs as part of an overall improvement program for an existing improved property and removal of existing non-conforming and blighted signs;
4. Landscaping when associated with a Façade Renovation Program, replacement of a non-conforming sign, or an overall improvement program for an existing improved property;
5. Exterior architectural amenities (e.g., addition or improvement of balconies, porches or arcades);
6. Awnings and shutters;

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7. Other exterior (street-side) façade improvements (considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis)
8. Architectural, engineering or landscape architectural services to design improvements may be funded through this program (maximum of 10% of total grant award).

****NOTE:***

This list is illustrative.

All architectural designs, materials and colors must be consistent with the historic and architectural heritage of the City of Leesburg Code of Ordinances adopted under Ordinance 16-35 Architectural Design Standards and Ordinance 03-112 Historic District Ordinance and Guidelines.

SECTION 3: NON-ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

1. The FSL Grant Program cannot be used to fund interior renovations or roof repair, other maintenance items and cannot be used to renovate a non-conforming sign, unless the sign is being brought into conformity.

Any improvements constructed or installed prior to City Council approval are not eligible.

SECTION 4: AVAILABLE FUNDING AND MATCHING REQUIREMENT

1. The City shall fund this program from various sources to include, the Downtown Leesburg CRA; 441/27 CRA; Carver Heights CRA; and the General Fund. It is anticipated that 3-5 projects per year will receive funding; however, if additional funding is available, more funding cycles may be considered.
2. All sign and landscaping grants shall be funded 80% by the City and 20% by the applicant. The City's portion shall not exceed \$20,000 for sign and landscaping grants. For sign, landscaping and façade grants, or façade grant only, 80% shall be funded by the City and 20% by the applicant. The City's portion shall not exceed \$20,000.

SECTION 5: APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINE

1. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.
2. As long as the FSL Grant Program is funded, there will be an annual grant cycle commencing on October 1 each year. All applications for funding shall be due on November 15 or the next immediate workday if the day is a holiday or weekend. Other grant cycles may be considered by the City as funding allows.
3. Application deadlines may change if funding levels permit additional grant cycles. In that case, the City will announce an additional cycle with an opening and closing application deadline.
4. The following application process shall be used for all grant applications submitted under this section:
 - (1) The applicant receives an FSL Grant Program Application. Application forms are available in the following locations:

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- a. City Hall – 501 West Meadow Street;
 - b. Planning and Zoning Department - 204 South Fifth Street;
 - c. The Leesburg Area Chamber of Commerce- 1195 W Magnolia St.; and
 - d. The City of Leesburg website: www.leesburgflorida.gov.
- (2) The applicant completes the application and submits it to the City for review and consistency with the CRA Redevelopment Plan, the Land Development Code, and any other applicable plans. The application package includes the following:
- a. Completed application;
 - b. Proof of ownership of the property;
 - c. Proof of paid property taxes (current and prior years);
 - d. Copy of occupational license (current)
 - e. Copy of an estimate for the work to be completed
 - f. Photos of area to be improved.
 - g. Other information as needed to ensure all proposed work will be performed to meet the guidelines herein.

The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees associated with the proposed project.

Applicants must submit a complete application and all supporting materials in accordance with the instructions in this packet. Incomplete applications are not eligible for review or approval.

- (3) The FSL Committee will review the applications according to the program selection criteria and shall score the grant application based upon the FSL grant criteria established herein. The FSL Committee shall forward a recommendation to the City Commission for final grant consideration. The Commission shall approve, approve with modifications or deny the funding application.
- The FSL Committee consists of three (3) individuals, including the City Manager or Deputy City Manager, the Planning and Zoning Manager, and the Housing Director.
- (4) The City Commission shall have sole authority to award FSL grants. If a grant application is denied, the applicant may reapply during the next funding cycle. The Commission's decision shall be final.

Please note that applications must be reviewed and approved before façade, sign or landscaping construction work begins. Grants will not be awarded to improvement projects that are under construction or completed prior to grant application.

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- (5) For approved grant projects, prior to construction of improvements, the applicant must submit and receive applicable building and other regulatory permits.

The City of Leesburg is required to file informational returns (Form 1099-G) for individuals and entities receiving grants from the City. This information is confidential and will only be used for informational return reporting purposes. Grant recipients must sign and return a W9 form to the City before funds can be distributed.

- (6) Upon completion of the improvements, final inspection and approval by the City and issuance of a certificate of occupancy (if applicable), the applicant submits a “reimbursement package” to the City which includes the following:
- a. Completed reimbursement form (provided by the City);
 - b. Copies of applicable invoices or receipts;
 - c. Proof of payment for improvements; and,
 - d. Before/After photos of the improvements.
 - e. Other information as needed by staff to ensure that the project was completed per the requirements herein.

Approved Applicants will receive grant funds after the project is completed and all associated costs have been paid. Upon completion of approved work, in order to receive grant payment, the applicant must submit documentation of work completed and proof of payment. It is the responsibility of the award recipient to maintain proper documentation of funds expended in the course of completing the improvement project. Release of funds is subject to submission, review and approval of this documentation. All improvements must be completed essentially as presented to the City Commission in order to receive payment.

Acceptable documentation is defined as PAID invoices/statements and/or schedule of values from vendors clearly detailing the work done, accompanied by copies of the cancelled check(s) showing payment accompanied by a vendor invoice.

- (7) If the project is not completed, is not approved at its final inspection, or does not receive its certificate of occupancy (if applicable) within one year of award, the grant award shall expire and the applicant shall not receive pledged funds. The applicant may request a six-month extension. Only the Commission Extensions shall be granted

SECTION 6: RECURRING FSL GRANT APPLICATIONS

FSL grant applications will not be considered if the single building/property under the same ownership has received maximum grant funds (\$15,000) within two previous fiscal years. Additionally, points will be awarded to first time applicants and/or applicants that have not previously received a grant in the past two years.

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SECTION 7: FLS GRANT IMPROVEMENT RANKING CRITERIA

The following selection criteria may be used to review and rate applications for the FSL Improvement Grant Program. Criteria are derived from the goals and objectives of the City's adopted Redevelopment Plan(s), as well as the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Criteria are weighted with a maximum score of 100 points.

1. ***Streetscape Aesthetics and Functionality and Quality of Design*** (Up to 30 Points) – Degree to which the proposed project enhances the streetscapes of Leesburg, including the addition or enhancement of display windows, awnings, landscaping, handicapped accessibility and architectural amenities such as arcades, balconies and porches. Point are awarded for achieving the goals of the Redevelopment District, the Comprehensive Plan and remedying non-conformities.
2. ***Conformity to City Regulations and Redevelopment Goals*** (Up to 25 Points) – Degree to which the proposed project promotes the character of Leesburg and promotes redevelopment goals through the use of urban design principles, site design, architecture, materials, color, landscaping and other visual elements.
3. ***Removal of Slum and Blight and Positive Impact to Neighborhood*** (Up to 25 Points) – Degree to which the proposed project upgrades or eliminates substandard structures, code violations and/or eliminates non-conforming uses, as well as achieving the redevelopment goals of the City of Leesburg.
4. ***Historic Preservation and Materials*** (Up to 15 Points) – Degree to which the proposed project promotes the historic character of Leesburg, through historic preservation, adaptive re-use of historic structures, site design, architecture, materials, landscaping and other visual and physical amenities.
5. ***Previous Grant Assistance*** (Up to 5 Points) – Applicants who have not been awarded the grant in the previous two years are eligible for five (5) points.

DISCLAIMER:

Neither the City of Leesburg, nor its affiliates, shall be responsible for planning, design, or construction of improvements to property owned by the applicant. No warranties or guarantees expressed or implied by the description of, application for, or participation in the Façade, Signage and Landscaping Improvement Grant Program. The applicant is advised to consult with licensed architects, engineers, or building contractors before proceeding with final plans for construction.

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FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

1. *Project Location:*

Address of Property to be improved: _____

Assessor Parcel Number(s): _____

Name of Business(es) in Project: _____

Building Frontage Measurement of Project: _____

2. *Applicant Information:*

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Do you Own, Rent or Lease the subject property? _____

**If you are not the owner, the owner will need to co-sign this application.*

3. *Businesses or Services Offered on Site:* _____

4. *Description of Proposed Improvements:* _____

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5. Please identify ways in which this project supports the Overlay District Concepts

6. Submittals

Applications ***must*** include the following materials, if applicable, for consideration by the City:

- Current Photo(s) of project site
- Assessor parcel number and proof of paid property taxes
- Applicant Information
- Listing of businesses or services offered on site
- Description of proposed improvements
- Identification of project's support of the Overlay District
- Current Occupational License
- Rendering or sketch of proposed improvements
- Architectural plans - elevation drawing, dimensions, measurements, etc
- Color and material samples
- Sign/Awning design drawings and/or plans
- Documentation of cost estimates -- copies of vendor bids, estimates, etc
- Signature of Property Owner and Applicant

Applications lacking sufficient materials to describe the project will NOT be reviewed.

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7. Estimated Costs and Timing

Please provide copies of three vendor bids/estimates or other documentation of cost estimates for all proposed façade work.

- a. Window or Door Replacement \$ _____
- b. Exterior paint or siding \$ _____
- c. Signage \$ _____
- d. Exterior Lighting \$ _____
- e. Façade/Exterior Architectural Improv. \$ _____
- f. Architectural/Design Fees \$ _____
- g. Landscape/Hardscape Improvements \$ _____
- h. Awnings or Shutters \$ _____
- i. Building Permit/Planning Fees \$ _____
- j. Other Proposed Improvements (specify) \$ _____
_____ \$ _____
_____ \$ _____
_____ \$ _____

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$ _____

Estimated Days/Months for Completion _____

8. Signatures

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Property Owner(s) Signature(s)

Applicant(s) Signature(s)

Property Owner(s) Signature(s)

Applicant(s) Signature(s)

Property Owner(s) Signature(s)

Applicant(s) Signature(s)

This Section for City Use

Amount Received: _____

Date Reviewed: _____

Recommendation to CRA: _____

Action by CRA: _____

MAP OF CRA BOUNDARY

