

DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (DIP)

A Matching Grant Program to Support Small, Locally-Owned, and Operated Businesses in the City of Virginia Beach.

A. WHAT IS DIP?

The District Improvement Program (DIP) is a matching grant program established to provide impactful support to small, locally owned, and operated businesses located within the boundaries of the Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), Special Economic Growth Areas (SEGAs), Suburban Focus Areas (SFAs), Council-adopted districts, or any valid business associations in the City of Virginia Beach.

The Program provides monetary matching grants to existing small business owners or those who plan to buy or lease existing and/or vacant industrial or commercial properties within the designated areas or districts qualified under this program.

The grant funding is to be used for building repairs or improvements, equipment expansion or business modernization, and interior or exterior building improvements. Proposed improvements must support and meet the goals of the adopted plans of the qualified designated district.

B. WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Eligible Applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- New or existing small businesses with less than 50 employees;
- Property and applicant are current on all City of Virginia Beach licenses, fees and taxes; and
- Businesses located within the boundaries of the SGAs, SEGAs, SFAs, other Council-adopted districts, or any valid business associations in the City.

Chain businesses with more than two other locations, national franchises, places of worship or residential buildings/complexes are **ineligible** for this Program.



C. WHAT KIND OF IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT FUNDING?

Projects must make demonstrable improvements to the property and follow applicable zoning, building codes, design guidelines and support the intended goals of the district where the project resides. Routine maintenance, movable furnishing, office supplies, kitchen supplies, or other non-capital investments will not be funded under this program.

Improvements eligible for grant funding:

INTERIOR BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Build-out and architectural services, electrical, and plumbing repairs, required upgrades for increasing occupancy levels or the size and scale of the business operation per code regulations, and renovations for building efficiency are included under this improvement. Itemized quotes or estimates of work from at least two contractors must be provided.

EXTERIOR BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Exterior improvements may include windows, doors, awnings, canopies, accent or security lighting and building materials. Such improvements require registered architectural or engineering plans and elevations, illustrating work areas, proposed changes and material specifications.

MODERNIZATIONS

Modernizations may include technological upgrades or operational equipment to expand the business or create efficiencies. An itemized quote or detailed description of the upgrades or equipment to be purchased must be provided.

FENCING

Photos or scaled drawing of proposed fencing, specifying height, length and color, and a site survey, as required by the City to obtain a permit, must be provided.

SIGNAGE

Signage improvements may include new or replacement of commercial signage. Scaled drawing with measurements of proposed sign(s), description, proposed location and other specifications must be provided for zoning review.

LANDSCAPING

A detailed landscaping plan by a licensed landscape professional must be submitted for landscaping improvements, showing site location, cost, size, plant types and quantity.

PARKING UPGRADES

Upgrading an unimproved parking area (e.g. gravel lot) with a paved or other approved surfacing material is eligible, as well as bicycle parking areas and bike racks. Site drawings or survey, site work description, proposed surfacing materials and other perimeter improvements, as required by the Zoning Ordinance, must be provided.

Routine maintenance, including parking lot patching, re-stripping or repaving will not be eligible.

OUTDOOR CAFÉ

Upgrades to or establishment of an outdoor café space are eligible. A detailed scaled drawing of the outdoor café site, with the survey of the property, is required.

Outdoor café within the public right-of-way in the Resort Area will require an Outdoor Cafe Franchise Agreement. All other outdoor cafes in the City will require encroachment agreement.

D. HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The Program budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 is \$100,000. No more than one grant shall be awarded to each business or property owner per fiscal year. Funding is not an entitlement and is available on a competitive first-come, first-served basis until funds for the fiscal year are depleted.

Minimum request: \$1,000
Maximum request: \$10,000

Matching grant request may be increased to a maximum of \$15,000 if the subject business has been approved for a grant in the same amount from another government or non-profit agency.

E. WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS?

Completed application and disclosure statement form and supporting documentations, as described in Section C, must be submitted to:

*Virginia Beach Department of Economic
Development
4525 Main Street, Suite 700
Virginia Beach, VA 23462.*

The Grant Review Committee will evaluate and rank the applications to determine if the project meets the Program objectives. The Committee meets quarterly and is comprised of City representatives from Planning and Community Development, Virginia Beach Economic Development, Virginia Beach Development Authority (VBDA), the City Manager's Office and the City Council. Convening outside the quarterly scheduled meeting may be necessary under special circumstances relative to an application.

Subsequently, the Committee makes recommendation on the grant amount to VBDA, who will approve a Resolution authorizing the grant award, project parameters and completion timeline of the approved improvements.

F. HOW DO I RECEIVE THE GRANT?

Grants are performance-based and will be authorized by VBDA after successful evaluation and completion of the improvements. Paid invoices and receipts must be submitted. If applicable, prior to beginning the work, all required City permits must be obtained for the proposed improvements.

All improvements must be completed within six (6) months from the date of grant approval. A final inspection by Staff representative will be conducted prior to payment approval to ensure consistency with the originally approved plan(s). Substantial changes to the originally approved plan(s) must be approved by the Committee in writing prior to making changes.

Only one extension date for the approve plan is permitted and is approved administratively. Subsequent requests for extension are not guaranteed and must be reviewed and approved by the Committee. If an extension is not granted and work has not commenced within six months from the award date, the Resolution becomes null and void.