



# **COMMERCIAL SIGN GRANT PROGRAM**



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# COMMERCIAL SIGN GRANT PROGRAM

## 1. OVERVIEW

The success of small businesses is crucial to enriching the prosperity and vibrancy of the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency (FPRA) District. As part of its commitment to increasing local business awareness, economic productivity, and the overall visual appeal of the FPRA District, the agency has established the Commercial Sign Grant Program. This program encourages existing business owners to replace old and outdated signs with modern, visually appealing ones. The initiative aims to enhance the community's aesthetic appeal for residents and visitors while boosting brand visibility for small businesses, ultimately improving opportunities for new customer acquisition and repeat business.

This program will complement other revitalization efforts to ensure the maximum leverage of resources and support local businesses.

## 2. FUNDING

Recipients of Commercial Sign Grants can receive up to \$5,000 in the form of a reimbursable grant for eligible expenses associated with removal of old signage, the design, production, and installation of new signage, or substantial renovation of existing signage including the installation of modern sign lighting. Grant funds are disbursed after all improvements have been completed in accordance with a Grant Agreement entered into between the FPRA Board and the Recipient.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY

- A. The property to be improved must be located within the FPRA District boundaries (see Boundary Map below at section 9).
- B. There must be a Commercial Building on the property. This means that a business that is frequented by the public is located in a portion of the building and that portion of the building is not a private residence.
- C. The Applicant must own the property or, if the Applicant is a tenant, the Applicant must submit its signed lease, and the owner of the property must support the project and execute a Property Owner Affidavit granting the Applicant permission to implement the improvements listed on the application.
- D. The Applicant must have funds sufficient to fully fund the project (proof of funds is required). The Applicant is responsible for paying for any permits required to do the project. No grant funds can be used to pay any permitting fees. The Applicant shall incur all initial project costs and may receive reimbursement only after all improvements have been completed in accordance with the Grant Agreement.
- E. The following properties are not eligible:
  1. Residential properties
  2. Home based businesses and online businesses
  3. Governmental facilities
  4. National corporate franchises
  5. New construction developments
  6. Properties that have been awarded an FPRA Commercial Sign Grant within the last five years
  7. Properties with outstanding monetary obligations owed to the City, for example, past due taxes or code enforcement fines or liens

#### 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application period will remain open until all of the allocated funds are depleted. Submitted applications will be evaluated every 30 days.

A. The Applicant must complete the Online Application and submit all required documents including:

1. Color rendering or sketch of the proposed design, including specifications as to size and width.
2. Email or letter verification from the Fort Pierce Planning Department confirming that the proposed signage is in compliance with the City Ordinances and Planning Regulations. Planning Department phone number is (772) 467-3737.

**\* NOTE: Properties located in a Historic District may also need separate approval from the Historic Preservation Board.**

3. Two (2) written estimates from two different licensed contractors. Estimates should be on company letterhead, dated, and include a detailed breakdown of the scope of work, including the line items specifying permit fees.
4. One (1) photo of the existing condition of the exterior of the building that clearly depicts the proposed location of the signage and the existing condition of the building exterior(s), and one (1) photo of the condition of the existing sign (if applicable).
5. Description of project improvements including material list, color selections and note how and where the sign will be installed on the building or the property.
6. City of Fort Pierce Certificate of Use.
7. Copy of Deed showing ownership of the property by the Applicant OR if the Applicant is a tenant, copy of signed lease and Property Owner Affidavit granting the Applicant permission to implement the improvements listed on the application.

B. Within 10 business days of receipt of the completed Application, a staff member will contact the Applicant to determine eligibility.

C. Every 30 days, staff will forward eligible Applications to the Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee (CRAAC). The CRAAC will review the Applications and make recommendations to the FPRA Board.

D. The FPRA Board will make the final determination and, if funding is approved, the FPRA Board may authorize the execution of a Grant Agreement

E. Written notification will be sent to all Applicants advising them of approval or denial of funding.

F. Staff will prepare the Grant Agreement to be executed by the Recipient and the FPRA Board following a vote to approve the Grant Agreement.

#### 5. ELIGIBLE SIGNS

- A. Awnings
- B. Freestanding ground signs
- C. Monument signs
- D. Projecting signs
- E. Under Canopy Signs
- F. Wall Signs
- G. Painted Signs

## **6. INELIGIBLE SIGNS AND EXPENSES**

All signs must be consistent with applicable design guidelines and policies as outlined by the FPRA Plan and the City of Fort Pierce Planning Codes. All work must be done in compliance with applicable City of Fort Pierce Codes and Planning Regulations. All professional work must be performed by a licensed contractor in good standing with the City of Fort Pierce.

The following signs are ineligible for the Commercial Sign Grant Program:

- A. Signs for new construction developments.
- B. Signs for residential properties, home based businesses or online businesses.
- C. Temporary signs.
- D. Laminated vinyl signs for windows or doors.
- E. Decals/Stickers for windows or doors.
- F. A-Frame, sidewalk, or sandwich board signs

The following expenses are ineligible for reimbursement under the Program:

- A. Permit fees and taxes.
- B. Refinancing existing debt.
- C. Sweat equity payments (i.e., reimbursement for Recipient's own labor).
- D. Expenses incurred prior to execution of Grant Agreement.

## **7. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The funding assistance provided under the FPRA Commercial Sign Grant Program is solely on a reimbursement basis. The FPRA has the exclusive authority to approve or deny program applications based on its determination as to the benefits to the FPRA District produced by requested projects. The FPRA may impose any conditions of approval it deems suitable to protect the interests of the agency. All Recipients will be required to execute a Grant Agreement.

By accepting the grant, the Recipient agrees to report and provide updates to FPRA Staff upon request. Recipient may be required to provide work schedules, execute reporting forms, and provide projected completion dates. The sign project must be completed within 180 days of execution of the Grant Agreement. Failure to complete the project within the time frame may result in denial of the reimbursement request.

FPRA staff will conduct a site visit before grant payment is made in order to verify that the business is in operation. Staff may also conduct unannounced site visits periodically in order to ensure compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.

By participating in this grant program, Recipients agree to allow the City of Fort Pierce and the FPRA, or their agents, to take photos of themselves, their property, and their business for promotional purposes related to the grant program.

There is no guarantee that funding will be available for every application submitted, including those that meet the required criteria.

The FPRA is a public agency and is governed by the "Florida Public Records Law" under Florida State Statutes, Chapter 119. Any documents provided by the Applicant/Recipient may be subject to production by the FPRA upon receipt of a public records request, subject to any exemptions provided by Florida Law.

## 8. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The Recipient shall incur all initial project costs and may receive reimbursement only after the sign project is complete. The reimbursement of funds will take place upon the receipt of a finding of the project completion by the FPRA. To initiate the reimbursement process, the Recipient must submit the following documents:

- A. Written notification from the Recipient that the project is complete.
- B. Completed FPRA Reimbursement Request Form.
- C. One (1) photo of the installed sign.
- D. One (1) photo of the property including the newly installed sign.
- E. Copies of all invoices. Detailed invoices should be on the company letterhead showing the name, address, and phone number of the licensed contractor. Invoices should include a date and should include a detailed breakdown of the scope of the work, including the line items specifying permit fees. **(Permit fees will not be reimbursed)**
- F. Proof of payment in full for sign improvements as approved.
- G. Copies of all required closed permits.
- H. Signed and completed W-9, as required by law, for the Recipient of the grant funds.

NOTE: The Finance Department shall process the reimbursement to the Recipient in accordance with the regular payment procedures of the City. No funds will be disbursed until all work is completed and all items set forth in this section have been submitted.

Please note that the reimbursement process may take approximately 45-60 days after the FPRA receives the necessary documentation. This timeframe allows for the review and verification of the submitted documents to ensure compliance with the program's requirements. The FPRA strives to process reimbursements in a timely manner and appreciates recipients' patience during the reimbursement period.

## 9. FPRA DISTRICT BOUNDARY MAP

