



Corridor Storefront Improvement Program

Program Guidelines

OVERVIEW

The Corridor Storefront Improvement Program (CSIP) is a grant program designed to assist business tenants and property owners located along the major commercial thoroughfares of Main and State Streets in Springfield. The CSIP will provide financial grants to eligible property owners and business tenants to make improvements to their **ground-floor storefronts** with the goal of improving the physical appearance of buildings along these two corridors.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT CONDITIONS

The CSIP is targeted to **ground- floor commercial storefronts** with direct frontage along the Main Street and State Street commercial corridor areas.

- Grants can be for up to \$10,000.
- Grants require a minimum 25% match from the applicant of the total project cost.
- Grants do not have to be repaid as long as the grant conditions are satisfied.
- Applications may be submitted by property owners and/or tenants; however, if a tenant submits an application, the property owner must provide permission for the work and must agree to maintain the property in like or improved condition for five years following issue of the grant.
- Expenditures that exceed the approved project cost shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- Eligible businesses include ground-floor commercial establishments conducting retail and/or wholesale trade; service establishments including professional offices; personal services such as dry cleaning or beauty salons; and other business services such as printing, etc.
- Grant applications will be accepted and screened for basic compliance (i.e., location, property use, intended improvements, etc.). Applications will then be evaluated on their individual merits and relative to other applications. The greater the fulfillment of CSIP goals, the greater the likelihood of receiving an award.
- The subject property may not have delinquent taxes, including property taxes, and neither the tenant nor the property owner may have other delinquent taxes outstanding. The subject property may not have fees in arrears, including BID fees. The subject property may not have active code enforcement actions. The subject property must be structurally sound and in compliance with applicable building codes, sanitary codes, and zoning regulations.
- Applicants must comply with all state and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code, zoning requirements, environmental requirements, etc.
- Applications for building(s) with multiple storefronts are strongly encouraged to prepare a joint application, to support the project costs and ensure a consistent quality of work and design continuity, although grants within the broader application may be awarded on an individual storefront by storefront basis. This approach will also reduce the cost per storefront by having shared design costs and the like, benefitting the applicants.

- Owners of buildings with more than one storefront may apply for separate grants for each individual storefront (one grant application per storefront).
- Work must be conducted by properly licensed contractors and/or appropriate business professionals to ensure quality of work and compliance with appropriate regulations.
- Applicants are responsible for obtaining bids, selecting the contractor(s) and completing any agreement with the contractor(s) to carry out the work. DevelopSpringfield does not have a list of approved vendors and will not make recommendations in that regard.
- If you have solid roll-down grates and are applying for CSIP funds for improvements, it will be required that you also remove the grates. A separate grate allowance of \$2,500 (Roll-Down Removal Grant) is available to provide financial assistance, in addition to the maximum \$10,000 grant amount and is on a non-matching basis, for the removal (or conversion) of solid roll-down grates. Funds may also be requested, within the aggregate \$2,500 limit, to install replacement open-wire mesh grates installed on the interior of the storefront with hidden mechanical systems, or installation costs for a security system. The Roll-Down Removal Grant allowance can only be accessed as part of a CSIP grant request for broader storefront improvements.
- The CSIP may only be expended on ground-floor commercial storefront improvements.

PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY

- Properties and/or storefronts not located directly on Main Street, State Street and in CSIP-designated business improvement areas.
- New construction.
- Vacant storefronts, unless part of a multi-tenant building with other occupied storefronts.
- Banks, savings and loan associations.
- Gas and service stations, used-car lots.
- Churches and other religious institutions.
- Home-based businesses.
- Adult entertainment establishments.
- Properties used entirely for residential purposes.
- Check-cashing institutions.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE

- Improved or refurbished exteriors, including restoration of finishes; compatible reconstruction of adjacent storefronts; repair or replacement of facade materials.
- Repair of architectural detailing.
- Repair or replacement of storefront windows, window framing and doors.
- Appropriate exterior cleaning, masonry repair and repainting. Paint removal if appropriate to expose underlying stone or brick materials.
- Removal of false fronts, siding and materials that cover architectural details.
- Removal (or conversion) of solid roll-down grates.
- Installation of open-wire mesh grates installed on the interior of the storefront with the mechanical systems are concealed.
- Improved exterior lighting including display window lighting. At discretion of DevelopSpringfield, lighting improvements may also include uplighting of overall building façade.
- Removal of inappropriate or unattractive signage; installation of attractive awning and signage.
- Improvement of ground surface between door and sidewalk.
- Installation of attractive landscaping features including plantings, fencing and the like.

- Reasonable and necessary architectural/design fees may be included in the total cost of eligible improvements, but cannot exceed 10 percent of the total grant amount. Excess amounts may be paid by the applicant in the event of a larger project which the grant is a smaller portion of.

INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Maintenance-type improvements such as roofing, paving, electrical, and structural upgrade improvements, as these do not increase the attractiveness or accessibility of a store-front location.
- Interior rehabilitation.
- Operating capital.
- Financing of personal property or equipment.
- Debt refinancing.
- Improvements made prior to grant approval.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Projects are intended to reflect principles of good design, and projects will be evaluated on their individual and relative merits. Priority will be given to projects which meet more of the CSIP Design Guidelines (copy attached). Applicants are required to meet with both the Program Administrator and Design Consultant prior to submitting a full application. Once the pre-application is received and screened by the Program Administrator, you will be contacted to set up an appointment to discuss the project with both the Design Consultant and the Program Administrator.

Note:

- Properties in local historic districts will need prior approval by the Springfield Historical Commission
- Properties located in an approved urban renewal district may require review and approval by the Springfield Redevelopment Authority.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, DESIGN CONSULTANT AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Program Administrator and Design Consultant are the contacts for the CSIP Program.

- Program Administrator- The role of the Program Administrator is to assist the applicant from the start of the application process through the completion of the grant funding process. The Program Administrator also facilitates the presentations to the DevelopSpringfield Board of Directors for approval of the grant requests. The Program Administrator should be contacted directly with any questions or concerns during this grant application process.
- Design Consultant – The role of the Design Consultant is to assist the applicant by ensuring that they have a complete and comprehensive project. Therefore, the applicant must meet with the Design Consultant prior to submitting an application. Upon interest in the CSIP, the Program Administrator will contact the Design Consultant to make arrangements to meet with the applicant. The Design Consultant reviews the submitted quotes to verify that the proposed work meets the Design Guidelines and that the quotes are sufficient. Along with the Program Administrator, the Design Consultant presents the design portion of the presentation to the DevelopSpringfield Board of Directors. Upon completion of the project, the Design Consultant completes a site visit to give approval on the project prior to funding the grant funds.
- Board of Directors-The DevelopSpringfield Board of Directors is comprised of local business executives who strive to assist in making positive change within Springfield. The Board of Directors meets once a month and review applications at that time. Decisions on applications are voted on, and the Board's decision is final.

APPLICATION/APPROVAL PROCESS

- Applicant will contact the Program Administrator to outline project concept and obtain application.
- The Program Administrator will provide a pre-application to be completed by the applicant. The pre-application should be completed and forwarded to the Program Administrator at the address below.
- **Once the Pre-Application is received by the Program Administrator**, an appointment will be set up for the Applicant to meet with both the Program Administrator and the Design Consultant at the location of interest. **The Applicant must meet with the Design Consultant and Program Administrator prior to submitting the full CSIP Application.**
- After meeting with the Program Administrator and Design Consultant, the applicant will complete the CSIP Application.
- Applicant will submit the completed application, along with supporting documentation including current representative photos of the subject storefront, scope of project, project cost estimate, list of vendors/contractors, and a visual rendering of how project will look upon completion.
- The Program Administrator will review application and supporting materials, and will request additional information from applicant as needed to proceed with evaluation.
- Application will be reviewed for compliance with program and design guidelines by both the Program Administrator and Design Consultant and the applicant will be notified of any issues identified for correction, explanation, or project modification.
- Qualified and complete applications will be presented to the DevelopSpringfield Board for final decision making. The decision will be based on the application's own merits as well as its merits relative to other competing applications and based on funds available. DevelopSpringfield's decisions are final. The Board will meet no less than quarterly for application decision making, and may meet more frequently, as appropriate.
- Applicant will be notified that the project has been accepted as outlined, accepted with described conditions and/or changes, or rejected.
- Upon approval of a CSIP grant, the applicant will be notified in writing of the grant amount and specific terms within the Grant Contract. Upon acceptance of those terms, work on the project must begin within 90 days (three months), of approval notification, and improvements must be completed within 180 days (six months), unless written approval for an extension is granted by DevelopSpringfield. **Failure to meet that deadline will result in loss of approved funds.**
- The Applicant will be required to sign a Publicity Release Form and agree to display a DevelopSpringfield project sign while the project is in process.
- **Applicant is not to begin work before the grant contract is executed. Any expense incurred prior to the execution of a grant contract is not eligible for reimbursement.**

PAYMENT/REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

- Upon project completion, project cost reconciliation must be submitted with supporting evidence of costs incurred, payments made, and the applicant's 25 percent contribution.
- Payments will be made on a reimbursement basis to the applicants. In certain cases, payment may be released to the contractor or materials provider, but only upon completion of the work or installation of the subject materials.
- Updated property photos must be obtained by the Program Administrator to clearly represent the work performed.
- The Design Consultant must inspect the completed work and verify that costs incurred reflect the work that was done.

- DevelopSpringfield reserves the right to deny payment if completed work is inconsistent with the representations of the original application and any applicable approved amendments, is not completed, or is not of adequate work quality. DevelopSpringfield reserves the right to:
 - ✓ Approve applications in its sole discretion.
 - ✓ Notify the appropriate neighborhood councils of applications received from applicants in their respective neighborhoods.
 - ✓ Announce all grant awards publicly.
- Grant funds will be released upon successful completion of the project; submission of a project cost reconciliation; evidence of payment to all associated vendors including architects, contractors and the like, or invoices to be paid to vendors, for materials and services. In-kind services do not qualify as match or as approved project costs.
- Reimbursement will occur after:
 - Project completion and final approval by DevelopSpringfield.
 - Submission of project cost inspection and reconciliation, paid invoices, two-sided copies of cancelled checks. In the event that funds are requested for release to a vendor, evidence of work completion is required and the funds may, at DevelopSpringfield's discretion, be released to both parties (Applicant and Vendor) or to the Vendor on behalf of the applicant.
 - Representative photos must be obtained by the Program Administrator clearly indicating the work results.

The CSIP is a discretionary program and all awards are made at the sole discretion of the DevelopSpringfield Board of Directors.

Submission of all materials to:
Jay Minkarah, CSIP Program Administrator
President & CEO
DevelopSpringfield
1182 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Phone: (413) 209-8808
Fax: (413) 209-8808
jminkarah@developspringfield.com

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD RESOURCES

- For zoning and other questions, please contact the City of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development at (413)787-6020.
- For building permits or questions about code enforcement actions, please contact the Department of Code Enforcement/Building Division at (413)787-6031.
- For status of fees, fines, or delinquent taxes please contact the Collector's Office at (413)736-3111.