

**CITY OF OCALA – COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
EAST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA
COMMERCIAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

One of the statutory functions of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is to undertake activities that facilitate the redevelopment and improvement of properties. Incentive programs aimed at encouraging private investment into properties have proven to be a successful activity to carry out this redevelopment function. In an effort to encourage private investment into commercial properties, the Ocala CRA has created Commercial Property Improvement Grant programs for the four CRA subareas. The program addresses key statutorily defined blight conditions that currently exist in the CRA including falling lease rates, vacant or underutilized commercial space, obsolete or substandard interior spaces, inadequate life safety and/or accessibility provisions, and deteriorating or inappropriate facades.

Additionally, the appearance and use of buildings and structures is the basis of the public's overall impression of Ocala as it plays an important role in marketing Ocala as a special place. Improving the physical appearance and use of buildings will promote the attraction and retention of business operations and promote economic growth.

There are four subareas of the Ocala Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

- Downtown North Magnolia West Ocala East Ocala

Each subarea has a grant program. All grant programs follow the same general process and requirements. Each program has a separate budget and a slightly different framework, in terms of grant amounts and eligibility requirements.

Only work begun after approval by the Ocala CRA (CRA) will be eligible for a grant. Work in progress or performed before approval will not be eligible.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Step 1: Eligible Grant Areas: To find out if your property is within a CRA grant area, click here:

<https://ocalafl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=09c9938cf61a41398aee0a4a5431ac7a>

A color-coded map of the CRA subareas will open-up. Enter your address or parcel ID# to see if the property is within a CRA grant eligible area.

Step 2: Once you know what CRA grant area your property is in, refer to the Grant Program Summary sheet of that subarea at the end of this document to learn about:

- Grant Amounts;
- Improvements eligible for a grant;
- Other eligibility requirements of that program.

Step 3: Call or email CRA staff with questions: Gus Gianikas, CRA Manager, (352) 629-8311. ggianikas@ocalafl.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Eligibility and General Requirements	3
II.	Application Materials	5
III.	Application Submittal and Review Process	5
IV.	Application Evaluation	6
V.	Reimbursement	7
	Application Form	8
	Scope of Work Checklist	10
	General Conditions	12
	Applicant & Owner Signature Page	13
	East Ocala CRA Grant Program Summary	17

I. Eligibility and General Requirements

- (a) Eligible Applicants - Applicants for the Program can be either the property owner or tenant. A tenant must provide a signed form from the property owner allowing the tenant to apply for the grant and make improvement to the property.
- (b) Ineligible Properties - The following types of property are **not eligible** without City Council approval:
 - 1. Tax delinquent property
 - 2. Property in litigation
 - 3. Property in condemnation or receivership
 - 4. Property or tenants with outstanding financial obligations to the City.
- (c) Eligible Areas - The building or property must be located within a grant area in one of the Ocala CRA four subareas and have the proper zoning. **See Grant Program Summary** sheet on page 13.
- (d) Ineligible business. See the Subarea Grant Summary Sheet at end of this document for the list of businesses excluded from the grant program. Places of worship and residential rental properties are not considered as businesses for the purpose of this grant.
- (e) Ineligible Work:
 - 1. Grants **cannot** be used to correct outstanding code violations in an active code enforcement case.
 - 2. **Except as noted in the attached Grant Program Summary** (pg. 13), routine maintenance procedures, such as painting or minor repairs to existing materials, will not, alone, be eligible for a grant, but may be a component of a larger project. (Routine maintenance is defined as minor work to a building or structure, for which a building permit is not required by law, where the purpose and effect of such work is to correct any deterioration or decay of or damage to a structure or any part thereof and to restore the structure or part thereof, as nearly as may be practicable, to its condition prior to the occurrence of such deterioration, decay or damage.)
- (f) Only project construction costs are eligible for the grant programs. Design and permitting costs are not eligible for the grant programs.
- (g) Owners with multiple properties can apply for a grant for each property.
- (h) All work done must be in accordance with the City of Ocala Code of Ordinances and all required permits and City inspections must be obtained.
- (i) Only work begun **after** approval by the Ocala CRA (CRA) will be eligible for a grant. Work in progress or performed before approval will not be eligible.
- (j) Any changes to the approved plan and work element will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the CRA in order to retain the grant. Staff will inspect work, following completion of project to confirm outcome as proposed.
- (k) Grants may be subject to cancellation if not completed or significant progress has not

been made by the project completion deadline. Requests for extensions will be considered **only if** made in writing and progress toward completion has been demonstrated.

- (l) All work must comply with the program guidelines and be approved by the CRA.
- (m) The contractor(s) and subcontractor(s) must be licensed to work in the City of Ocala. The City does not warrant or assume responsibility for any issues arising between the applicant and its contractor(s) or subcontractor(s).
- (n) Organizations that own property on which property taxes are not collected or that have not contributed to the CRA Tax Increment Financing Fund (TIFF) are eligible to apply for grants, except for the Downtown Development district Grant; however, properties on which property taxes are collected or have contributed to the TIFF will take priority over those that do not, when ranked for funding.
- (o) Applicants will agree that improvements made using these funds will stay in place for a minimum of five years. If improvements are replaced or removed within five years, the grant recipient must pay a pro-rata share of the grant proceeds invested in the project for the number of months remaining. For example: if \$15,000 is reimbursed and improvements are replaced or removed during month 33 of the 60 month period the recipient pays the City back \$6,750 (Calculated as follows: 60 months - 33 months = 27 months remaining; 27 months divided by 60 months = 45% which is the pro-rata percentage. Multiply the reimbursed amount by the pro-rata percentage to calculate the payback amount (\$15,000 x 45% = \$6,750)). Previous improvements funded by a CRA grant are not eligible for a new grant to alter the improvements within five (5) years of completion, unless the previous grant is paid back as specified above.
- (p) Owners or merchants who are in the contracting business and intend for their company to perform work on their own properties or businesses, must furnish at least 2 proposals other than their own for the work to be done.
- (q) Owners and merchants (as private individuals) may perform work on their own buildings, as provided by law (contact City Building Official for determination); however, they will not be reimbursed for their time while acting as contractor and/or installing material. Material cost and the labor of employees are reimbursable; however, documentation must be produced for the number of hours worked on the project by the employees, the rate of pay, the employee's social security numbers, etc. Any contract over \$2,000 is subjected to Federal Labor standards; therefore, the contractor's employees must be paid the prevailing wage rate.
- (r) The applicant may be required to obtain a building permit for certain types of construction work. Building permit fees are based upon the value of work. Applicants should call the Building Division at (352) 629-8421, if they are interested in receiving an estimate of those fees.
- (s) The American with Disabilities Act requires some handicap upgrades when a building permit is required. Please contact the Building Division about possible additional costs and include these in your submittal.

- (t) Any eligible property owners who intend to pursue State or Federal tax incentives, or energy rebates should contact the appropriate agency prior to beginning the application process. If a Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit is to be pursued, the project must meet all 10 standards of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. References to such intentions should be included in the grant application.

II. Application Materials

- (a) Application packages must include enough documentation to illustrate the visual impact of the project and its cost. Failure to provide required information may delay the review process or cause the application to be ineligible. The following items are required to be submitted:
 1. A completed application form.
 2. Proof of Ownership or Option to Buy/Leasehold Agreement for at least five years.
 3. Color photographs of the existing conditions.
 4. Accurate scaled drawings of the proposed improvements. Construction documents do not need to be submitted until project is approved by the CRA and submitted for permitting.
 5. Project Schedule
 6. Project budget, showing detailed estimates for all work items. Do not include any design or permitting costs in the project estimate.
 7. At least 2 competitive bid proposals from contractors (licensed within the City of Ocala). These proposals should provide a detailed list of the work to be completed, a detailed breakdown of the costs, and the project schedule.
 8. Manufacturer's literature and specifications for windows, doors, etc. Samples of materials may be included or may be requested during the review process.
 9. Any other documentation necessary to illustrate the visual impact of the proposed project.
 10. Provide proof of property or liability content insurance (as applicable)
 11. Demonstrate source of funding and ability to meet the financial obligations of the program. Applicant funding may include a bank loan, line of credit, equity, or any combination thereof. In addition, startup business applicants must also submit a copy of their business plan.

III. Application Submittal and Review Process

- (a) Applications must be submitted to the CRA Manager in the Growth Management Department, 201 SE Third Street, Ocala, FL 34471, for review and determination of eligibility of improvements. The property owner(s) as well as the applicant must sign the application agreeing to the General Conditions, set forth therein.
- (b) City Staff will review, document, and determine if the application meets all eligibility

requirements and is sufficiently complete to review. Staff will meet with applicant to review completed application and complete a walk-through of building interior.

- (c) Applications deemed complete will be reviewed by the Grant Review Committee and the CRA Advisory Committee to recommend if the project should receive a grant and if so, recommend the amount of the award. The Ocala CRA Board makes the final determination if a grant is approved. The determination is based on the evaluation criteria in Section IV – Application Evaluation.
- (d) The CRA will notify the applicant/property owner in writing of award approval. Work cannot begin until applicant has received a written notice from the CRA indicating the grant has been approved.
- (e) If Construction Permits are required, permit applications for work funded by a grant must be submitted to the City of Ocala Building Department no later than 60 days after receiving the grant approval. One 60-day extension may be granted upon a written request from the property owner.
- (f) Any deviation from the approved plan must be reviewed and approved by the CRA.
- (g) City staff will review progress during renovation process.
- (h) Upon completion of work, city staff will walk-through building to verify compliance with project application. Final inspection will take place concurrently by Building Department.

IV. Application Evaluation

After an application has been deemed to meet all eligibility requirements, the application will be evaluated and a grant may be awarded based on the following criteria.

- (a) Does proposed project include the priority work elements of the CRA subarea grant program?
- (b) What is the ratio of public to private investment?
- (c) If property has received a previous grant for improvements.
- (d) Will the grant result in an improvement that would not be made otherwise?
- (e) What is the number and type of jobs being created? For residential projects, number and type of units being created.
- (f) What will be the business hours of operation?

V. Reimbursement

- (a) Upon submission of complete documentation, reimbursement will be made to the applicant. Submissions shall include:
 - 1. invoices for all work performed, with details of work clearly expressed;
 - 2. copies of cancelled checks;
 - 3. paid receipts for all labor materials; and,
 - 4. lien waivers from all contractor(s) and sub-contractors.
- (b) Reimbursement shall be made according to the requirements of each grant program.
- (c) The City reserves the right to refuse reimbursement of expenditures in whole or in part for work that:
 - 1. Does not conform to the program guidelines.
 - 2. Does not conform to the proposal(s) submitted with the application and authorized by the CRA.
 - 3. Is not commensurate with the workmanship and costs customary in the industry.
 - 4. Is not completed within the established time frame (typically 6 to 12 months depending on the scope of the project). Since the CRA cannot reserve funds for projects indefinitely, projects may be subject to cancellation if not completed or if significant progress has not been made by the progress deadline. Requests for extensions will be considered only if made in writing and progress toward completion has been determined.
 - 5. Staff will inspect work to ensure that it complies with the approved plans. Any changes to the approved plan will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the CRA in order to retain the grant.
- (d) Reimbursement can be expected approximately **6 weeks** after all of the following documentation has been submitted:
 - 1. Copies of all paid invoices and cancelled checks for all of the work covered by the grant. These must equal at least the required matching amount plus the amount of the grant. Invoices must be marked paid, signed, and dated by the contractors.
 - 2. Copies of the signed contracts with contractors chosen to do the work.
 - 3. Copies of lien waivers from all general contractors, subcontractors, and major material suppliers.
 - 4. Photographs of the completed project.
 - 5. All necessary Federal Labor Standards materials from contractors.
 - 6. All final inspections and/or certificate of occupancy from City Building Official..
 - 7. Active Business Tax Certificate.
- (e) Projects that have received a grant prior to having secured tenants for rental spaces must have at least partial occupancy before a reimbursement will be processed.

**CITY OF OCALA EAST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA
COMMERCIAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANT
APPLICATION**

(Completed application and all required attachments must be submitted)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Business / Project Name: _____

Project Address: _____

Parcel Number: _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant's Name: _____

Name of person to receive all correspondence if different from applicant:

Applicant's Business Name (if applicable): _____

Type of business: _____

Applicant's Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone number: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____

Applicant is the _____ Property Owner _____ Business Owner/Tenant

How long has the business been at the current location? _____

If renter, when does your current lease expire? _____

PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (if different from applicant)

Property Owner's Name: _____

Property Owner's Business Name (if applicable): _____

Property Owner's Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone number: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

If necessary, attach additional sheets addressing the following

Describe the existing or proposed business. _____

Explain the purpose of and need for the proposed improvements. _____

Would the proposed improvements be made without the assistance of the grant program? If not, please explain. _____

Number and types of jobs being created. _____

What will be the business hours of operation? _____

For projects with residential component - number and types of units being created. _____

PROJECT COSTS & SCHEDULE

Estimated cost of project based on attached submitted low bid(s). _____

Required -- Attach itemized bid sheets.

How much funding assistance are you requesting? _____

Anticipated start date: _____ Anticipated completion date: _____

SCOPE OF WORK CHECKLIST (Check all that apply)

East Ocala CRA

- Vacant building being converted to active use;
- New signs following design guidelines; including removal of existing inappropriate signs
- New landscape area – reimbursement to be made 90 days after installation
- Exterior painting – colors must be approved by Committee
- Awnings
- Windows, doors
- Parking lot pavement sealing & striping
- Exterior security & safety lighting

GENERAL CONDITIONS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant shall be solely responsible for all safety conditions and compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, ordinances, and other applicable regulations.

It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant will not seek to hold the City of Ocala, the Grant Review Committee (Committee) and/or its agents, employees, board members, officers and/or directors liable for any property damage, personal injury, or other loss relating in any way to the Program.

It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant will hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, employees and attorneys for all costs incurred in additional investigation or study of, or for supplementing, redrafting, revising, or amending any document (such as an Environmental Impact Report, specific plan, or general plan amendment) if made necessary by said proceeding and if the applicant desires to pursue such approvals and/or clearances, after initiation of the proceeding, which are conditioned on the approval of these documents.

The applicant authorizes the City of Ocala to promote any approved project including but not limited to displaying a sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in City of Ocala materials and press releases.

If the applicant fails to perform the work approved by the Committee, the City reserves the right to cancel the grant. The applicant also understands that any work started/completed before the application is approved by the Committee is done at their own risk, and that such work will jeopardize their grant award.

Completion of this application by the applicant DOES NOT guarantee that grant monies will be awarded to the applicant.

Applicant

I, _____, business owner/tenant of the building at _____, have read and understand the terms and conditions of the Program and agree to the general conditions and terms outlined in the application process and guidelines of the Program.

Signature _____ Date _____

Owner Approval for Tenant Applicant

I, _____, owner of the building at _____, have read and understand the terms and conditions of the Program and agree to the general conditions and terms outlined in the application process and guidelines of the Program. I give my consent to the applicant to move forward with improvements on the building as outlined in the Scope of Work section of this application.

Signature _____ Date _____

Property Information – For staff use only

- Is the property assessed Marion County property taxes? Y / N
- Are property taxes paid up to date? Y / N
- Is the property in condemnation or receivership? Y / N
- Is there an active City code enforcement case on the property? Y / N
- Is the building on the National Register of Historic Places Y / N

OCALA CRA – EAST OCALA SUBAREA
COMMERICAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Framework November 2019

General	Following are eligibility requirements and priorities. Filing an application and meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee grant funding.
Eligible Area	Designated Gateway Corridors (Major Roadways) in East Ocala Redevelopment Area as shown on attached map. The potentially eligible properties are color coded on the attached map.
Eligible Applicant	Property Owner, or business owner with property owner’s approval
Eligible Properties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taxable ad valorem properties – property taxes must be paid up to date 2. Property must be used for a business, i.e., retail, office, manufacturing 3. If property is occupied, the business must have active current Business Tax Receipt 4. Property must be in one of the following zoning districts - B–Business; O-Office; RO – Residential Office, FBC – Form Based Code, SC-Shopping Center, M-Manufacturing. 5. Existing commercial buildings only; not for new construction
Ineligible Properties	<p>Tax delinquent property; property in litigation; property in condemnation or receivership; property or tenants with outstanding financial obligations to City require City Council approval.</p> <p>Ineligible Businesses – See list on page 2.</p>
Priority Building Status	Vacant buildings or spaces being converted to active use are priority over occupied buildings or spaces.
Eligible & Priority work	<p>Only work begun <u>after</u> approval by the CRA Agency Board will be eligible for a grant. Work in progress or performed before approval will not be eligible.</p> <p><u>Work elements in order of priority are:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replacement of pole signs with monument signs following Sign Design Guidelines. (See pages 3-5) 2. Windows, doors, awnings and façade enhancements 3. Exterior security & safety lighting 4. Exterior painting – colors must be approved by Committee 5. New wall sign (must meet sign code) 6. New landscaping areas – reimbursement to be made 90 days after installation. Irrigation must be available. 7. Parking lot pavement resurfacing or resealing and restriping
Ineligible work	Grant cannot be used to correct outstanding code violations in an active code enforcement case. Reroofing.
Budget	FY 20 Budget = \$65,000.
Maximum Grant	\$10,000

Required Match	1:1; City (50%) – Applicant (50%); Priority will be given to projects that provide higher level of private investment in relation to CRA investment
----------------	---

Ineligible Businesses

The following business do not fit the vision for the West Ocala CRA and Community Plan and as such are **not eligible** for the grant.

- Adult Oriented Businesses
- Tattoo Parlors / Shops
- Bail / Bonds
- Check Cashing Service
- Pawn Shops
- Bars; bars as part of restaurant are permissible but restaurant must be primary business
- Electronic or Vapor Cigarette Store

SCHEDULE – Grant applications are processed on a first-come, first serve basis as long as budget funding is available. The East Ocala CRA Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the CRA Board on grant applications. The process typically takes 6 - 8 weeks. The schedule for application deadlines and Advisory Committee meetings is listed below.

Advisory Committee Meeting	Application Deadline
December 18	November 29
February 26	February 7
April 22	April 3
June 24	June 5
August 26	August 7

SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR EAST OCALA COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Monument sign

Monument sign is a sign in which the base of the vertical structural supports are concealed within an enclosed base.

1. The enclosed base shall be a planter structure between two and three feet in height above the ground.
2. The length of the planter structure base shall be equal to at least the length of the face of the sign or a minimum length of three feet.
3. The width of planter structure base shall be equal to at least the horizontal width of the sign surface or at least two feet.
4. The sign shall be of solid material with no air space between individual sign components nor between the base of the sign and the top of the planter base.
5. The planter base shall be of brick or compatible material matching the finish of the primary structure.
6. Alternatively, in lieu of a planter, the sign may be located in a landscaped buffer provided low-growing shrubbery is planted to conceal the base of the sign.

Height, Area and Setbacks

1. Maximum height of the monument sign shall be twenty feet (20') measured from the average grade elevation to the top of the sign.
2. Maximum monument sign copy area shall be as required by Sign Code Sec. 110-151. - Individual businesses or industrial.
3. Monument signs may not be located closer than five feet from the adjacent right-of-way and may not obstruct any sight triangles at intersections or driveways.

Photographs of signs in Ocala illustrating the above will be presented at the meeting.

OCALA SIGN CODE

Sign Definitions

Freestanding sign means any sign with vertical supports placed upon or in the ground and architecturally and aesthetically integrated with the overall development. A freestanding sign shall include a ground or pole sign as defined in this section.

Ground sign means the total square footage of a sign where the bottom of the sign face either: 1) rests upon the ground; 2) extends above the ground with vertical supports a maximum of four feet; or 3) rests upon a base that is embellished to conceal all structural vertical supports. A monument sign is considered a ground sign.

Sec. 110-151. - Individual businesses or industrial uses.

The following are permitted signs for individual businesses or industrial uses:

- (1) Maximum sign area for primary street frontage. The maximum total business sign area for the primary street frontage shall be as follows:
 - a. B-2, B-2A, B-3, B-3A, B-3B, B-3C, B-4, B-5, M-1, M-2 and M-3 zones: 100 square feet, or two square feet for each property front foot, whichever is greater.
 - b. Reserved.
- (2) Permitted types of signs. The maximum total business sign area for signs located in B-2, B-2A, B-4, B-5, M-1, M-2 and M-3 zones shall be as follows:
 - a. A maximum of two sign structures for each frontage totaling up to 50 percent of total business sign area, with no more than 150 square feet of sign area per structure.
 - b. Either one roof sign or one projecting sign of no more than 25 percent of total business sign area.
 - c. Wall signs.
- (3) Height, setbacks and spacing. Height, setback and spacing requirements are as follows:
 - a. Setbacks and maximum height for freestanding signs in B-2, B-2A, B-4, B-5, M-1, M-2 and M-3 zones shall be as follows:
 1. The maximum height shall be 30 feet.
 2. Freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the public right-of-way.
 3. Freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of 25 feet from side lot lines or equidistant between side lot lines.

4. Freestanding sign structures on the same ownership parcel shall be a minimum of 150 feet apart.

b. Setbacks and maximum height for signs in B-3, B-3A, B-3B and B-3C zones shall be as follows, except that signage for properties in these zones with frontage on Pine Avenue from SR 40 to SR 200, or Silver Springs Boulevard between S.W. First and Pine, shall be regulated under subsection (3)a of this section. Setbacks in these zones are subject to review by the downtown development commission, which may allow waiver of certain setback requirements.

1. The maximum height of freestanding signs shall be seven feet.

2. Freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the public right-of-way.

3. Freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of ten feet from side lot lines.

4. Signs shall be permitted to extend over public sidewalks to a maximum of a point 2½ feet from a line at the back of the curb extended vertically, provided that the minimum clearance of 9½ feet above sidewalk grade is maintained. Signs on approved awnings may be allowed to a minimum clearance of 7½ feet above sidewalk grade with the approval of the building official.

East Ocala CRA Commercial Building Improvement Grant Program

