



Business & Property Improvement Grant

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DLI BACKGROUND:

Downtown Lansing Inc. (DLI) is dedicated to making Lansing a place where people want to be, by encouraging its businesses, neighborhoods, and stakeholders to build a dynamic culture known for its vibrancy, sustainable growth, and business friendly environment.

OVERVIEW

Downtown Lansing Inc. offers grants and assistance exclusive to downtown businesses. The Downtown Lansing Business & Property Improvement Grant Program supports existing businesses, as well as new businesses choosing to locate in Michigan's Downtown by reducing commercial vacancies, activating storefronts and encouraging private investment in Downtown Lansing.

Through strategic investments in tenant buildouts, code compliance improvements, business modernization, accessibility upgrades, and storefront enhancements, the program seeks to strengthen Michigan's Downtown as an attractive, resilient, and welcoming destination.

Preference may be given to projects that:

- Advance Downtown Lansing's Comprehensive Market Analysis (CMA) priorities,
- Include a property that has been vacant for 5 or more years.
- Involve the rehabilitation of historic or architecturally significant buildings.
- Activate street-level spaces
- Fill vacant storefronts
- Increase downtown amenities

A small project that meets a critical downtown need may score higher than a larger project with limited public benefit.

The proposed project should meet at least 1 of the following program goals:

- Activate or rehab a vacant storefront or underutilized commercial space.
- Support the retention, expansion, or relocation of an existing downtown business.
- Open a new business that fills a market need identified by Downtown Lansing's Comprehensive Market Analysis (CMA)
- Improve the customer experience through physical interior and/or exterior improvements to a commercial space.
- Address building code, accessibility, or operational modernization needs.
- Enhance the appearance and functionality of a building or tenant space.
- Support uses that increase foot traffic, street activity, and economic vitality within Downtown Lansing.



APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Confirm that the applicant/business proposed use is permissible.
2. Confirm the tenant space is under 15,000 sq. feet.
3. Prospective applicant submits their completed application package to DLI which consists of an introductory letter providing an overview of the project, DLI Program Application, and supplementary documents including project estimates and signed lease (if applicable). Documents may be submitted in person, via US mail or email to kate@downtownlansing.org
4. If there are questions, DLI will schedule a meeting with the applicant to review the program and discuss the improvement plans.
5. DLI will submit the application package and all required paperwork to the Business & Property Improvement Grant Review Committee consisting of DLI staff, DLI Board representatives, commercial real estate professionals, lending and financing representatives, and other community development professionals as appointed by DLI. The Grant Review Committee shall consist of no fewer than three voting members.
6. Upon approval, DLI will send a Business & Property Improvement Grant Awardee Letter (known from here on out as the Awardee Letter), subject to compliance with DLI program requirements, and all other required approvals. The Awardee Letter serves as a notice to proceed with the interior and/or Business & Property Improvement Grant Program. **Any work or expenditures made before receipt of this letter will be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.**
7. Construction or related work shall commence within 180 days of the Awardee Letter unless an extension is approved in writing by DLI. All work must be completed within 1 year of the date listed in the Awardee Letter. (subject to weather and other unavoidable events).
8. Once construction has been completed all necessary City, DLI and Landlord (if applicable) approvals must be obtained and documentation (copies of proof of payment(s) provided showing the applicant's share of cost has been provided. Upon receipt of these required documents, DLI will process a check for payment of the approved grant amount payable to the applicant. Please plan 30 days from submittal of required documents and approvals before grant funds are received.



ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Existing for-profit businesses located within District A of the Downtown Lansing Inc. district.
- New businesses seeking to locate within District A of the Downtown Lansing Inc. district.
- Commercial property owners undertaking improvements for an eligible business tenant.
- Tenants with written authorization from the property owner.

Applicants must:

- Be current on property taxes, rent, utilities, and municipal obligations. Property must be free of all mechanic liens at time of application.
- Obtain all required permits and approvals.
- Demonstrate the financial ability to complete the project.
- Include copies of estimates for materials/work to be included.
- Comply with any reasonable request from DLI during the application or administrative phases of the project.

Incomplete applications **WILL NOT** be accepted. Applicants completing both eligible façade and interior improvements may receive a combined award of up to \$100,000, subject to funding availability.

TRANSFORMATIONAL EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:

Building exterior improvements must be located on the exterior of the building. A 50% matching grant will be awarded, up to a \$50,000 maximum award.

Eligible Transformational Façade Improvements may include:

- Structural Improvements to façade
- Brick/stone/masonry repair
- Door/window/storefront system/trim replacement or repair
- Removal/replacement of inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes or materials
- Exterior lighting on façade (not including lighting in your signage).
- Signage, awnings, doors (Businesses awarded a sign grant over the past 5 years are not eligible for additional sign and/or awning funding)
- Exterior painting and stucco
- In order to cultivate a more accessible downtown experience for all users, improvements to create barrier free and accessible entryways will be considered as part of the overall façade improvement if there is an aesthetic component to the project as well.

The grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis and offer no upfront funding.

Grant funds will be awarded at half the total improvement costs needed, not exceeding



\$50,000. For example: If the total project cost is \$40,000, \$20,000 will be the grant award. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 reimbursement after project completion. Or, if the total project cost is \$250,000, a maximum of \$50,000 will be the grant award. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$50,000 **reimbursement after project completion**. DLI may, at its discretion, process reimbursement requests in phases as project milestones are completed, subject to available funding and program requirements.

INTERIOR TENANT IMPROVEMENTS:

Provides a small business owner project coordination and/or financial assistance for undertaking the rehabilitation and renovation of vacant or underutilized commercial properties located in the downtown district. A 50% matching grant will be awarded, up to a \$50,000 maximum award.

Eligible Interior Tenant Improvement costs include:

- Capital costs, including the costs incurred or estimated to be incurred for the construction of public works or improvements, and fixtures; the renovation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, remodeling, repair, demolition, alteration, or expansion of existing buildings, structures, and fixtures; the acquisition of equipment;
- Professional service costs, including those costs incurred with permits, the design phase, etc.
- Fire life/safety upgrades to satisfy current fire code regulations related to:
 - Fire sprinkler systems
 - Fire alarm systems
 - Fire panels
 - Smoke control systems
 - Kitchen hood systems
- Building & Safety upgrades to satisfy current building code regulations related to:
 - Egress upgrades, including panic hardware, illumination and exit signage
 - Ingress upgrades, including stairs, elevators, interior ADA ramps
 - Mechanical, plumbing and electrical upgrades
 - Energy code upgrades
 - Asbestos or similar abatement
- Accessibility upgrades to satisfy current code regulations related to:
 - Restroom remodel for ADA compliance
 - Egress upgrades including ramping, panic hardware, door swings
 - Ingress upgrades including stairs, elevators, interior ADA ramps
 - Floor leveling/resurfacing to correct cracks or other obstructions



The grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis and offer no upfront funding. Grant funds will be awarded at half the total improvement costs needed, not exceeding \$50,000. For example: If the total project cost is \$40,000, \$20,000 will be the grant award. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 **reimbursement after project completion.** Or, if the total project cost is \$250,000, a maximum of \$50,000 will be the grant award.

The grant recipient may be eligible to receive up to \$100,000 reimbursement after project completion only if the project includes **both** a Transformational Exterior AND Interior Improvement. DLI may, at its discretion, process reimbursement requests in phases as project milestones are completed, subject to available funding and program requirements.

Tenant/Property Owner Commitment: In order to be considered eligible, the business, whether property owner or tenant of the project, must demonstrate that they are:

- Committed to and has the ability to maintain or expand its business presence at the project location.
- Committed to maintain all project improvements for the useful life of the improvements.
- The project possesses positive economic attributes that will provide and increase economic activity around the surrounding neighborhood.

INELIGIBLE BUSINESSES/PROPERTIES

The following properties and businesses are ineligible from participation in the Interior & Exterior Improvement Program:

- a. Construction of a new building.
- b. Single-family properties.
- c. Residential portions of a larger mixed-use development.
- d. Properties or projects which do not satisfy all of the program's eligibility requirements.
- e. Any cannabis related business.
- f. Other business types: including:
 - Check cashing/payday advance
 - Adult stores/services
 - Packaged Liquor retailer
 - Store that sells firearms
 - Marijuana or cannabis operations of any kind
 - Internet based business
 - Check cashing
 - Pawnbroker & auto pawn



DEADLINE TO APPLY:

This grant funding is available on an ongoing basis until all budgeted funds are expended.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Approval for grant applications shall be based on the following:

1. Submittal of a completed Tenant Improvement Grant application form and the issuance of the projects.
2. Tenant or Landlord must have a certificate of occupancy permit by the City of Lansing.
3. Copy of landlord approval (if applicable)
4. DLI and/or the review committee reserves the right to reject submitted applications for any reason and all determinations are final and not subject to appeal.
5. DLI and/or the review committee reserve the right to waive any errors or irregularities in any application submission.
6. Any tenant's or landlord's project that is not approved will be unable to apply for this or other DLI grants for 12 months.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES AND TERMS

- The final selection of a contractor is the sole responsibility of the participating business. As such, the agency shall offer no warranty on work performed. The applicant should obtain any desired warranty information from the contractor in writing.
- If Applicant closes their business before the end of the 24-month following receipt of grant funds, does not complete the project as approved, or does not fulfill landlord requirements (ex: mortgage/rent payments) the Applicant will be responsible for paying back the Tenant Improvement Grant funds and ineligible to receive any other funds from DLI until the grant funds are paid back to DLI.
- Applicants agree that they shall indemnify and hold harmless DLI and its partners, directors, agents, employees, and any other affiliate against any losses, claims, damages, or liabilities to any person or entity in connection with any matter referred to in this application, including, without limitation, the performance of the services that are the subject of this agreement.
- Applicants agree that any award under this program is awarded at the sole discretion of DLI.

To submit your application email kate@downtownlansing.org. Applications must include all required attachments.

*****Please note, submission of this application does not guarantee you will receive a grant or move forward to the full application process. If you have any questions or issues with the application, please contact Downtown Lansing Inc. at 517-485-3322 or email kate@downtownlansing.org***



Downtown Lansing Inc.
Tenant Improvement Program
Application Form

Project Name

Address:

Property Owner

of Employees:

Applicant

Sq. Footage of project space

Applicant Email

Is the property currently vacant?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, how long has the space been vacant?

Phone

Proposed Business Use

Does this project include one of priority business as outlined in Downtown CMA? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Project Summary & Requested Funding Amount: Please describe:

If applying as a new business/tenant, please include a description of your business including:

- The products or services to be offered.
- Target customer base.
- Hours of operation.
- How the business will contribute to activity in Downtown Lansing.
- How the proposed use aligns with Downtown Lansing's business recruitment priorities.



Based upon the above summary and data, it has been determined that the project:	
Qualifies for Project Coordination (Y/N):	
Qualifies for Funds Reimbursement (Y/N):	
Signature of Staff	Date:
DLI Funds Reimbursement Disclaimer	
This is a reimbursement grant. For projects qualifying for reimbursement, the Applicant acknowledges that the Tenant Improvement Program will only pay for qualifying expenditures as outlined in the Downtown Lansing Tenant Improvement Program description. This Form acknowledges that the Project as currently proposed meets the minimum qualifications in order to apply for the Funds Reimbursement Application; however, it does NOT ensure approval of the Application. This form also acknowledges that should the business close, not complete the Project as approved, or be found to have been dishonest regarding work completed, the Applicant will be responsible for reimbursing the full Project costs to DLI.	
Signature of Applicant:	Date:
Applicant Name/Responsible Party:	

SAMPLE SCORING CRITERIA

Please note: A small project meeting a critical downtown need may score higher than a larger project with limited public benefit.

Section 1: Eligibility Screening (Pass/Fail)		
Applications must meet all eligibility requirements before advancing to scoring.		
Eligibility Requirement	Yes	No
Property/business located within eligible Downtown Lansing district	☐	☐
Applicant is property owner or authorized tenant	☐	☐
Application is complete and signed	☐	☐
Required estimates/quotes submitted	☐	☐
Proposed expenses are eligible under program guidelines	☐	☐
Applicant is current on local taxes, assessments, and code compliance requirements	☐	☐
Project has not commenced prior to grant approval (unless otherwise permitted)	☐	☐
Funding request does not exceed program limits	☐	☐

Evaluation Criteria	Max Points Available
Alignment with DLI/CMA Priorities and Business Needs	20
Activation of Vacant or Underutilized Space	20



Contribution to Street-Level Activity & Pedestrian Experience	15
Overall Impact on Downtown District	15
Building Condition & Code Compliance Improvements	10
Financial Readiness & Project Feasibility	10
Application Quality & Completeness	5
Historic Preservation & Adaptive Reuse	5
Total Score	100

