

## Category 1: Design or Façade Improvement Grant

### Business Success Grant Overview

The **Business Success Grant Program** at El Cajon CDC provides grants of up to **\$30,000** in three, separate funding categories to qualifying current and prospective Downtown El Cajon property and business owners. Each grant funding category has a separate grant application. This is the grant overview for Category 1.

The Three Business Success Grant Categories:

- 1) **Design or Façade Improvement Grant**
- 2) Business Recruitment/Relocation Grant
- 3) Business Expansion Grant

Grants are offered on a reimbursement basis. The program's goal is to provide incentives to business and property owners to improve the aesthetics of Downtown El Cajon and stimulate its economy. For any questions, please call Edith Saldivar, Economic Development Coordinator, at (619) 401-8858, or contact her via email: [Edith@downtownelcajon.com](mailto:Edith@downtownelcajon.com).

**Design or Façade Improvement Grants:** Property and business owners can receive assistance to improve or restore the exterior of a building or provide additional community or security enhancements.

- **Eligible Expenses:** Improvements to or restoration of building exteriors; professional services such as design, engineering, architecture; labor paid at prevailing wage; new doors and windows; security enhancements; landscape; lighting; signage; ADA compliant improvements, and paint color selection that affect only the owner's property.
- **Ineligible Expenses:** Building permits and routine property maintenance. However, applicants should include these expenses in their Line-Item Project Budget (see page 3).
- **Note on Exterior Improvements:** All exterior improvements, including new business signage, in Downtown El Cajon must first receive **Design Review Commission (DRC)** approval. The DRC Approval Letter is a key requirement of the grant submittal package for applicants seeking funding for exterior improvements. **The DRC approval process is separate and independent from the grant application process and may sometimes take a few months to complete.** For information on the DRC process and a referral list of architects and designers contact Edith Saldivar, Economic Development Coordinator, at (619) 401-8858, or contact her via email: [Edith@downtownelcajon.com](mailto:Edith@downtownelcajon.com).
- **Note on Public Right-Of-Way Improvements:** Any enhancements to be made that are not on the owner's property but are in the public right-of-way, must first be approved by the City of El Cajon Public Works Department. For information call (619) 441-1653 or visit at 200 Civic Center Way (4<sup>th</sup> Floor).

#### Eligibility Requirements:

- 1) Applicant must be a property and/or business owner in the Property Based Improvement District (PBID) in good standing with the El Cajon CDC PBID and with the City of El Cajon.
- 2) Applicant must own or lease a building in Downtown El Cajon PBID at the time of applying. A copy of the grant deed or lease is required as part of the complete application submittal package.
- 3) If the applicant is a business owner, please note that any new business located within El Cajon city limits, or any existing business moving to a different location within the City, must first contact City of El Cajon Community Development Department staff at (619) 441-1741 to check the zoning of your new location.
- 4) Attendance at a **Mandatory Business Success Orientation is required prior to submitting application:**
  - **Applicants must register in advance.** To register, call Edith Saldivar, Economic Development Coordinator, (619) 401-8858. Walk-ins cannot be accommodated.
  - **Orientation location:** El Cajon CDC, 131 East Main Street, Suite 201, El Cajon, CA, 92020.
  - **Orientation dates:** Every Monday, year-round, except Holidays, from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

- **Who should attend:** the business or property owner(s); the person who will be preparing all materials; the architect or designer (if project requires exterior renovations); and the contractor (if the project requires construction and the contractor has been hired).
- **What should you bring:** notepad and pen, brief project description, estimated costs, and a smile.
- **Meeting agenda:** program overview, grant requirements, DRC process, forms, timeline, Q&A.

**When To Apply:** Grant applications for Category 1 are only accepted after successful completion of the Design Review Commission approval process. Grant applications are accepted year-round on an on-going basis as funding is available. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early in the El Cajon CDC's fiscal year (July 1- June 30) since only a set amount of funds are available during each 12-month period. Once El Cajon CDC's current funding allotment is granted, applicants will need to wait for the following year to apply and will be considered if funding becomes available.

**Grant Limitations:** To ensure that a broad range of Downtown property and business owners have the opportunity to benefit from the Business Success Grants, a grant award may not exceed \$30,000. An applicant may only apply once per grant category in one Fiscal Year. Applicants may not apply twice for the same grant category without first obtaining special committee approval. The number of grants approved is limited by the amount of El Cajon CDC Business Success Grant funding available.

**Loans Available for Applicants:** El Cajon CDC reimburses the applicant once the project has been 100% completed and a complete reimbursement package has been submitted. To help applicants with the upfront project costs, El Cajon CDC has partnered with CDC Small Business Finance. Applicants are eligible for a specialized loan program to help with the projects cost; they can borrow up to \$200,000 at a competitive, fixed rate. For information about the loan program contact Susan Lamping at (619) 243-8639 or [slamping@cdcloans.com](mailto:slamping@cdcloans.com).

**Multi-Step Grant Application Process:** Applying for a grant is a multi-step process that can take **several months** to complete, including required attendance at a Mandatory Business Success Orientation Meeting; creating a line-item project budget; obtaining bids; submitting necessary documentation; and securing Design Review Commission approval.

**Selection Process:** Upon receipt of the complete grant submittal package, the El Cajon CDC will review the request and supporting documents for compliance with mandatory project criteria. The criteria include the scope and quality of the project, sustainability of the economic activity expected as well as the project's overall contribution to the Property Based Improvement District. Priority points are awarded to those projects that best meet or exceed the design consideration and additional considerations listed on the grant application.

**Within 30 days of submitting** a complete grant submittal package, the applicant will receive notification about the grant approval, denial, or request for more information by the committee. When the application is approved, the applicant will receive a Grant Award Letter and will meet El Cajon CDC Economic Development Coordinator to 1) sign a Memorandum of Agreement accepting the scope and terms of the grant, 2) fill out an IRS W-9 Form for El Cajon CDC records and 3) understand the reimbursement forms and grant requirements.

**Grant Reimbursement Process:** A complete reimbursement package including all required supplemental and supportive materials is **due within 12 months from the date of grant approval**. These materials will not be returned. Submittal containing fraudulent information will result in an automatic cancellation of the entire grant award and end of relationship with El Cajon CDC staff.

**Payment will be made within 30 days of receipt** of the complete reimbursement package. No funds will be awarded without the necessary documentation. Grant funding is from the City of El Cajon's Redevelopment Agency and administered by the El Cajon CDC. Staff will review the documents and submit to the Redevelopment Agency for final approval. The last step of the reimbursement process is a walk through to make sure all work was completed as agreed upon.

### What Next?

Attend a Mandatory Business Success Grant Orientation to begin the first step of the **Grant Process Confirmation Checklist** and obtain a copy of the **Business Success Grant Application** and corresponding worksheets. To register, call Edith Saldivar, Economic Development Coordinator, (619) 401-8858. Walk-ins cannot be accommodated.