

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES
WESTERN AVENUE COMMERCIAL STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GUIDELINES (FY 2024-25)

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes offers a Commercial Storefront Improvement Program (the Program) that provides up to a 50% matching grant to qualified businesses and property owners (the Program Grantee) along the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor for the completion of storefront improvements. This document contains information regarding grant funding, eligibility, evaluation criteria, and other program guidelines. Please contact the Community Development Department at WesternStorefrontProgram@rpvca.gov with any questions.

I. GRANT FUNDS

A. Funding Available

The Program provides matching grants to eligible applicants located within the Program Area (see Section II.A). The Program match requirement is set at a maximum of 50% of eligible costs. However, the City reserves the right to flex the match requirement on a case-by-case basis. Three tiers of grant funding are available to applicants:

Tier 1: To be used for non-architectural elements such as paint, signage, and awnings. The Program reimburses 50% of the Program Grantee's cost up to a maximum grant amount of \$5,000.

Tier 2: May be used for all Tier 1 type improvements as well as additional significant storefront improvements including, but not limited to, structural upgrades, storefront tile or stone accents, complete window replacement, or upgrading entryways for ADA compliance. See Section II.C for a complete list of eligible improvements. The Program reimburses 50% of the Program Grantee's costs up to a maximum grant amount of \$10,000.

Tier 3: Multiple tenant commercial buildings, consisting of three or more tenants, are eligible for the Program under Tier 3. Grant funds may be used for Tier 1 or Tier 2 type improvements. The Program reimburses 50% of the Program Grantee's costs up to a maximum grant amount of \$20,000.

B. Requests for Proposals

The FY 2024-2025 Program round will be open for applications **October 15, 2024**. The submission deadline is **December 1, 2024**.

	Maximum Grant Amount	Match Required	Total Improvement Cost
Tier 1: Mini Grants	\$5,000	50%	\$10,000 or greater
Tier 2: Significant Storefront Improvements	\$10,000	50%	\$20,000 or greater
Tier 3: Multiple Tenant Commercial	\$20,000	50%	\$40,000 or greater

The grant amount has a ceiling as noted in the chart above. Applicants may request less than the maximum amount of the grant for any level or contribute more than 50% of the improvement costs. Applicants must wait to submit their applications until the application round is opened. Once the round is closed, no further applications will be accepted.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Program Area

Properties eligible for the Program must be located in the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor, including properties zoned for commercial use located within the City of Rancho Palos Verdes along Western Avenue between Westmont Drive (on the north end) and the southerly City boundary just south of Summerland Street (on the south end).

Please refer to the attached Program Area Map for Program boundaries.

B. Business Type

Applicants of the Program must be commercial businesses located within the Program Area. Franchises and chain retailers are eligible under the Program.

C. Improvements

Improvements assisted by the Program should enhance or restore the physical condition or appearance of the building. Proposed improvements must be visible from the street. Types of improvements include but are not limited to:

- Exterior paint
- Removal of old signs, awnings, and other exterior clutter
- Repair or replacement of exterior siding, stucco, or other exterior finishes
- Installation of new entry doors that meet ADA accessibility requirements
- Repair and replacement of windows
- Installation of awnings
- Installation of signs
- Installation of exterior lighting
- Installation of permanent landscaping
- Entire storefront re-facing
- Remediation of city and state code violations
- Construction of outdoor dining and gathering spaces

Improvements not listed above but that contribute to the overall upgrade to a storefront may be considered for grant funding on a case-by-case basis.

Up to \$1000 of the requested grant funds may be used for architectural and design services.

Improvements must comply with:

- All local, state and federal laws and regulations
- Design Review Requirements

D. Applicants

Applicants may be either an owner of, or tenant within, a proposed project. Both the owner and the tenant may apply to the Program if improvements are to different areas of the façade. If the applicant is a tenant, the property owner must also sign the Commercial Storefront Improvement Grant Application.

E. Maintenance Requirements

Approved applications will require that the applicant enter into a Grant Agreement with the City of Rancho Palos Verdes for a term not to exceed 3 years (sample Grant Agreement is attached). The Grant Agreement details the terms and conditions associated with the Program, as well as required future maintenance obligations. Improvements funded through the Program must be maintained for a minimum of 3 years (unless they are tenant-specific, in which a change in tenancy requires a change in the improvements, e.g. signs). If the improvements

are not maintained, the City may consider this a breach of contract and exercise the option to require the grant funds be returned to the City. The City may also require grant funds be returned if within the 3-year term the property or business is sold or transferred.

F. Improvements Ineligible for grants:

- Construction of or improvements to new buildings
- Chain-link fencing with or without slats
- Already completed projects or improvements
- Residential property improvements
- Assembly use facility improvements (e.g., theaters, community centers, churches)
- Improvements by other governmental entities

III. APPLICATION PROCESS

See the Program Application for a step-by-step summary of the application process, and a detailed checklist of required materials. Program Applications are available at the City of Rancho Palos Verdes Community Development Department, 30940 Hawthorne Boulevard, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275 or online at _____.

Prior to formally submitting an application, applicants are encouraged to meet with Community Development Department staff to discuss their proposed project.

IV. REVIEW PROCESS

A. Storefront Improvement Program Committee Review

A committee consisting of City staff from the Community Development Department and the City Manager's office (the Committee) will review applications. The Committee will: 1) approve; 2) disapprove; or 3) approve with conditions. If approved or approved with conditions, the Committee will also decide the amount of Program Grant for the Project. If approved with conditions, the Committee may request that the applicant make specific changes to the proposed improvements, or that the Applicant address pre-existing conditions prior to grant approval. All Grant Agreements will be forwarded to the City Council for review and consideration of final approval.

B. Evaluation Criteria

Program Applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria listed below. Proposed improvements that best meet these criteria will be most competitive for grant funding.

- Project's contribution to the vitality of the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor
- Amount of street frontage improved
- Total contribution from the Program Grantee

- Prominence of the improved property within the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor
- Design elements
- Property owner participation
- Impact on City fiscal resources
- Current condition of business/property
- Previous grant award history

V. NOTIFICATION AND NEXT STEPS

After Committee review is completed, Program applicants will be notified via email (if available) and postal mail about the Committee's decision. As noted, the Committee may:

- Approve, including the amount.
- Disapprove.
- Approve with conditions, including the amount. If approved with conditions, the Committee may request that the Applicant make specific changes to the proposed improvements, or that the Applicant address pre-existing conditions prior to grant approval.

A. Approved Scope of Work

When a Committee review results in changes to the scope of work submitted with the application, an updated and approved Scope of Work (SOW) will be provided to the Program Grantee for review and signature. The signed approved SOW will be attached to and made a permanent part of the Application.

The Program Grantee must complete the Project in substantial conformance with the approved application and SOW. Any changes made after the Grant is awarded must be reviewed and approved by the Committee (e.g., changes to a paint or awning color, sign or architectural design, material choices, etc.).

B. Required Forms

Upon Grant award, the Program Grantee will be required to complete the following forms:

- **Grant Agreement** which details the Terms and Conditions associated with the grant.

These forms must be returned to City staff within 3 weeks of the date the award is granted.

C. City Council Approval

All Grant Agreements require City Council consideration and approval.

D. Permits and Design Review

All necessary planning, building, and other permits must be secured before construction is initiated. Permits can be obtained from the City of Rancho Palos Verdes Community Development Department, located at City Hall.

E. Deadline to Complete Work

- For Tier One grants, improvements must be completed within **three months** of execution of the Grant Agreement. A one-time extension of 30 days may be granted by the Director of Community Development for good cause.
- For Tier Two and Three grants, all work must be complete within **six months** of execution of the Grant Agreement. A one-time extension of 60 days may be granted by the Director of Community Development for good cause.

F. Reimbursement

After the proposed improvements are completed, the Program Grantee must submit the following to the Community Development Department to receive reimbursement:

- Owner's sworn statement stating that proposed improvements have been completed
- Proof that the project has passed final inspection by the City's Department of Community Development
- Contractor's sworn statement showing the full cost of the work and each separate component amount due to the contractor and each and every subcontractor involved in furnishing labor, materials, or equipment in the work
- Proof of payment of the contract cost pursuant to the contractor's statement and final lien waivers from all contractors and subcontractors
- Before and after photographs of the improvements.

If applicable, the Program Grantee shall also submit to the City a copy of the architect's statement of fees for professional services for preparation of plans and specifications.

All reimbursements will be made to the Program Grantee only. No reimbursement will be administered to a contractor or vendor.

All proposed improvements are subject to City inspection. Grants are processed in the normal City accounts payable cycle of net 60 days. The Program Grantee must have all City permits and fee obligations paid, and all permits finalized, prior to reimbursement with Program grant funds.

VI. GENERAL

- Contracts for improvements shall be between the Program Grantee and their chosen contractor.
- The availability of Program funds is subject to funding approval by the City Council each fiscal year.