



# DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

The Joliet City Center Partnership seeks to promote a healthy and expanding business climate in the Downtown Core Area. Utilizing revenues from an economic development special service area (SSA), an incentive grant program has been developed to stimulate private investment and to provide a tool for sustaining redevelopment within the Downtown Core. The goals of the grant programs are to:

- ❖ Encourage business/property owners to expand, rehab, renovate, beautify or upgrade buildings, interior space and exterior space
- ❖ Facilitate the occupancy of vacant space
- ❖ Attract and retain business activity
- ❖ Increase residential density within the Downtown Core
- ❖ Foster implementation of the priorities of the Joliet Downtown Plan, Joliet City Center Redevelopment Project Area Plan, Cass Street Redevelopment Plan, and Joliet Quality of Life Plan

Eligibility to apply for grant funding is based upon the following criteria:

- a. Property must be physically located within the Joliet City Center Special Service Area.
- b. Retail or commercial use must be present or intended for first floor. Exceptions may be considered depending upon market evidence.
- c. Property must generate or be intended to generate sales tax, food-beverage tax, or hotel-motel tax, and shall exclude not-for-profit uses.
- d. Property owner consent is required as part of application.

Four categories of funding incentives are available. They include a ***Small Business Assistance Grant, Façade Improvement Grant, Interior Improvement Grant, and Catalytic Improvement Grant***. Program details of each are identified in this brochure. All grants applications are subject to the availability of budgeted funds.

## **SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GRANT**

A Small Business Assistance Grant is intended to provide a start-up incentive in the form of a micro-grant. This grant provides funding directly to **new businesses** who are renting or leasing space within the Downtown Core Area. This grant is not intended for property owners. The use of funds are flexible in nature and are intended to expedite the opening of a business when there is a demonstrated need for assistance. The grant applicant shall identify specific improvements to be made that will modernize or alter the space in order to allow for a new use to occur. Examples of eligible micro-grants include, but are not limited to the following:

- New Signage
- Upgrade or replacement of interior fixtures (i.e. lighting, plumbing, etc.)
- Remodeling or modernization expenses (counter tops, doors, interior trim, ceiling tiles, etc.)
- Other improvements that will remain with the space

### **Program Details**

- Grants are based upon reimbursement of actual costs following project completion.
- Grants may fund up to 50% of approved project costs, not-to-exceed \$1,500 grant funding.
- Written agreement must be executed prior to starting any work related to requested funds.
- Projects must be started within 30 days of approval and completed within 180 days.
- Business owner/applicant is required to commit to operation for a period of not less than one (1) year from project reimbursement. If the owner or business fails to meet this standard a pro-rata reimbursement of grant funds will be required.

### **Application Process**

- Prospective applicants are required to schedule a pre-application meeting to discuss their project prior to submittal.
- The formal application process begins with submittal of an application form, associated drawings, project schedule, and project bid/proposal results.
- Applications will be evaluated by a review committee and selection shall be based upon criteria established by the Joliet City Center Partnership and City of Joliet.
- This grant is limited to new businesses that have not received prior development assistance.

Determination of funding eligibility shall be at the sole discretion of the Joliet City Center Partnership

## **FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

A Façade Improvement Grant is intended to provide assistance for property improvements that are undertaken on the exterior of a building structure. *This grant is not intended to fund work that is construed as maintenance.* To be considered, the proposed improvement shall result in a significant visual improvement to the structure and property, or implement restoration of a building's character, curb appeal, and streetscape compatibility. Eligible project elements may include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- New signage
- Window frame replacement
- Door replacement
- New Awnings
- Façade renovation/replacement

- Restoration of original architectural features
- Exterior lighting
- Streetscape enhancements including improvements to facilitate addition of outside dining
- Painting, if in conjunction with other façade related improvements
- Landscaping, if in conjunction with other façade related improvements
- Tuckpointing, if in conjunction with other façade related improvements
- Murals depicting a general theme and not directly advertising a product or service

### **Program Details**

- Grants are based upon reimbursement of actual costs following project completion.
- Grants may fund up to 50% of approved project costs, not-to-exceed \$20,000 grant funding.
- Proposed improvements must be adjacent to streets or other public property.
- Professional design assistance is strongly recommended. Design fees of up to \$1,000 may be reimbursed subject to not-to-exceed grant award total.
- Multiple bids/proposals from contractors required prior to grant approval. Unique circumstances, when determined by the City Center Partnership, may result in the waiver of this provision.
- Written agreement must be executed prior to starting any work related to requested funds.
- Applicants other than the property owner must provide written authorization stating that the applicant has the authority of the owner to make the proposed property improvements and to participate in the program.
- Documentation of paid expenses and waivers of lien are to be submitted prior to reimbursement. Prevailing wage regulations apply to work done via contractors for grants in excess of \$10,000.
- Projects must be started within 60 days of approval and completed within 180 days.
- Owner/applicant are required to commit to ownership/operation for a period of not less than three (3) years from project reimbursement. A lien against the property will be required to insure this standard is met. If the owner or business fails to meet this standard a pro-rata reimbursement of grant funds will be required.
- If a Façade Improvement Grant has previously been awarded for the improvement of the same location or space within 3 years of the date of application, such new application shall be ineligible for funding. This restriction can be waived, in the sole discretion of the Joliet City Center Partnership, in exceptional circumstances.

### **Application Process**

- Prospective applicants are required to schedule a pre-application meeting to discuss their project prior to submittal.
- The formal application process begins with submittal of an application form, associated drawings, project schedule, and project bid/proposal results.
- Applications will be evaluated by a review committee and selection shall be based upon criteria established by the Joliet City Center Partnership and City of Joliet.
- Preference shall be given to owners/businesses improving buildings that have not received prior development assistance.

Determination of funding eligibility shall be at the sole discretion of the Joliet City Center Partnership

# INTERIOR IMPROVEMENT GRANT

An Interior Improvement Grant is intended to provide assistance for property enhancements that are undertaken on the interior of a structure. *This grant is not intended to fund work that is construed as maintenance, cosmetic or is merely undertaken to improve interior finishes.* This incentive is intended to encourage business and property owners to expand, upgrade, modernize or change the interior use of an interior space. Approval will include only those improvements that are considered permanent, add value to the property and will remain with the space. The Joliet City Center Partnership shall solely determine whether the proposed work meets the standard of an “improvement” as opposed to projects that are more reflective of “maintenance.” Eligible project elements may include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- HVAC, mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems
- Sprinkler or fire suppression systems
- Upgrades related to accessibility or other code compliance
- Utility upgrades
- Structural upgrades
- Installation of restrooms
- Ingress/egress improvements
- Improvements that create an entirely new floorplan, significantly change the interior form of a space, or adapt a space to a significantly different interior use. To reach a level of project eligibility, grants can cover a combination of multiple improvements such as new flooring, walls, ceilings, carpeting, lighting, trim, attached fixtures, and eligible work to obtain from the City of Joliet a Certificate of Occupancy

## Program Details

- Grants are based upon reimbursement of actual costs following project completion.
- Grants may fund up to 50% of approved project costs, not-to-exceed \$20,000 grant funding.
- Professional design/architectural assistance is required. Design fees of up to \$2,000 may be reimbursed subject to not-to-exceed grant award total.
- Multiple bids/proposals from contractors required prior to grant approval. Unique circumstances, when determined by the City Center Partnership, may result in the waiver of this provision.
- Written agreement must be executed prior to starting any work related to requested funds.
- Applicants other than the property owner must provide written authorization stating that the applicant has the authority of the building owner to make the proposed property improvements and to participate in the program.
- Documentation of paid expenses and waivers of lien are to be submitted prior to reimbursement. Prevailing wage regulations apply to work done via contractors for grants in excess of \$10,000.
- Projects must be started within 60 days of approval and completed within 240 days.
- Owner/applicant are required to commit to ownership/operation for a period of not less than three (3) years from project reimbursement. A lien against the property will be required to insure this standard is met. If the owner or business fails to meet this standard a pro-rata reimbursement of grant funds will be required.
- If an Interior Improvement Grant has previously been awarded for the improvement of the same location or space within 3 years of the date of application, such new application shall

be ineligible for funding. This restriction can be waived, in the sole discretion of the Joliet City Center Partnership, in exceptional circumstances.

### **Application Process**

- Prospective applicants are required to schedule a pre-application meeting to discuss their project prior to submittal.
- The formal application process begins with submittal of an application form, associated drawings, project schedule, and project bid/proposal results.
- Applications will be evaluated by a review committee and selection shall be based upon criteria established by the Joliet City Center Partnership and City of Joliet.
- Preference shall be given to owners/businesses improving buildings that have not received prior development assistance.
- Determination of funding eligibility shall be at the sole discretion of the Joliet City Center Partnership

## **CATALYTIC INCENTIVE PACKAGE**

A Catalytic Incentive Package is a customized assistance program intended to stimulate projects that are considered to be “game changers” within the Downtown Core Area. By definition an eligible project would demonstrate tremendous value to the Downtown Core and overall Joliet community, and would need to demonstrate no fewer than five (5) of the following characteristics:

- Ability to generate significant retail sales taxes, exceeding other typical businesses within the Core.
- Ability to significantly increase equalized assessed value and property tax generation of the subject property, and adjacent property within the Core.
- Ability to create a significant number of new employment opportunities.
- Ability to achieve major goals desired within the Joliet Downtown Plan, Cass Street Redevelopment Plan, or Joliet Quality of Life Plan.
- Ability to increase the availability of market rent housing within the Core.
- Attraction of unique project that would enhance the image of the City Center Core and City as a whole.
- Ability to generate a significant number of visitors, tourism and foot traffic increasing vibrancy within the Core.
- Potential to result in related, or complementary, business development elsewhere within the Core.
- Commitment to undertake a sensitive restoration of historic property.
- Ability to convert vacant or nearly vacant property into leasable space.

Project elements may include any eligible expense authorized for Exterior Improvement Grants or Interior Improvement Grants.

### **Program Details**

- Due to the unique project benefits envisioned, a Catalytic Incentive Package will be customized to address a variety of needs, and offers a high degree of flexibility.

- Subject to demonstrated need the incentive package may include reimbursement grants, loans, TIF rebates or other stimulus as determined necessary to complete a game changing project.
- Grants approved under this program may fund up to 50% of approved project costs. The maximum grant amount will be determined based upon the demonstrated need and overall development benefit to the Downtown Core. If other public grant funding is approved in an incentive package, expenses shall not be “double counted” for multiple incentive sources.
- Applicants requesting Catalytic Incentive Package assistance must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the City Center Partnership and City of Joliet, that sufficient private financing and owner equity are present in the project.
- Professional design/architectural assistance is required. Design fees of up to 10% of project cost may be reimbursed subject to not-to-exceed grant award total.
- Multiple bids/proposals from contractors required prior to grant approval. Unique circumstances, when determined by the City Center Partnership, may result in the waiver of this provision.
- Written agreement must be executed prior to starting any work related to requested funds.
- Due to the nature and scope of this program, only property owners may apply for funding.
- Documentation of paid expenses and waivers of lien are to be submitted prior to reimbursement. Prevailing wage regulations apply to work done via contractors.
- Projects must be started within 60 days of approval with completion deadlines to be identified within the written agreement.
- Owner is required to commit to ownership/operation for a period of not less than three (3) years from project reimbursement. A lien against the property will be required to insure this standard is met. A personal guaranty will also be required. If the owner fails to meet this standard a pro-rata reimbursement of grant funds will be required.
- Properties and any tenants or owners of business occupying the same are ineligible for any other grants at that property from the Joliet City Center Partnership for a period of 5 years from the date of payment of such grant. The only exception to this restriction are business who apply and qualify for a Small Business Assistance Grant.

### **Application Process**

- Prospective applicants are required to schedule a pre-application meeting to discuss their project prior to submittal.
- The formal application process begins with submittal of an application form, associated drawings, project schedule, and project bid/proposal results.
- Applications will be evaluated by a review committee and selection shall be based upon criteria established by the Joliet City Center Partnership and City of Joliet. The applicant shall demonstrate a sufficient equity stake in the project with a formal review to be conducted by the City’s financial consultant.
- Preference shall be given to owners/businesses improving buildings that have not received prior development assistance.
- Determination of funding eligibility shall be at the sole discretion of the Joliet City Center Partnership