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What is the Commercial Revitalization Program grant?

This program provides grant awards to projects that enhance established business districts by redeveloping properties, decreasing vacancy rates, adding to the tax base, creating jobs, leveraging private sector investment, and improving the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods through the removal of blight and revitalizing vacant or underutilized properties. The CRP combines into one grant program the intent of two existing CRA programs - the “Commercial Site Improvement” and “Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement” grants – to support larger economic development projects in South St. Petersburg, while also incentivizing new construction.

What award amounts for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant?

Applicant’s investing more than \$100,000 in capital improvements (excluding land) may receive an award up to \$50,000. To receive this award, an applicant must create at least two jobs, retain at least five jobs, or facilitate the relocation of a company with five or more employees to the South St. Petersburg CRA. At least 50 percent of the job creation requirement must be met by residents of the CRA.

Those investing more than \$250,000 in capital improvements (excluding land) are eligible for an award of \$100,000. To receive this award, an applicant must create at least ten jobs, retain at least 10 jobs or facilitate the relocation of a company with 10 or more employees to the South St. Petersburg CRA. At least 50 percent of the job creation requirement must be met by residents of the CRA.

To ensure that the job creation and retention measures of the **Commercial Revitalization Program** are met, the City will retain 25 percent of the award until six months after the completion of the project. The retainage will be released to the applicant upon submission of appropriate documentation.

When is the application deadline for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant and where do I submit my application?

The City will begin accepting CRA Commercial grant applications on **FEBRUARY 1, 2019**, with a deadline of 5 p.m. on **FEBRUARY 11, 2019**, to receive all applications. Bring your application to **The Greenhouse** (City Hall Annex), located at **440 2nd Avenue North** (east of City Hall).

Is there an application fee?

Yes. There is a \$35 fee to pay for criminal background checks on each signer of the application, including property owners that are not the business owner. This would include also a fee per each officer for those applications where the property and/or business owner is held by a LLC



or other corporate ownership. You will be refunded the fee if your application is not awarded funding.

Am I eligible for the grant?

Many commercial businesses and/or property owners located within the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Area are eligible for this program. The CRA is generally located between Fourth St. and 49th St., from Second Ave. N. to 30th Ave. S. [Click here](#) to see the CRA boundaries.

However, all applications for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant must be for property located in one of the following zoning districts:

- Corridor Commercial Suburban 1 and 2 (CCS-1 and CCS-2)
- Corridor Commercial Traditional 1 and 2 (CCT-1 and CCT-2)
- Corridor Residential Suburban 1 and 2 (CRS-1 and CRS-2)
- Corridor Residential Traditional 1 and 2 (CRT-1 and CRT-2)
- Retail Center 1 (RC-1)
- Industrial Traditional (IT)
- Industrial Suburban (IS)
- Institutional Center (IC).

You can use this link to determine the zoning for your property [City of St. Petersburg Zoning Map](#). A single click on your property will pop up the zoning designation.

[Click here](#) to see what other financial incentives are potentially available for your property.

What would disqualify me for the grant?

Below are the disqualifying criteria that may make you ineligible for funding

- Unpaid code enforcement liens
- Unpaid special assessment liens
- Pending judgment or foreclosure
- Felony conviction for financial mismanagement within the last five years
- Mortgage payments three months in arrears
- Unpaid property taxes
- Unpaid property insurance

What improvements are eligible for Commercial Revitalization Program funding?

The Commercial Revitalization Program will be made available to support future projects in the South St. Petersburg CRA, that provide visible improvements to a building or site, decrease



vacancy rates of the area, provide missing retail or service opportunities, retain or create jobs, and/or create new commercial space. The intent of the Commercial Revitalization Program is business development, thus the applicant should be an occupant of the building or a property owner that can demonstrate evidence that the building will be occupied by a business. Additionally, eligible projects must demonstrate that “but for” city investment, the project would not occur.

- Capital investment (excluding land) by applicant must be at least \$100,000 for \$50,000 tier.
- Rehabilitates and returns to service a vacant commercial structure or adds new commercial square footage to a building or a business district through new construction or adaptive reuse of a building formerly used for non-commercial purposes, or removes blight or a declared public nuisance;
- Visibly improves exterior building, site, and/or essential interior building systems such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and energy efficiency improvements;

What improvements are not eligible for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant?

- Work performed by an unlicensed contractor
- Routine maintenance
- Projects not resulting in the minimum job creation or retention requirements specified by each award level
- Projects with proposed capital improvements less than \$100,000
- Land acquisition costs
- Improvements in progress or completed prior to preliminary approval
- Painting when not associated with other improvements
- Improvements to any building primarily used for residences, including those in mixed-use projects, which is defined as more than 50 percent of the building in residential use. (Commercial space associated with mixed use projects is eligible for funding)
- Improvements to buildings constructed within the last 5 years

Why must I sign a grant agreement if I am awarded funding?

The CRA commercial grant agreement specifies your rights and responsibilities after receiving the grant award as well as the City’s duties and rights. It is an agreement signed by Mayor Kriseman and the applicant that details the award amount, the improvements and their amount on which the award can be used, the time frame for executing the agreement and completing the project and other items. Click on the link for a [Sample CRA Grant Agreement](#).

What information will I need to provide in order to apply for the grant?

Below are the required documents for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant



- Completed and signed application form, including the signature of the property owner if not the same as the applicant
- A five-year pro forma demonstrating the need for public financial assistance to support the project
- If necessary, a letter requesting an extension of ninety days to seek additional financing if TIF funding application is approved
- Detailed cost estimates of work by input (labor, materials, etc) and project component (signage, landscaping, painting, carpentry, etc)
- Summary budget of cost estimates tied to each project component described above
- Copy of current business tax certificate
- Confirmation that mortgage, property insurance and property tax payments are current and in good standing
- Documentation of property ownership or written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct the identified improvements.
- Legal description and survey of project site
- Digital photographs of existing conditions of the project site
- Use must be consistent with the City's land development regulations
- Written description of project improvements
- Sketches or conceptual drawings of improvements that will be funded by the Grant.

Do I have to complete the work before I get paid?

Yes. The Commercial Revitalization Program grant is a reimbursable award to ensure that the work for which the award was approved is completed and in accordance with City regulations and requirements. To be paid, you must submit a request for review of work after completion and provide documentation that the work has been completed in accordance with City regulations through a Certificate of Completion or Certificate of Occupancy. In addition, you must provide documentation of the expenditures made supporting the project such as invoices, canceled checks, etc.

Are there other sources of potential funding to pay for my part of project costs and help me complete the project before receiving the grant award?

Yes. The Commercial Revitalization Program is a reimbursable grant that requires a minimum capital investment by the applicant. To receive a \$50,000 grant award, an applicant must invest at least \$100,000 in capital improvements (minus land costs), while a \$100,000 award requires an investment of \$250,000 or more (minus land costs). That means that the applicant will need sufficient funds to pay for the project up-front before the City awards funding. Many applicants need funding assistance to take advantage of the program and the City is partnering with the Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation (TBBBIC) to offer bridge loans to grant awardees.



The program, which you can link to [here](#) for information on term, collateral, interest rates and more, provides a direct loan up to \$40,000 for businesses within the South St. Petersburg CRA. For more information, please contact [Brent Everett](#), (813) 425-2043.

Below are other sources of private funding for local businesses that complement and go above and beyond the amount of resources in the CRA funding process for business financing.

GTE Federal Credit Union

[Shamus McConomy](#), (813) 414-6553

PNC Bank

[Victor Avila](#), (813) 637-7144

Can I still apply for a grant if I am a commercial tenant and do not own my building?

If you are a commercial tenant on a property that you do not own, you may still apply for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant provided that the property owner signs the consent form that is included with the application. City policy also requires the property owner to undergo a criminal background check as described above.

My property includes both residential units and commercial space. Am I eligible for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant?

Maybe. Mixed-use residential projects are eligible for the Commercial Revitalization Program grant provided the commercial component of the project comprises more than 51% of the gross square footage of the development and meets the minimum capital improvement threshold of \$100,000. Eligible projects must have completed the conceptual planning stage and have sufficient documentation to submit for the city's Construction Services and Permitting Division review.

How does the City decide on who gets awarded funding?

Grants are awarded through a competitive application process involving review by an internal review committee that will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the applications relative to the following factors

- the location of the project on a priority commercial corridor identified by the Citizen Advisory Committee of the South St. Petersburg CRA
- creation of new commercial space through new construction or renovation of a previously vacant and blighted building
- the number of jobs to be created and/or retained by the proposal
- the number of CRA residents employed by the applicant at the time of application submittal



- the capital investment by the applicant and the leverage provided by the City funding
- the use of environmentally sustainable materials and practices recommended by the City’s Office of Sustainability and Resiliency (OSR).

After receiving the evaluation from the review committee, a recommendation and a priority list will be made by the Mayor to the St. Petersburg City Council. St. Petersburg City Council has the final authority to approve funding for all Commercial Revitalization Program applications.

When will City Council review and act on the grant applications?

City Council is expected to meet on either April 4th or April 18th in 2019 in Council Chambers on the second floor of City Hall which is located at 175 5th Street North. Applicants will be notified if there is a change in date, time or venue.

Does the City provide technical assistance on preparing applications prior to the application deadline?

Beginning **January 3, 2019**, and continuing every Thursday until **February 7, 2019**, City staff will also be holding satellite office hours from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the office of the **Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation**, which is located at **1123 22nd Street South** in the Deuces Live Florida Main Street District.

Must I attend a CRA Commercial Grant Workshop to apply for the grant?

Yes. In advance of the grant application deadline, City Administration is offering **mandatory** workshops to assist with preparing the application. **Applicants must attend at least one CRA grant workshop in order to be eligible to apply for these commercial programs.**

What is the Schedule for the CRA Commercial Grant Workshops?

Jan. 9, 2019 (3-4:30 pm)	Greenhouse Satellite Office (Enoch Davis)	1111 18 th Ave S
Jan. 15, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	Greenhouse Satellite Office (Enoch Davis)	1111 18 th Ave S
Jan. 16, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	The Greenhouse (City Hall Annex)	440 2 nd Ave S
Jan. 22, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	Greenhouse Satellite Office (Enoch Davis)	1111 18 th Ave S
Jan. 23, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	The Greenhouse (City Hall Annex)	440 2 nd Ave S
Jan. 31, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	Greenhouse Satellite Office (Enoch Davis)	1111 18 th Ave S
Feb. 4, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	Greenhouse Satellite Office (Enoch Davis)	1111 18 th Ave S
Feb. 5, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	Greenhouse Satellite Office (Enoch Davis)	1111 18 th Ave S
Feb. 6, 2019 (6-7:30 pm)	The Greenhouse (City Hall Annex)	440 2 nd Ave S

*To register for the workshops, go to: <https://stpetegreenhouse.com/>