



Village of Lake Villa Downtown Improvement Grant Program

Program Overview

The Village of Lake Villa Downtown Improvement Grant Program is intended to encourage investment in commercial properties located within the Downtown and eligible Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and/or Business Development District (BDD) areas.

The program is designed to support building improvements that strengthen the pedestrian environment, improve property conditions, encourage reinvestment, enhance public safety and code compliance, and support the long-term economic vitality of Downtown Lake Villa.

The Downtown Improvement Grant Program aims to:

- Strengthen the pedestrian-oriented downtown environment;
- Encourage reinvestment in existing commercial properties;
- Improve the appearance and functionality of downtown buildings;
- Support code-compliant, safe, and accessible commercial spaces;
- Enhance building architecture, storefronts, and signage;
- Encourage high-quality business and property maintenance;
- Support economic development and business attraction efforts; and
- Advance implementation of the Village's Comprehensive Plan and Downtown redevelopment goals.

General Program Eligibility

Eligible properties must:

- Be commercial, mixed-use, or multi-tenant commercial properties;
- Be located within an eligible Downtown/TIF/BDD area as determined by the Village;
- Be current on all taxes, utility bills, and obligations owed to the Village;
- Not have outstanding code violations unless the proposed project addresses those violations; and
- Receive Village approval prior to the start of work.

Eligible applicants include:

- Property owners;
- Commercial tenants with written property owner authorization; and
- Business owners operating within eligible commercial properties.

Eligible Improvements

Eligible improvements may include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior façade and storefront improvements;
- Building restoration, rehabilitation, or modernization;
- Permanent exterior lighting, awnings, and architectural enhancements;
- Accessibility and ADA improvements;
- Building code, life safety, and occupancy-related improvements;
- Interior commercial tenant buildouts and rehabilitation;
- Electrical, plumbing, HVAC, structural, and fire protection improvements;
- Permanent commercial signage and sign lighting;

- Removal of nonconforming or deteriorated building and sign elements;
- Site and pedestrian-oriented improvements associated with downtown commercial properties;
- Other improvements approved by the Village that support the goals of the Program.

Ineligible Improvements

The following improvements are generally not eligible:

- Improvements completed prior to grant approval;
- Routine maintenance or repair work;
- Improvements not visible to the public unless related to code compliance or occupancy;
- Inventory, furnishings, equipment, or operational expenses;
- Temporary signage or temporary improvements;
- Residential-only properties;
- Work completed without required permits;
- Sweat equity or applicant self-performed labor without prior approval;
- Roof replacement not visible from the public right-of-way;
- Cleaning-only projects;
- New building construction;
- Vinyl siding on historic or architecturally significant buildings;
- Furniture or fixtures not permanently attached;
- Appliances not associated with permanent occupancy improvements;
- Temporary signs, banners, inflatable signage, or portable signs;
- Excessive internally illuminated signage unless specifically approved by the Village;
- Electronic message boards unless specifically approved by the Village.

Grant Funding

- Matching reimbursement grant;
- Up to 50% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum reimbursement amount established annually by the Village Board.

Funding is subject to annual budget appropriations and available program funds. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis unless otherwise announced by the Village. No property shall receive more than one grant award within a twenty-four (24) month period unless otherwise approved by the Village Board. Additionally, total grant reimbursements to a property shall not exceed \$50,000 within any rolling five (5) year period.

The Village reserves the right to establish different reimbursement limits, priorities, or funding caps based on project type, location, or available funding.

Application Process

Step 1 – Pre-Application Meeting

Applicants are encouraged to meet with Village Staff prior to submitting an application to discuss project eligibility, design considerations, required permits, and application requirements.

Step 2 – Application Submission

Step 3 – Village Staff Review

Once staff verifies the application is complete, an inspection of the subject property will be scheduled to ensure the property/structure is in compliance with Village Codes. After all deficiencies have been identified the Staff Review Committee will evaluate the application based on the following criteria:

- Applications will be reviewed on a first come, first served basis. If requests exceed the amount of available funds, priority will be given to applications from businesses that best complement targeted business categories. Preference will be given to businesses that fill a particular niche and do not compete directly with existing Lake Villa businesses.
- Applicant demonstrates preparedness to move forward with the proposal by providing proof of lease or purchase and addressing all non-conforming zoning and building issues.
- Property owner/tenant verifies that there is no outstanding debt due to the Village.

Step 4 – Committee/Village Board Review and Action (If applicable)

Applications may be reviewed by advisory bodies and/or the Village Board as determined by Village staff. Grant requests in excess of \$20,000 shall require Village Board authorization for the execution of the Grant Program Agreement.

Step 5 – Reimbursement

The grant will be paid on a reimbursement basis once the proposed project has been completed, and receipts for eligible expenditures have been verified.

Grant approvals will be null and void if project is not completed within twelve (12) months of grant approval. Grant program project timeline(s) will be enforced as follows:

- a. Must submit a full set of plans for building permit within three months of grant approval;
- b. Must obtain building permit within six months of grant approval;
- c. Must complete project within twelve (12) months of grant approval;
- d. Extension requests shall require Village Board approval.

Additional Terms & Conditions

1. Grant funding is subject to availability.
2. The Village reserves the right to approve, deny, or modify any request.
3. Projects must remain substantially consistent with approved plans.
4. The Village may terminate grant agreements for failure to comply with program requirements.
5. Approved projects may be used by the Village for promotional and marketing purposes.
6. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all required permits and approvals.
7. Grant recipients shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
8. Reimbursement shall only occur after project completion and verification.

Submission Information

Village of Lake Villa
65 East Grand Avenue Lake Villa, Illinois 60046
Phone: (847) 356-6100

Application Form

A. Applicant Information

If Applicant is not the owner of the subject property, the owner must sign this application (below) signifying they are aware of the improvements proposed as part of this grant application.

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Applicant Address: _____

City/State/Zip:

Phone Number: _____

Email Address:

B. Property Information

Property Address: _____

Property Owner Name: _____

Property Owner Address: _____

PIN Number(s): _____

Current Use of Property: _____

Zoning District: _____

Year Building Constructed (if known): _____

C. Project Description

Description of proposed project:

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D. Estimated Project Costs

Please outline what the grant funds will be used for along with a breakdown of those costs. If additional space is required, please provide a separate attachment.

<i>Item Description</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Total Project Cost	

E. Project Timeline

Estimated Start Date:

Estimated Completion Date: _____

Applicant Certification

I hereby certify that the information contained within this application and all attached materials is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that approval of this application does not waive any Village requirements, permits, or approvals.

I understand that no work may begin until grant approval has been issued and all required permits have been obtained.

Applicant Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

I hereby authorize the Applicant to submit this application and undertake the proposed improvements described herein.

Property Owner Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Application Requirements

A complete application for approval consists of the following items submitted in a comprehensive package:

Checklist for Downtown Improvement Grant

- ☐ Completed and signed grant application
- ☐ A project narrative describing the general nature of the project and outlining specific aspects of the proposal and matching grant funds requested
- ☐ Color rendering of proposed site improvement(s)
- ☐ A minimum of two (2) contractor quotes and/or proposals for each item funded by grant
- ☐ A recent Plat of Survey of the subject property may be requested

An application will not be accepted or processed until all of the items above have been submitted. If applications exceed the Village's funding budget, an application will not be considered complete until all items have been submitted.

**Village of Lake Villa
Downtown Improvement Grant Program**

PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

I hereby submit this application to participate in the Village of Lake Villa Downtown Improvement Grant Program. I understand that the purpose of the program is to help encourage and leverage private investment in the Village's downtown business community and help my business bring an underperforming property into more productive use.

I understand that prior to commencing any work, the Village must first approve both my participation, proposed scope of work, and budget for the project and that I must meet with Administration Development staff prior to paying for improvements in order to review how much, if any, the Village may reimburse for the project.

I understand that all improvements made through the help of the program must be in accordance with all Village plans and codes. Moreover, as a condition of approval, I understand the Village may require changes to the scope of work I am proposing. I further understand that any work started or completed prior to approval of the project and my participation in the program is not eligible for reimbursement.

In making this application, I understand that the program is competitive, funds are limited and selection for participation is at the sole discretion of the Village of Lake Villa. I understand that the Village will review my application and at the Village's discretion may reject or approve my participation in the program.

I also understand that if selected for this program, the Village will establish a maximum grant award for the project, and this may be at a lower amount than requested or less than half of the anticipated cost of the project.

I further understand that the Grant operates as a rebate program and, therefore, if selected for participation, Village funds will be disbursed to me at the conclusion of the work, after submittals by me of copies of all bills and satisfactory evidence of their payment, either by lien waivers or bills stamped "Paid" by all contractors. I understand that the actual rebate amount will be calculated at 50% of the documented actual costs by me for eligible expenses to complete the agreed upon improvements, up to the maximum grant amount awarded by the Village for the project.

By signing this application, I hereby acknowledge that I have read the above statement and understand these important features of the program.

Signature of Applicant

Printed Name

Date

☐ **APPROVAL** Yes _____ No (Reason or Revisions Needed: See letter, attached)

☐ **APPROVAL** by: _____ Village Administrator (If Grant Amount is less than \$25,000)
_____ Village Board (If more than \$25,000) App'l Date _____