

# Interior Building Improvement Grant

Development Incentive Program Guide & Application Package

Edmonton

The Interior Building Improvement Grant provides funding for interior renovations to commercial properties within Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) or other areas approved by City Council. Interior improvements to commercial units can help property owners and new business tenants fill vacant storefronts, create better first impressions for businesses, and support vibrant street life in BIAs. The program is open to property owners and commercial tenants, although the property owner must approve of the project.

## **Grant Amount**

Approved projects may be eligible for a matching reimbursement grant that will cover **up to 50% of project costs for an interior renovation to a maximum of \$20,000.**

A titled lot can only receive this grant once. Common areas such as foyers or hallways are not eligible unless they are improved along with a commercial unit.

## **Eligibility**

Eligible applications must answer yes to all of the following:

- Commercial unit is located on the main floor and facing the street.
- Commercial unit is located within a Business Improvement Area or other Council-approved area.
- Commercial unit has been vacant for at least 6 months prior to applying to the program, or has been underutilized over the last 3 years.
- Building is 20 years old or older.
- Construction work must not have begun on the project prior to applying and being approved for the program.
- By the end of construction and for the length of the maintenance period, windows and doors will not be covered by security bars or grills, rolling shutters or doors, posters, large window appliques, vinyl wraps, or otherwise obscured. *It is important to clarify with your tenant that they can comply with this requirement.*
- At the end of the project, the commercial unit will have a 2 year minimum lease with a commercial tenant.

## **Eligible Work**

Eligible work includes improvements to the interior of the commercial unit only. Projects must include at least two of the following improvements:

- Structural repairs
- Electrical upgrades
- Plumbing upgrades and fixtures (i.e. sinks, toilets, etc)
- HVAC
- Flooring and/or interior doors and/or ceilings
- Demising walls
- Drywall and/or painting
- Improved accessibility (i.e. ramps, handrails, accessible washrooms)
- Fire safety compliance (i.e. sprinklers)
- Improvements related to health and safety

Eligible costs that can be reimbursed through the program also include architecture/design/engineering fees (reimbursement will be to a maximum of 20% of eligible work costs), project management/administration fees (to a maximum of 10% of eligible work costs), demolition, equipment rentals and labour costs. Work must be performed by a contractor with a valid City of Edmonton business license.

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Ineligible items of work include:

- Asbestos/other hazardous material abatement
- Non-permanent fixtures such as bars or cabinetry
- Appliances, furniture, window coverings and other moveable objects
- Lightbulbs
- Exterior windows and doors
- Permit fees, service fees and insurance
- Gas, tools, consumables, cell phone fees and other incidental costs

## Process

There are six steps to the Interior Building Improvement Grant program.



### Step 1: Apply to the Program

**The application form is included in this package.**

- All applicants must contact the Program Manager prior to submitting an application package to discuss grant eligibility. See the Development Incentive Program website for contact information.
- The Program Manager or a delegate will visit the site prior to the approval of an application.
- Projects that have begun or are completed prior to signing a Development Incentive Program Reimbursement Agreement are ineligible to receive a grant.
- Submit completed applications to:

Development Incentive Program Manager  
Email: [development.incentive@edmonton.ca](mailto:development.incentive@edmonton.ca)

### Step 2: Application Review

- Applications will be reviewed against the eligibility requirements and the guidelines of the program.
- Partial applications and/or applications submitted outside of an application period will not be reviewed.
- Applicants will hear back from the City within 3-4 weeks of the application period closing.
- Approval of applications is subject to the availability of funding and the project's alignment with grant eligibility criteria.
- All decisions to approve or decline an application are final and cannot be appealed.

### Step 3: Reimbursement Agreement

- The Reimbursement Agreement outlines the responsibilities of the City and the applicant, along with the approved scope of work for an approved project, maximum grant amounts, and general terms.
- The City will pull the Land Title and a Corporate Registry Search to confirm ownership of the property.
- Applicants must submit all documentation necessary to draft a Development Incentive Program Reimbursement Agreement with the City within three months of project approval.
  - Approved applications must submit a minimum of 2 quotes for all eligible work including a cost breakdown of eligible work. This could be two quotes from two general contractors, or 2 quotes per subcontractor for each category of work.
  - Applicants are responsible for applying for all relevant [City of Edmonton permits](#) and must share permit applications with the Program Manager.
- The Reimbursement Agreement must be signed by all parties within one month of the draft being shared with the applicant.
  - The property owner must always sign the Reimbursement Agreement, even if the tenant will be doing the work and receiving the grant.
  - If the documentation is not submitted or the Agreement is not signed in a timely manner, the file will be closed and grant funding will be reallocated to other projects. The applicant may re-apply to participate in the program in the next application period.

### Step 4: Construction

- Projects must be completed within one calendar year.
  - Projects that are not completed within one year may apply for an extension if there are extenuating circumstances. Otherwise, the file will be closed and the grant funding will be reallocated to other projects.

### Step 5: Reimbursement

- The grant will be paid:
  - after the work is complete;
  - invoices, proof of payment, permit service report(s) and a cost summary has been submitted to the Program Manager, and
  - all required inspections are conducted with a successful outcome.
- All documentation must be submitted and inspections completed within the one year timeframe as specified in the Reimbursement Agreement.
  - If the documentation is not submitted in a timely manner, the file will be closed and grant funding reallocated to other projects.
- In order to be eligible to receive a grant, the property owner must submit a signed two year (or longer) lease agreement for the eligible commercial unit.

### Step 6: Maintenance

- The applicant must maintain all improvements supported through the program for a minimum of 5 years, including clear and uncluttered windows and doors. *It is important to clarify with your tenant that they can comply with this requirement.*
  - If the improvements are not maintained, up to 50% of the matching grant must be repaid to the City of Edmonton.

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## **Important to Know**

The program team is here to support you through the program process, however there are some important things to understand about the program to ensure your success.

- A project will not receive a grant if work starts before a Reimbursement Agreement is signed by all parties.
- It is your responsibility to obtain all required permits, such as electrical, mechanical, plumbing, gas and building permit.
- It is your responsibility to manage contactors and keep track of invoices.
- If you want to make changes to your project after you've signed an Agreement, you must request approval for them from the Program Manager.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of deadlines. If you miss the deadline to submit relevant documentation, your file will be closed and the grant funding will be reallocated to other projects.
- Grant amounts will not be increased due to changes in project scope or cost overruns.

## **How to Apply/Contact Us**

**This program is no longer accepting applications.**