

**City of Palatka
Community Redevelopment Agency
Building Improvement Grant (BIG) Program
Administered by Palatka Main Street**

The City of Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency was created to address conditions of blight within the Palatka Main Street District that require enhanced management and redevelopment.

Tax Increment Financing is not derived from a new tax, but allows a portion of property taxes from within the district to be used to leverage public funds to promote private sector real estate, business, and other activities in order to spur revitalization.

Palatka Main Street District boundaries are represented in the map (attachment A).

Purpose

The purposes of this Building Improvement Grant program are to:

- Improve the appearance and utilization of downtown buildings so that they will be used in accordance with applicable building and zoning regulations and Community Redevelopment Agency plans
- Encourage the opening of more new small businesses and the expansion and strengthening of existing businesses
- Fill the financial gap of a property for his/her qualified building/property needs or of a tenant for the build-out needs of a qualified business.

Applicants are encouraged to review current zoning and Community Redevelopment Agency Plans with the Planning Department and with Palatka Main Street.

Grant Awards

This is a competitive program that requires applicants to make formal application through Palatka Main Street.

Funding will be based on the grant application complying with program criteria and on the recommendations of an Evaluation Committee.

Palatka Main Street will appoint an independent Evaluation Committee made up of a representative of its Board of Directors, Design Committee, and Economic Restructuring Committee. Evaluation Committee members are not eligible for grants or for contracts from grantees. The Evaluation Committee may take testimony or seek professional guidance on issues related to historic preservation, building and zoning codes, market analyses, business operations, and other subjects.

The right to refuse any grant application is reserved.

Application submitted before work begins is preferred and may be favored.

Grants will not be awarded for work previously completed or work in the process of being completed; however, at the discretion of the Community Redevelopment Agency, and Palatka Main Street, costs for eligible repairs that were completed within twelve months prior to the date of the grant application may be included for consideration as part of the total project costs, not exceeding \$25,000. Inclusion of this previously done work is no guarantee of recommendation or approval.

Palatka Main Street may set grant application deadlines, review periods and award limits, and application and award dates.

Decisions of the Evaluation Committee may be appealed to Palatka Main Street and decisions of Palatka Main Street may be appealed to the City of Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency Board.

Program Guidelines

This Building Improvement Grant program is funded with Tax Increment Financing money to assist with:

- Exterior renovations or improvements
 - Restoration, improvement, or re-creation of historically correct or compatible architectural features to facades or elements of buildings which are visible from the public street, consistent with architectural guidelines that may be established, and consistent with established priorities - including compatibility in scale, proportions, and colors.
 - Roof repair/gutters
 - Repair or addition of awnings, canopies, balconies, and galleries
 - Doors and windows
 - Painting and stucco
 - Repair or manufacture of signs consistent with architecture, sign ordinances, design standards and guidelines
 - Meeting Green Building Criteria
 - Permanent, general use, attached features or fixtures

- Interior renovations or improvements:
 - Interior demolition
 - Interior framing, windows, doors, lighting, drywall, and flooring
 - Mechanical, electrical, plumbing, HVAC repair or upgrades demolition
 - ADA access to building and/or restrooms
 - Tenant improvements necessary to meet code
 - Meeting Green Building criteria
 - Permanent, general use, attached features or fixtures

- **The following are ineligible for the grant program:**
 - Property not in the district
 - Work which removes or degrades historically significant features
 - Use of inappropriate materials
 - Non-appurtenant fixtures
 - Permitting fees and work without building permit
 - Work by other than licensed contractor
 - Routine maintenance
 - Improvements to buildings for which applicant has neither clear title nor valid lease, which are non-conforming, or which are subject to outstanding fines or liens.

Grant Criteria

Grant funds are limited and will be awarded subject to the degree to which they support Community Redevelopment Agency plans and goals, and subject to announced program procedures, grant cycles and deadlines.

Within the first 30 days of each calendar year, the Evaluation Committee shall meet and review the amount of money allocated by the City of Palatka for distribution by the Community Redevelopment Agency Building Improvement Grant Program during that calendar year. The Committee shall divide the total amount into three portions, which need not be equal. One of said three portions shall then be assigned for distribution during each of the three time periods (cycles) during the calendar year. The first cycle shall span from January 1 until March 31. The second cycle shall span from April 1 until June 30. The third cycle shall span from July 1 until September 30. Applicants for grants to be awarded during each cycle shall make application as described herein during the first 60 days of that cycle. After the close of the application period for each cycle, evaluation of the applications and award of the grant funds for the then current cycle shall be made as described elsewhere herein with the evaluation to be concluded and the award made not later than 30 days after the close of the application period. The application period for each grant cycle shall be advertised in a newspaper of City-wide circulation at least once not more than 30 days or less than 15 days before the beginning of each application period. In the event funds allocated for distribution during a grant cycle as defined above are not awarded during the designated cycle, the undistributed funds shall be available for distribution during the succeeding cycle.

Upon submission, applications will be evaluated, within 7 days, for eligibility by the Palatka Main Street staff or designee, under the following criteria:

- Location within Palatka Main Street District
- Availability of funds
- Appropriate business and improvements in accordance with applicable codes, ordinances, plans, and guidelines
- Project ready to be implemented
- If project information is insufficient, the applicant will be notified of deficiencies.

- Complete applications will be forwarded to Evaluation Committee which will notify applicant of review and award schedule

The Evaluation Committee will use a scoring chart (Attachment B) to determine the strength of the application and to determine whether to recommend full funding, partial funding, resubmission, or denial of funding.

Duration of Grant

Should the Grantee transfer, sell, divest themselves of their interest in the subject property or business, or fail to maintain the renovations and improvements during the five-year period following receipt of the grant funds, the Grantee shall return/repay the grant funds as follows:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Amount Due CRA</u>
0 to one (1) year after grant funds received	90%
One (1) to two (2) years after grant funds received	80%
Two (2) to three (3) years after grant funds received	60%
Three (3) to four (4) years after grant funds received	40%
Four (4) to five (5) years after grant funds received	20%
Five (5) years after grant funds received	0%

The specific terms of repayment shall be included within a written agreement executed between Palatka Main Street/City of Palatka and the grant recipient, and recorded within the public records of Putnam County, Florida. The agreement shall include language sufficient to constitute a valid and enforceable lien upon the real property which is the subject of the grant. The agreement shall be signed by the grant recipient prior to the distribution of grant funds and shall be recorded immediately after distribution of grant funds.

Pre-Application

If requested, Palatka Main Street staff or assignee will review the applicant’s plans or application, including the eligibility criteria, program requirements, proposed project scheduling, and consistency of the applicant’s proposal with the intent of the program including offering assistance, limited technical assistance and an opinion as to whether the applicant is sufficiently prepared to move on to the application stage.

Application

A property owner or tenant that is interested in participating in the program must submit a completed and signed application (Attachment C), along with supporting documentation, in accordance with published guidelines, to:

**Palatka Main Street
1100 Reid Street
PO Box 550
Palatka FL 32178**

Application package shall include:

- Proof of ownership or lease interest
- Approval of property owner and/or landlord representative, if the application is from the tenant
- Business plan
- Licenses, if applicable
- Work plan, cost estimates, and timeline estimates (including proposed start date and completion date)
- Documentation of the type and source of the project funds. Verification of the funding sources may be required before final approval of the grant application.
- Applicant may be an individual, partnership, or corporation

Tenant applicants are required to have an agreement with landlord concerning leasehold value of improvements and the impact on rent, if any.

Grant Process

The Palatka Main Street staff or designee will review applications for completeness and compliance with program criteria. Applications that are incomplete will be returned with guidance. Projects that do not comply with program criteria will not be considered for funding, but an explanation will be provided.

The Evaluation Committee will review applications to determine if funding is to be recommended in full, in part, subject to conditions; or be rejected. All three members of the Evaluation Committee must be present and participate in any meeting at which funding is to be considered. All decision of the committee shall be by majority rule.

Disapproval by Evaluation Committee may be appealed to the Palatka Main Street Board. Disapproval by the Main Street Board may be appealed to the Community Redevelopment Agency Board.

All applicants will receive written notification regarding approval or denial of their application. Approval will include a funding agreement listing the amount of grant funds that are approved and the requirements for reimbursement.

Grant program description and credit signs must be displayed during project and for six (6) months following reimbursement, followed by a grant program description and credit decal or plaque to be displayed as mutually agreed for a period of not less than 5 years.

Modifications to the approved plans or construction documents, which produce visible differences in the approved design or which are not approved by City of Palatka Building Department, will require a repeat of application review and approval procedures. Failure to receive such approval may invalidate the funding agreement, and the agreement will be deemed terminated. In the event the agreement is terminated, any grant funds that have been disbursed to the applicant by the Community

Redevelopment Agency shall become immediately due and payable to the Community Redevelopment Agency.

Reimbursement Procedures

Generally, approved projects will receive reimbursement upon completion of the project and submission of all required receipts, invoices and documentation. Grantees with larger projects may request reimbursement at fifty percent completion of project and at one hundred percent completion of project. Palatka Main Street and the Palatka City building official will make the final determination as to whether the project is complete.

Funds will be disbursed by a check payable to the applicant or contractor after the following:

- Submission of all receipts and required documentation to the Palatka Main Street manager, including:
 - Contractor invoicing and evidence of payment of funds
 - Release of lien letters from contractors
 - Applicant must honor contractual obligations to contractor; hold harmless agreements must be executed
- Certification of completion by Palatka City building inspector and closed permit reports
- Verification that the any additional criteria added by contract has been completed as proposed in a satisfactory and professional manner
- Certification of completion of grant project by the Palatka Main Street manager and submission to the Palatka City Finance Director.

Reservations

Palatka Main Street and the City of Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency expressly reserve the right to:

- Reject any or all applications
- Request additional information from any or all applicants
- Amend the program guidelines and application procedures without notice
- Display and advertise properties that receive grant funding.

Release and Hold Harmless Agreement

Upon approval of a grant, the applicant and any affected contractor will be required to sign a Release and Hold Harmless Agreement with Palatka Main Street, the City of Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency, as permitted by the laws of the State of Florida.

Attachment B

Evaluation:

- The application is reviewed by the Palatka Main Street manager and reviewed and scored by the Evaluation Committee.
- They will consider the strength and need of the applicant and the appropriateness of the project.
- While there is no requirement for a match, the financial commitment by the owner, landlord, and tenant, as applicable will be evaluated and may have an impact on recommendation and approval.
- The Evaluation Committee will also determine the level of program funding.
- Each member of the Evaluation Committee shall score each application utilizing the score sheet and criteria set forth below. The average of the total scores of the three committee members for each application shall be utilized for comparison and evaluation purposes.
- Any application which receives an "average" total score of less than 50 points shall not be awarded funds.

Scoring Criteria:

Criteria	Points	Rank	Score
Consistent with City of Palatka comprehensive plans	5		
Consistent with Community Redevelopment Agency plans	5		
Consistent with design guidelines or historic preservation standards	5		
Consistent with Main Street Approach and Palatka Main Street goals	5		
Degree of investment leveraging by applicant/investors landlord or tenant in matching funds	20		
Strength of business plans	10		
Strength of business capitalization	5		
Previous history of applicant. First time applicants are encouraged	5		
Quality of proposed work	10		
Likelihood that proposed work will increase value of building and/or profitability of business	10		
Likelihood that improvements will result in long-term occupancy or business improvement	10		
Likelihood that proposed work can be completed as presented and in accordance with submitted schedule	5		
	100		

~~While the Evaluation Committee scores and makes recommendations as they see fit, a score of 50 or below would generally be considered to be a weak score.~~