

2024-2025 Business Development Grants Program Guidance

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Business Development Grant Program Guidelines & Application

Purpose:

The objective of this program is to encourage restoration and utility of commercial property within the city. This program is funded by the Rio Grande City Economic Development Corporation.

Financial Assistance:

Important: Project costs incurred prior to receiving the RGC EDC Board of Directors approval is NOT eligible for reimbursement.

Projects that qualify may receive a grant with a maximum reimbursement of \$5,000 towards the total project cost. The grant is a 50% matching grant.

Example:

Total project cost:	\$10,000
Program share:	\$5,000
Property owner/tenant:	\$5,000
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Total project:	\$10,000

For example, if the project is \$10,000, the grant will reimburse up to \$5,000. If the total project cost is less than \$5,000, the grant will reimburse 50% of the total project cost. The number of grants awarded each fiscal year (FY) will depend on the availability of funds and total number or project applicants.

Eligibility:

- Applicant must be the owner of the property for which the grant application is submitted or submit copy of lease with minimum 2-year lease remaining.
- Commercial properties must be up-to-date on all municipal taxes when the application is submitted.

- Business facilities must be zoned for commercial use.
- Commercial properties must comply with state and local code requirements.
- Improvements to buildings without significant architectural features shall be carefully designed and constructed to be in scale with the existing and surrounding structures. Buildings that have significant architectural features are required to restore and maintain those features.
- Properties must be located within the City of Rio Grande City. Priority will be given to properties on Rio Grande City's commercial corridors including the downtown district.

The number of grants awarded each fiscal year (FY) will depend on the availability of funds and total number of project applicants.

Qualifications:

- Property shall be used for business and located within the City of Rio Grande City.
- Applicant shall be the owner of the property or the business owner who will need to have the property owner's written approval.
- Be in good standing and current with City of Rio Grande City required permits; utilities; sales and tax permits.
- Maintain a minimum number of employees for effective business operations.
- Engaged in business activity that is legal under city and state law.

Eligible Improvements:

- Parking lot improvements; landscaping; painting
- Window repair and replacement
- Removal of handicap barriers and improvements to handicap accessibility
- New storefront construction within existing buildings
- Awnings; benches; planters; pavers; banners
- Exterior lighting
- HVAC
- Roof repairs
- Fire prevention and safety
- Upgrades to electrical and plumbing required to meet city code for commercial use

Ineligible Improvements:

- Project improvements which are underway or started prior to an executed agreement **are NOT eligible** under any circumstances to participate in the Business Development Grant Program.
- Interior improvements not listed above and that are not for commercial use
- Projects or property owners who have unsatisfactorily participated in a Business Grant program in the past.

Application Process:

The application process presented below has been streamlined to facilitate rapid case processing.

1. Applicant files an application, checklist, project budget and all back-up documentation, with the Rio Grande City EDC office. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Rio Grande City Economic Development Corporation
5332 E. US Hwy 83 Ste. B
Rio Grande City, Texas 78582

2. The application is reviewed and verified by the EDC staff to determine applicability, eligibility, and scoring. Main Street Façade and/or Commercial Revitalization project applications are reviewed by the Main Street Advisory Board to determine applicability, eligibility and scoring.
3. Verified applications go to Rio Grande City EDC for approval.
4. The Rio Grande City EDC office informs the applicant of project approval and availability of funds.
5. Applicant requests up to three (3) estimates from contractors to perform work. In-kind service is not an allowable use.
6. Applicant selects a contractor.
7. Any changes to the original plans must have prior approval from the Rio Grande City EDC.
8. Contractor completes project in compliance with the submitted plan and Business Grant.
9. A Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the City's building official to the applicant.
10. Applicant submits the Certificate of Occupancy, cost documentation (paid invoices, receipts, cancelled checks) to the Rio Grande City EDC office.
11. The Rio Grande City EDC issues reimbursement to the applicant.
12. The file is closed and the Rio Grande City office tracks the project requirements for two (2) years.

Application Scoring:

Priority will be given to properties located within the City's commercial corridor, historically significant properties, vacant and underutilized properties, deteriorating properties in need of repair, tourism, cultural and public use properties, job creation projects, and mixed-use developments.

Applications & Deadlines:

A completed Grant Program Application and checklist must be submitted along with an exterior photo of the building, a cost estimate, project narrative and scope of work to be performed. Applications will become available on October 1st through May 1st of each year at the Rio Grande City EDC office at 5332 E US Highway 83, Ste. B, Rio Grande City, Texas. Applications will be accepted as long as program funds are available. Applications will be reviewed and verified by Rio Grande City EDC staff for final approval to be made by the Rio Grande City Economic Development Corporation. Projects must be completed and original receipts received at the Rio Grande City EDC office by August 1 so that grant reimbursement may be made in a timely fashion.

Reimbursement of Funds:

Applicants must apply for the grant before restoration or renovation work has begun. No grants will be considered for improvements already performed. If there is a hazardous situation that needs immediate work, please contact the Rio Grande City EDC office before beginning. Awards will be administered as a reimbursement once the project has been completed as agreed upon, and paid receipts are supplied to the Rio Grande City EDC.

Changes to Redevelopment & Use, and Recapture Clause:

Participants must agree not to change or alter improved renovations without prior written approval from the Rio Grande City EDC office for two (2) years from the date of the applicant signing the Business Grant. The property must be put in commercial use and remain in commercial use for a minimum of 40 hours per week during the two (2) year period. Notification of changes in occupancy or use must be made to the Rio Grande City EDC office. If a change in use occurs and the property is not used for commercial purposes for longer than the 180 day period, then the following recapture clause may apply.

Property not occupied for 180 days = payback 100%

Applicants receiving funds from the Business Grant Program are encouraged to maintain ownership of said property for two (2) years immediately following the improvements. If they do not, the following recapture clause may apply.

Property and/or business sold within 2 years = payback 25%

Property and/or business sold within 1 years = payback 50%



Business Development Grant Program Application

Applicant Information:

Name of Business: _____

New Existing

Physical Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Business Phone: _____

Business Website or Social Media: _____

Nature of Business: _____

Applicant's Name: _____

Position /Title: _____

Phone and Email: _____

Nature of Business: _____

Renovation/building/project description: _____

Explain how your business will benefit and enhance the area in which you are locating and how your business will complement other businesses within the area:

Required Documents

1. Signed Application Form
2. Certificate of occupancy provided by the City of Rio Grande City, or application or receipt for certificate by the Rio Grande City Planning Office;
3. Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts sales tax statement, if applicable (most recent filing);
4. Photos of the building façade to be improved and of adjacent properties;
5. A sketch or rendering of the proposed finished façade if applicable;
6. Copies of all cost estimates involved with the project;
7. Proof of property ownership or property owner’s written consent to undertake façade project;
8. Proof taxes are paid and current; (Texas Comptroller tax statement, RGCCISD ad valorem tax receipt of City of Rio Grande City personal and/or business property taxes)
9. Completed W-9 Form.

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By signing below, the Applicant understands and agrees to the following:

1. All information contained in this application, the attached exhibits and other materials submitted in connection with this application are true and accurate to the best of the business owner's knowledge. Applicant understands and agrees that false or untruthful information may be grounds for the Rio Grande City EDC to stop processing this application or to withdraw any approval previously obtained based in whole or in part on such false or untruthful statements.
2. The Rio Grande City EDC is under no obligation to approve the request contained in the application. No promises of approval are conveyed with the acceptance of this application.
3. All tax obligations to the City of Rio Grande City are current.
4. The business is currently in good standing with the City, and has no pending municipal code violations.
5. The business is not currently occupying the property without a lease in place or proof of property ownership.
6. The APPLICANT hereby certifies that the APPLICANT does not and will not knowingly employ an undocumented worker. An "undocumented worker" shall mean an individual who, at the time of employment, is not (a) lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States; or (b) authorized under the law to be employed in that manner in the United States. APPLICANT understands and agrees that if, after receiving a Grant, APPLICANT is convicted of a violation under 8 U.S.C. Section 1324a(f), the APPLICANT shall be required to reimburse to the Rio Grande City EDC the grant amount received. Payments must be paid in full within thirty (30) days after the date of written notification by the Rio Grande City EDC. The form of such payment shall be a cashier's check or money order, made payable to the Rio Grande City Economic Development Corporation. The Rio Grande City EDC has the right to recover court costs and reasonable attorney's fees as a result of any civil action required to recover such repayment.
7. The applicant agrees not to begin any improvements for which it seeks reimbursement until it is first approved by the Rio Grande City EDC.
8. The applicant understands any amendment to this application must be performed before it is presented to the Rio Grande City EDC Board of Directors for its approval.

9. The applicant understands that failure to comply with grant agreement will result in forfeiture of the obligated funds and applicant will be required to reimburse the Rio Grande City EDC any grant money received.

10 (a). All answers given on this grant application are true and accurate;

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Applicant	Signature	Date

10 (b). If applicant is a tenant:

As the legal owner of the above property, I hereby grant authorization to complete the improvements indicated on this application;

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Property Owner	Signature	Date

Sworn to before me this day of _____, 20_____

Notary Public Stamp