



## STUART COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Stuart CRA Business Improvement Reimbursement Program is an incentive program designed to encourage visible, **exterior** improvements to commercial businesses in the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area.

The grant program provides a reimbursement grant of up to \$10,000 of public funds per property to match private funds to pay for the design and completion of property improvements. The grant shall be available for commercial businesses which may qualify for a reimbursement of 50% of the applicants total project costs up to \$10,000

**Funds are distributed per a 60 day grant cycle. The grant cycle begins on September 11th 2017 and will end November 17th 2017. To be eligible for consideration applicant must submit a completed application by 5pm on Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at City Hall, City Manager's office located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. Funds are limited and subject to availability. Funding may be appropriated annually in the CRA budget. The continuation of the program is subject to the availability of funds in the CRA budget.**

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

All owners of a licensed business within the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area shall be eligible for the program. Refer to attached CRA map.

The property owner is the applicant; however the property is currently leased to a tenant, then the application and agreement must be jointly executed by both the owner and the tenant.

Residential, non-profit and City owned/leased properties are not eligible.

First time applicants have priority. If funds are available, past applicants may apply for property improvements.

Properties must NOT have building code or code enforcement issues. City staff will verify this during its due diligence.

Property must NOT have any tax liens and must be current on property taxes paid to the City of Stuart.

Commercial Businesses must have a current Business Tax License with the City of Stuart.

## ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The Stuart CRA Business Improvement Reimbursement Program shall provide, on a reimbursement basis, 50% matching grant for eligible exterior improvements, which are consistent with and further the implementation of the Stuart Community Redevelopment Plan and City of Stuart Land Development Code, and visible from the roadway. Funds may be used for one or more of the following types of enhancements as a part of an improvement program:

- Replacement of windows and doors
- Awnings and decorative shutters (no metal panel shutters or accordion shutters)
  - Bahama Shutters
  - Colonial Shutters
- Exterior stucco or siding
- Exterior signage
- Dumpster enclosures
- Xeriscape Landscaping (a maximum of a total 1,500 dollars or 15% of total project, which ever is less, no irrigation) and fences (no metal chain-link)
- Parking lots, driveways, and streetscaping (I.e. benches, shade trees, bicycle racks)
- Exterior architectural amenities (e.g., addition or improvement of balconies, porches, entryways, or arcades)
- Other exterior (street-side) façade improvements (considered on a case-by-case basis)
- Architectural, engineering or landscape architectural services to design improvements to be funded through this program (maximum of 500 dollars in grant funding)

NOTE: All improvements proposed with this grant application must be consistent with the Community Redevelopment Plan and the Land Development Code overlay design guidelines.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Download an application from the City's website, [www.cityofstuart.us](http://www.cityofstuart.us) or secure an application at City Hall, City Manager's or Development office located on 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Downtown Stuart.
  2. Review the application, if you have any questions please speak with Nicole King at 772-600-1267.
  3. Submit a completed application package to City Hall, City Manager's office, which includes the following:
    - a. completed application
    - b. complete budget spreadsheet (attached to application)
    - c. proof of ownership of the property,
    - d. copies of TWO cost estimates by licensed contractor/agent registered with the City of Stuart or Martin County,
    - e. photographs of areas to be improved
    - f. W-9 form (as applicable)
- **The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees which are associated with the proposed project.**

4. City staff reviews the application for completeness, and eligibility. City staff will go to the project property and do a “walk-thru” of the property to consider the proposed improvements.
5. Staff reviews applications on the following criteria and provides a recommendation to the Community Redevelopment Board:
  - a. Meets grant requirements
  - b. Follows City of Stuart Urban Code regulations
  - c. Promotes the historic character of the neighborhood
  - d. Does the project contribute to reducing blight and economic revitalization
  - e. Does the project significantly enhance the building, is not strictly maintenance
  - f. Is this a first time applicant
6. Staff will present a recommendation for funding to the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB). Staff will prepare an agenda item by the **December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017** Community Redevelopment Board meeting, meeting starts at 4pm located in the City Hall Commission Chambers located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue.
7. The applicant or a representative MUST be present at the December 5th CRB meeting in order to be considered for the grant program.
8. The Community Redevelopment Board will hear the agenda item and make a recommendation for approval or denial of funding.
9. Construction of any component of the grant application CANNOT begin until the board approves the project. With CRB approval, applicant will need to sign contract and will have **120 days** for project completion. Any work completed prior to this approval will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Once approved, the property owner will have to sign to specify the obligation of the applicant for grant reimbursement. The contract may be recorded in the public records of Martin County, Florida. For the duration of the improvements, the applicant will post a sign to be provided by the City which indicates the project has received a Property Improvement Grant and relevant program information.

## **REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

**Disbursement of grant funds shall only occur when the following documents are submitted and all other required conditions are met:**

Upon project completion, the applicant contacts Nicole King by calling 772-600-1267 with the project completion date.

The applicant submits a “reimbursement package” to the CRA which includes the following:

- a. Completed reimbursement form (provided by the CRA as part of the application);
- b. Copies of applicable invoices must show “paid in full”; (receipts must CLEARLY show how the project was paid, i.e. check, cash must be made by cashier’s check or credit)
- c. Copies of final inspection
- d. Proof of payment for improvements (which must be at least as much as the amount indicated in the application); and photos of improvements.

If the project is not completed, is not approved in its final inspection, or does not receive its certificate of occupancy (if applicable) within one year from the approval of the grant, the grant award shall expire.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS APPLICATION PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY MANAGERS OFFICE TO SPEAK WITH NICOLE KING AT 772-600-1267.**



Additional Instructions: An application to the Business Improvement Reimbursement Program will not be processed until a completed application packet is submitted to the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency located in City Hall, City Manager's Office at 121 SE Flagler Avenue, Stuart.

**COMPLETED APPLICATIONS ARE DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> BY 5PM. APPLICATIONS WITH ALL DOCUMENTS ATTACHED WILL BE ACCEPTED AT CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE LOCATED AT CITY HALL 121 SW FLAGLER AVENUE.**

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- photographs of areas to be improved
- W-9 form (as applicable)

**The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees which are associated with the proposed project.**

**If you should have any questions please call 772-600-1267**