



## **The Grant County Chamber BUSINESS Enhancement Program GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **WHAT IS THE BUSINESS Enhancement Program?**

Buildings are the most important physical component of a business district, economically, functionally, and aesthetically. Recognizing this, the Grant County Business Enhancement Program, herein referred to as “GCBEP” to county commercial property owners or business owners. The purpose of the program is to assist in preserving and enhancing the buildings of Grant County by providing financial assistance to those engaging in projects to develop their businesses through structural improvements.

The essential goals of the GCBEP are to:

1. Improve the structural integrity of buildings.
2. Restore the functionality of these buildings.
3. Make the business and commercial districts more useful to local business owners and clientele.
4. Encourage additional business investment opportunity improvements.
5. To provide financial assistance to property owners for structural rehabilitation and restoration and security.

### **ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS & PROJECTS**

Any commercial property or business owner, registered Oregon State Business, within Grant County that is a chamber member may apply. Grants are only available for small independently-owned businesses. Large corporations, banks, and franchises will not be eligible. Award is not limited to a single building – it can be multiple buildings under one owner or jointly between adjoining properties.

Unapproved changes to the project that affect the eligibility criteria will make the grant invalid. If changes are desired, reevaluation and approval must first be obtained from GCBEP.

The applicant is required to obtain all necessary permits as required for the project. Copies of permit approvals must be submitted with application.

The Grant County Chamber of Commerce reserves the right to request additional information if necessary for evaluation of the funding request and to modify the guidelines and rules as needed.

All projects must comply with all relevant local, state and federal laws and codes.

### **GENERAL ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

1. Exterior and interior improvements intended to restore and rehabilitate, include but are not limited to:

- Repair of Roofing
- Insulation
- Brick facade tuck pointing (involves repairing the mortar joints by coordinating the color of the mortar to match the brick, creating the illusion of very fine joints within the wall, and is ideal for historical buildings and brick structures where the mortar is noticeably wearing away)
- Window painting or repair
- Door painting or repair
- General storefront rehab or restoration
- Removal of false facade
- Facade restoration
- General cleaning
- Accessibility improvements
- Restoration projects, including removal of slip sheathing or other treatments
- Exterior and Interior lighting
- Landscaping/planter boxes
- General painting or paint removal
- Murals
- Signage
- Improved visibility of window displays
- Security Systems

## **GENERAL INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

- Ineligible projects and activities include, but are not limited to:
- Working capital
- Payroll
- Financing or inventory
- Financing of building acquisition
- Refinancing existing debt
- Inappropriate restoration activities such as restorations that reduce the integrity and the strength of building structures, and changes to structure that can be disruptive to other businesses
- Sidewalk or parking improvements
- Design elements that are not true to the original design approved.
- Professional design or engineered services.

## **MATCHING FUNDS**

Projects can be up to \$5,000 including grant, funded by 1:1 match (GCBEP 50% Contribution/up to \$2500). There is no minimum amount for total project cost.

Grant money is subject to the GCBEP Committee approval. Funding is contingent on available funds for that fiscal year (July 1- June 31); thus, less expensive projects may receive preference.

## **DISBURSEMENT**

Funds will be disbursed on a DISBURSEMENT basis ONLY; accurate and timely receipts are required to retain funds. Receipts can include, but are not limited to, bills, invoices and receipts.

Disbursement requests from expenses incurred prior to application approval will not be honored.

## **Grant County Design Standards and Style**

The intent of the design standards is not to require all building improvements to look the same, but rather to require buildings to contain certain design elements in common to create a more unified overall appearance. Common design elements are color, height, and artistic design. GCBEP values high design standards and creativity while encouraging solutions that achieve these goals affordably so that business and property owners are benefited rather than burdened by the revitalization process.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- The GCBEP will consider the following criteria when reviewing applications:
- Will the project add jobs?
- Will the project cause an unusable space to become useable?
- Is the project visible from Highway 395 or 26?
- Has applicant been awarded the GCBEP in the past?
- Is the project vital to the operations of the business?
- Is the project vital to the security and/or integrity of the structure of the building?
- Curb appeal

## **APPLICATION**

A signed application constitutes an agreement between the building owner, business owner, and the GCBEP. Use of local qualified contractors and suppliers is highly encouraged. Projects should generally be ready to proceed at time of application approval by GCBEP. Applicants may apply only one time per year as the funds are limited. Applicants may apply up to three times in a five-year period. Projects must be completed 120 days from award of monies.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

1. Contact the Grant County Chamber for information.
2. Complete the application and agreement.
3. With your application, provide a description of the project, including color photos of the existing building conditions and sketches/photos/plans of the proposed improvements.
4. Provide a project budget, including grant amount, and additional funding needed for each project item.
5. After reaching final design plans, complete the application and submit it to the GCBEP Committee for approval.

Grants will be awarded competitively and on a first come first serve basis until all enhancement funds have been exhausted for the respective fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

The GCBEP Committee will review applications for completeness and determine if funding is to be recommended. Applications are due by the 1st of each month and grant decisions will be made by the 15th of each month.

Please contact the Grant County Chamber with any further questions at 541-575- 0547.