

CITY OF OCALA – COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY WEST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

One of the statutory functions of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is to undertake activities that facilitate the redevelopment and improvement of properties. Incentive programs aimed at encouraging private investment into properties have proven to be a successful activity to carry out this redevelopment function.

Additionally, the appearance and use of buildings and structures is the basis of the public's overall impression of Ocala as it plays an important role in marketing Ocala as a special place. Improving the physical appearance and use of buildings will promote the attraction and retention of business operations and promote economic growth.

Goal 1: Strategies include – Provision of grants for properties which add value in the CRA and increase the potential for property redevelopment.

Goal 2: Restore value and prominence to gateways, corridor segments and crossroads by enhancing their physical appearance and visually differentiating their special character.

Goal 3: Improve vacant, dilapidated and nuisance properties which are barriers to corridor redevelopment and negatively impact the value of corridors and neighborhoods.

Only work begun after approval by the Ocala CRA will be eligible for a grant. Work in progress or performed before approval will not be eligible.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Step 1: Gather two quotes; both should include the same scope of work (if painting yourself, print paint costs from paint suppliers).

Step 2: Complete the grant application attached or visit <https://ocalafl.civicserve.com/> to complete the online.

Step 3: Submit application and other required application materials by due date.

There are three ways to submit an application;

1. Submit online through the Ocala's economic development portal **CivicServe** (<https://ocalafl.civicserve.com/>);
2. Scan and email the application to cra@ocalafl.gov; or
3. Mail or bring the application in person to 201 SE 3rd Street, Second Floor, Ocala, FL 34471.

APPLICATION DEADLINES - 2024

January 22, 2024

February 23, 2024

April 19, 2024

June 21, 2024

August 26, 2024

October 25, 2024

Email questions to cra@ocalafl.gov

II. **Eligibility and General Requirements**

- (a) Eligible Applicants - Applicants for the Program must be the property owner. Proof of ownership is required.
 - 1. Proof can include: copy of deed, property appraiser tax card, or Ocala electric/utility bill.
- (b) Ineligible Properties - The following types of property are **not eligible** without City Council approval:
 - 1. Tax delinquent property
 - 2. Property in litigation
 - 3. Property in condemnation or receivership
 - 4. Property or tenants with outstanding financial obligations to the City.
- (c) Eligible Areas - The building or property must be located within the specified neighborhood outlined in the grant framework on page 11 of this application.
- (d) Ineligible Work:
 - 1. Grants cannot be used to correct outstanding code violations in an active code enforcement case.
 - 2. Only wood, masonry, and stucco are eligible for the paint grant. Vinyl and aluminum siding are not eligible.
- (e) Only work begun **after** approval by the Ocala CRA will be eligible for a grant. Work in progress or performed before approval will not be eligible.
- (f) Any changes to the approved project will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the CRA in order to retain the grant. Staff will inspect work, following completion of project to confirm outcome as proposed.
- (g) Grants may be subject to cancellation if not completed or significant progress has not been made by the project completion deadline. Requests for extensions will be considered **only if** made in writing and progress toward completion has been demonstrated.

III. Application Materials

- (a) Application packages must include enough documentation to illustrate the visual impact of the project and its cost. Failure to provide required information may delay the review process or cause the application to be ineligible. The following items are required to be submitted:
1. A completed application form.
 2. Proof of Ownership and homestead status.
 3. Color photographs of the existing conditions.
 4. Color photo examples of proposed colors.
 5. Project Schedule
 6. Project budget, showing detailed estimates for all work items. Do not include any design or permitting costs in the project estimate.
 7. At least 2 competitive bid proposals from contractors (licensed within the City of Ocala). These proposals should provide a detailed list of the work to be completed, a detailed breakdown of the costs, and the project schedule.
 8. Any other documentation necessary to illustrate the visual impact of the proposed project.
 9. Provide proof of property or liability content insurance (as applicable).

IV. Application Submittal and Review Process

- (a) Options: Submit online through the Ocala's economic development portal **CivicServe** (<https://ocalafl.civicserve.com/>); Scan and email the application to cra@ocalafl.gov; or Mail or bring the application to 201 SE 3rd Street, Second Floor, Ocala, FL 34471.
- (b) The property owner(s) as well as the applicant must sign the application agreeing to the General Conditions, set forth therein.
- (c) City Staff will review, document, and determine if the application meets all eligibility requirements and is sufficiently complete to review.
- (d) Staff may meet with applicant to review completed application.

- (e) Applications deemed complete will be reviewed by:
 - 1. the Grant Review Committee, who will make a site visit to the property to evaluate the application, scope of work and property condition; and,
 - 2. the CRA Advisory Committee to recommend if the project should receive a grant (according to priority criteria) and if so, recommend the amount of the award. The applicant is encouraged to attend the Advisory Committee meeting to answer questions about the project; and,
 - 3. the Ocala CRA Board that makes the final determination if a grant is approved. The determination is based on the evaluation criteria in Section V –Application Evaluation.
- (f) The CRA will notify the applicant/property owner in writing of award approval. Work cannot begin until applicant has received a written notice from the CRA indicating the grant has been approved.
- (g) Any deviation from the approved project must be reviewed and approved by the CRA.
- (h) City staff will review progress during renovation process.
- (i) Upon completion of work, city staff will inspect building to verify compliance with project application.

V. Application Evaluation

After an application has been deemed to meet all eligibility requirements, the application will be evaluated, and a grant may be awarded based on the following criteria.

- (a) Does proposed project include the priority work elements of the CRA subarea grant program?
- (b) Is the structure historic?
- (c) Is the property located in the CRA?
- (d) What is the overall condition of the property?

VI. Reimbursement

- (a) Upon submission of complete documentation, reimbursement will be made to the applicant. Submissions shall include:
 - 1. invoices for all work performed, with details of work clearly expressed;
 - 2. copies of cancelled checks;
 - 3. paid receipts for all labor materials; and,

4. lien waivers from all contractors and sub-contractors.
- (b) Reimbursement shall be made according to the requirements of each grant program.
- (c) The City reserves the right to refuse reimbursement of expenditures in whole or in part for work that:
1. Does not conform to the program guidelines.
 2. Does not conform to the proposal(s) submitted with the application and authorized by the CRA.
 3. Is not commensurate with the workmanship and costs customary in the industry.
 4. Is not completed within the established time frame (typically 6 to 12 months depending on the scope of the project). Since the CRA cannot reserve funds for projects indefinitely, projects may be subject to cancellation if not completed or if significant progress has not been made by the progress deadline. Requests for extensions will be considered only if made in writing and progress toward completion has been determined.
 5. Staff will inspect work to ensure that it complies with the approved plans. Any changes to the approved plan will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the CRA in order to retain the grant.
- (d) Reimbursement can be expected approximately **6 weeks** after all of the following documentation has been submitted:
1. Copies of all paid invoices and cancelled checks for all of the work covered by the grant. These must equal at least the required matching amount plus the amount of the grant. Invoices must be marked paid, signed, and dated by the contractors.
 2. Copies of the signed contracts with contractors chosen to do the work.
 3. Copies of lien waivers from all general contractors, subcontractors, and major material suppliers, if applicable.
 4. Photographs of the completed project.
- (e) Projects that have received a grant prior to having secured tenants for rental spaces must have at least partial occupancy before a reimbursement will be processed.

CITY OF OCALA – WEST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

(Completed application and all required attachments must be submitted)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: _____

Project Address: _____

Parcel Number: _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant's Name:

Name of person to receive all correspondence if different from applicant:

Agent's Name (if applicable): _____

Agent's Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone number: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____

How long have you owned / lived at the current location? _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

If necessary, attach additional sheets addressing the following:

Explain the purpose of and need for the proposed improvements.

Would the proposed improvements be made without the assistance of the grant program? If not, please explain.

PROJECT COSTS & SCHEDULE

Estimated cost of project based on attached submitted low bid. _____

Required -- Attach itemized bid sheets.

How much funding assistance are you requesting? _____

Anticipated start date: _____ Anticipated completion date: _____

GENERAL CONDITIONS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant shall be solely responsible for all safety conditions and compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, ordinances, and other applicable regulations.

It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant will not seek to hold the City of Ocala, the Grant Review Committee (Committee) and/or its agents, employees, board members, officers and/or directors liable for any property damage, personal injury, or other loss relating in any way to the Program.

It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant will hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, employees and attorneys for all costs incurred in additional investigation or study of, or for supplementing, redrafting, revising, or amending any document (such as an Environmental Impact Report, specific plan, or general plan amendment) if made necessary by said proceeding and if the applicant desires to pursue such approvals and/or clearances, after initiation of the proceeding, which are conditioned on the approval of these documents.

The applicant authorizes the City of Ocala to promote any approved project including but not limited to displaying a sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in City of Ocala materials and press releases.

If the applicant fails to perform the work approved by the Committee, the City reserves the right to cancel the grant. The applicant also understands that any work started/completed before the application is approved by the Committee is done at their own risk, and that such work will jeopardize their grant award.

Completion of this application by the applicant DOES NOT guarantee that grant monies will be awarded to the applicant.



Applicant

I, _____, owner/occupant of building at _____, have read and understand the terms and conditions of the Program and agree to the general conditions and terms outlined in the application process and guidelines of the Program.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Property Information – For staff use only

Is the property assessed Marion County property taxes? Y / N

Are property taxes paid up to date? Y / N

Is the property in condemnation or receivership? Y / N

Is there an active City code enforcement case on the property? Y / N

Is the building on the National Register of Historic Places? Y / N



**CITY OF OCALA – COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
WEST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM**

Revised March 2024

Purpose	
To encourage residents of single-family and duplex homes within designated neighborhoods in the West Ocala CRA to make improvements to their properties, thereby reducing blighted conditions and improving the aesthetics of the community.	
Plan Consistency	
<i>Priority #4: Solve homeless problem.</i>	
<i>Priority #5: Create means for residential growth to include more owner-occupied Residents.</i>	
Eligible Areas	Neighborhoods within the West Ocala CRA subarea.
Eligible Properties	Single family and duplex homes within the West Ocala CRA subarea. This includes owner occupied and rental units.
Ineligible Properties	Properties with active code enforcement case or code enforcement liens; Tax delinquent property; property in litigation; property in condemnation or receivership; property or tenants with outstanding financial obligations to City require City Council approval.
Eligible applicant	Property owner
Eligible work	<p>Only work begun after approval by the CRA Board will be eligible for a grant. Work in progress or performed before approval will not be eligible.</p> <p><u>Project work elements are:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exterior painting – colors must be approved by Committee; Pressure washing and other work to repair and prep for painting. 2. Repair and replacement of windows, doors (Exterior improvements only). 3. Demolition of irreparable damaged houses or structures for the construction affordable housing. 4. New landscaping area visible from the street/sidewalk (Including Removal of hazardous trees.) 5. Fencing. 6. Reroofing. 7. Weatherization. 8. New construction. 9. Conversion from septic system to City sanitary sewer service.
Maximum Grant	\$20,000 (Reimbursement)
Required Match	City (75%) – Applicant (25%) <i>To receive the maximum grant of \$20,000, the project cost for eligible work must be at least \$26,666.</i>