



Jersey City Urban Enterprise Zone
Business Improvement Grant Program

INTRODUCTION and INSTRUCTIONS
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Grant Description

Jersey City and the Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) have collaborated to provide a matching grant program designed to support UEZ-registered businesses located within the boundaries of the UEZ who plan to rehabilitate and improve the character of their building's façade. The goal of the program is the visual enhancement of individual facades as key elements in a comprehensive program for the revitalization of the business districts in Jersey City.

Grant Eligibility

All UEZ-registered businesses located within the UEZ are eligible to apply for this grant. Proof of registration is required before proceeding with the grant program. UEZ registration requires a separate application process, location within the UEZ zone is not a substitute for this stipulation. Applicant is responsible for maintaining UEZ registration through the duration of the grant process. Commercial lessees in the funding area are eligible with written permission from the lessor. For each and every business applying for a grant, the address of UEZ registration shall be the same address where the proposed work is applied for. Tenant Applicants shall provide a copy of lease agreements verifying the address stipulated as the site of proposed work. If no such documentation exists, applicant must substantiate tenancy at that location to the satisfaction of the UEZ. If UEZ registration lapses at any point during the grant process then no reimbursement will be issued, even if prior approvals or reimbursements have been made. Businesses participating in the grant program must also be in tax compliance in order to receive any reimbursement.

Funding Criteria

- Individual applicants will receive up to a 50% matching grant, up to a maximum of \$20,000 per building. All applicants must be registered with the UEZ.
- All restoration, rehabilitation and new construction projects must conform to the all applicable municipal ordinances and historical commission recommendations as well as the Department of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (where applicable). Priority will be given to projects in which the proposed improvements will enhance the character of the entire façade and which maintain compatibility with adjacent structures.
- Grants will be awarded based on approved construction costs for rehabilitation of storefronts and total upper facades: decorative cornices, architectural elements, entries, windows, awnings, signs, lighting, security gates and fencing and landscaping improvements.
- Routine maintenance, structural repairs not related to façade improvements, and interior improvements are not within the purview of this grant. Funding for roof repair will be limited to the decorative roofs below the cornice line.
- The applicant, owner and contractor shall be fully insured for the duration of the project and shall provide copies of insurance certificates to the Urban Enterprise Zone and all other pertinent agencies prior to approval.
- No work, labor, or materials can be ordered or installed prior to receipt of Certificate of Approval by Applicant.
- The grant only applies to exterior work visible from the sidewalk.

Review and Approval Process

Prior to any work, the UEZ shall review and approve all proposals based on adherence to the all applicable municipal ordinances and historical commission recommendations and the Department of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (where applicable). The review shall focus on each proposal's success at preserving and/or enhancing the character of the building or buildings in question; adherence to high aesthetic standards; and compatibility of proposal with adjacent structures. Applicants shall submit to the UEZ a complete description of their project, in compliance with the schedule noted and in the format described below. Eligible Applicants are welcome to consult the Design Review Board for review and comment on their proposals prior to and during their schematic design efforts. However, no project subject to review by the Jersey City Historic Preservation Commission shall be reviewed by the UEZ until it has received approvals from the Jersey City Historic Preservation Commission: either a Certificate of No Effect or a Certificate of Appropriateness.

1. Pre-Design Conference/Conceptual Review

- a. Prior to formal submission of application, the applicant(s) should request a meeting with representatives of the UEZ Grant Review Board and discuss the goals of the project.
- b. The basic packet that the applicant(s) must provide for the pre-design conference are:
 - i. Full description of the site and the proposed project
 - ii. Photographs and/or sketches of subject and adjacent structures
 - iii. Sketches of proposed improvements, and
 - iv. A context map for block applicants.
 - v. A copy of the 1938 tax photo.
- c. The applicant(s) shall be prepared to discuss special program needs as well as unusual functional aspects of the proposal. If unique architectural concepts or design elements are contemplated, they should be presented at this conference with supporting materials.

2. Application Process

- a. Submittals:

A complete list of application requirements and attachments are designated on the application checklist. The applicant(s) shall provide three complete cost estimates for the project. Applicant shall demonstrate that all required financing is in place and that they are a registered member of the UEZ.
- b. Application Completeness Review:

Once the application has been submitted, UEZ personnel will review the application for completeness within approximately two (2) weeks. The response time is based on the number of applicants and meeting schedule of UEZ's Grant Review Board. During this period, the applicant(s) may be asked to submit additional information. *The application will not proceed unless all the necessary information has been received, including all necessary attachments.* For the complete list of requirements, see attached check list and application. The application packet will be placed on file and the applicant(s) will receive a project number to track the progress of said project by contacting the UEZ personnel.

3. Design Approval

The proposed project will be reviewed by the UEZ Grant Review Board. The board will issue design recommendations to the applicant(s) within two (2) weeks after application is deemed complete. Applicant(s) will then have twenty (20) days to incorporate recommendations into this final design or submit alternative solutions. Applicants not meeting their deadline shall be considered withdrawn. If Planning Board, Zoning Board or Historic Preservation Commission approval is deemed necessary, the approved design shall be submitted as a recommendation to the appropriate board at this time.

4. Preliminary Funding Approval

When the UEZ Grant Review Board deems that the project has met all necessary design, schedule, cost estimates and financial criteria, as well as all necessary approvals from required City Agencies, the project will then receive preliminary approval for funding.

5. Review by Applicable City Agencies

Applicant(s) are required to obtain all necessary permits from appropriate City Agencies (Building, Zoning, Planning, Historic Commission, etc.). These permits will be granted upon review and approval by those agencies. *In no way does approval by the UEZ Grant and Design Review Board substitute for appropriate approval by City Agencies.* Any approvals issued by the UEZ shall be conditional, subject to receipt of required permits and approvals. Copies of permits and all approvals required by City and other Agencies (including but not limited to those by Zoning Board, Planning Board, and Historic Commission) shall be provided to the UEZ before final grant approval or grant reimbursements can be issued.

6. Final Funding Approval /Conformation/Compliance

Upon obtaining all necessary permits, and furnishing copies of same to the Grant Program, applicant(s) will sign a Grant Agreement with the UEZ. For grant disbursements of \$5,000 and under, the applicant(s) will receive 50% of the grant amount at 50% completion as indicated in the approved project schedule and the balance at 100% completion. For grant disbursements of over \$5,000, the grant will be dispensed at 50%, 75% and 100% completeness. At each milestone, the applicant(s) shall submit a requisition for payment to the UEZ and schedule a site visit by its representative, prior to each payment. For grant disbursements over \$15,000, requisition for payment shall not be reviewed unless it has been signed and approved by the applicant's licensed consultant(s).

In order to receive final reimbursement, applicants must submit copies of the cancelled checks (both sides) which were paid out to their contractors as well as final signed invoices.

NOTE: For further information, please contact the Jersey City Urban Enterprise Zone, 30 Montgomery Street, 8th Floor, Jersey City, NJ, 07302, Telephone 201-333-7797.