



**BUILDING IMPROVEMENT AND  
DESIGN & ENGINEERING  
GRANT APPLICATION  
VILLAGE OF MORTON, ILLINOIS**



The Building Improvement and the Design & Engineering Grant Programs of the Village of Morton make funds available to business owners and property owners located within the Morton Business District for the rehabilitation of commercially-zoned buildings located within the District. The goal of these programs is to promote commercial redevelopment activities within the District, improve the aesthetic elements of commercially-zoned buildings located within the District, and enhance the overall business landscape, thereby supporting the quality of life for residents of the community.

The Programs are part of the Village's economic development efforts and are administered by the Village through its Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission. The funds to support these programs are derived from the Business District Sales Tax of .25% which is charged on retail sales within the Business District.

The decision to fund a project is made by the Village Board of Trustees based upon the recommendation of the Commission. The Commission recommends applications based on the merits of the proposed project and the applicability to the Program's requirements.

The grant award cycle begins May 1 and runs through April 30 each year. Projects will be evaluated for funding based upon the date of receipt of the completed application and the availability of funds in the grant award cycle.

### **STEP ONE – INITIAL ELIGIBILITY**

**Indicate below if you are applying for the Building Improvement Grant, the Design & Engineering Grant, or both.**

☐

Building Improvement Grant

☐

Design & Engineering Grant

### **Basic Eligibility Checklist**

#### **5-Year Requirement:**

Have you owned this property (based on address) for 5 years or more? If so, have you received funding through this grant program in the past 5 years? *If both questions are yes, you are eligible to receive pro-rated funding until the 5-year period has passed.*

#### **Other Initial Eligibility Requirements Which Must Be Met for Eligibility:**

1. The property must be located within the Village of Morton Business District. (map shown in this document and is also available on our website at [www.morton-il.gov](http://www.morton-il.gov).)
2. The project components must be eligible. (see list of excluded items on the Guidelines on pages)
3. The project cost must be expected to exceed \$1,000.
4. You must be the owner of the property or its tenant with written consent of the owner.
5. The commercial usage of the building must be 51% or greater of the total square footage, unless it meets both of the following exceptions:
  - a. The business employs at least 3 full-time equivalent employees (30 or more hours per week).
  - b. The address must be zoned for commercial use.

**If all of the other initial eligibility requirements are met, you may be eligible for the program and you should complete the remainder of this application.**

### **APPLICATION FEE**

**A fee of \$250.00 must be submitted with this application. This fee will be returned if 1) the grant is not approved, or 2) the grant is approved and the work is completed within the allotted time frame. Make checks payable to the Village of Morton.**

## **APPLICATION TIMELINE**

Funds for the Building Improvement Program are approved on a first come, first served basis. The funds are allocated based on the Village fiscal year beginning May 1 and ending April 30 of the following year.

### **> SUBMIT APPLICATION**

- By the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month at 5:00 pm to the Village Hall at 120 N. Main. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, submission is required on the prior business day.
- Contact the Village Administrator at 309-266-5361, extension 284, to arrange for an in-person, 5 to 10 - minute project overview presentation for the Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Meetings are normally held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm at the Morton Police Station Training Room.
- Following presentation by application Commissioners score the application and forward a recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees.

### **> NOTIFICATION OF APPROVAL OR DENIAL**

- Applicant should be notified by mail or email of a decision by 60 days from presentation date.

### **> BEGINNING PROJECT**

- Applicant must not begin the portion of their project for which grant funds are requested until they receive a notice of approval. All work for which grant funds are awarded must be completed within one year of the date of the notice of approval.

### **> REIMBURSEMENT**

- Following completion, the applicant must provide the following to the Commission for approval of the reimbursement of the amount granted:
  - Invoices from contractor(s) which completed work. If project completed by owner, invoices for materials purchased.
  - Proof of payment of invoices, in the form of paid receipts, cancelled checks or credit card statements.
  - Photographs of the completed project.
- Upon receipt of the documents listed in item #5, the request for reimbursement will be presented at the next Business District Commission meeting for approval.
- If approved, the Village will issue payment to the project owner within 30 days.

## STEP TWO – APPLICANT & PROJECT INFORMATION

### 1. Applicant: (please print clearly)

Business Name or Individual Name if Sole Proprietor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Tax ID # or Social Security Number if Sole Proprietor: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Property: \_\_\_\_\_

If applicant is not the owner of the property, Section 2 must be completed and signed by the property owner.

### 2. Owner of Property (if same as Applicant, read the bottom paragraph and sign below)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that as the owner of the property located at:

\_\_\_\_\_,

I agree to and authorize the Applicant to apply for a grant under the Building Improvement Grant Program and to perform the proposed exterior work described in this application. I further certify that I am current on any and all property tax and mortgage payments.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Property Owner

**3. Subject Property**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Index Number (PIN): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Original Construction: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Use of Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Square Footage of Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial Use Square Footage: \_\_\_\_\_  
(square footage is calculated by multiplying the width times the length of space occupied)

Proposed Use of Property (If Different Than Current Use of Property):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. If Applicant Is Not the Property Owner, Does Applicant Have a Lease?**

☐ Yes ☐ No (circle one)

If Yes, what is the expiration date of the lease? \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Description of Project**

Provide an overall description of the proposed exterior work for this project.

Use additional paper if required.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### STEP THREE – PROJECT COST

**Required** – submit **2** current (dated within 60 days of application) estimates from qualified contractors for all work to be performed.

Specifications for Estimates:

1. Estimates must be from companies normally engaged in the area of work to be performed.
2. If the company providing the estimate is owned by the applicant or entity, or a relative thereof, the work will be considered to be self-performed. See below for self-performed work.
3. Estimates need to be detailed, including the cost of each segment of the project. If a segment isn't considered eligible, the cost needs to be identified. If a portion of the project isn't eligible and isn't able to be separated from the cost of the entire project, the entire project application *will be denied*.
4. If the project is related to a franchise-mandated update and the franchisor specifies the contractor to be used then only that contractor's estimate is required. In all other cases, failure to provide 2 estimates will be cause for denial.
5. Estimates from Morton businesses are encouraged.

**Self-performed work** – If the project, or portion thereof, is to be completed utilizing the labor of the applicant owner of the business, its employees, or any related entity, the grant will reimburse the cost of materials only.

**Itemized list of project segments** – List below the individual segments of the project and the costs from the estimates included. Itemized estimates are essential in case there are ineligible item(s) included. If so, an itemized estimate will allow us to separate those costs. Without itemization the entire application could be denied due to the ineligible item(s).

	Line Item	\$ Estimate #1	\$ Estimate #2
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
f.			
g.			

**Include Photographs of the Existing Building** – Please attach photographs which demonstrate the need for proposed improvements.

**Include a Sketch of the Proposed Conceptual Design** – Please attach a drawing of the proposed improvements.

**Description of Color and Material Samples** – Describe below the colors to be used or attach samples.

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## STEP FOUR – GRANT INFORMATION

### Amount of Grant Funds Requested:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Building Improvement Grant (B.I.G.)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Architectural, Design, or Engineering Services (A.D.E.)

Building Improvement Grants for eligible costs may be awarded to applicants on a reimbursement basis for not more than fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost or \$10,000.00, whichever is less.

Architectural, Design and Engineering Grants may be awarded to eligible applicants for eligible projects on a reimbursement basis for not more than fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost or \$5,000.00, whichever is less.

<b>Grant Amount</b> if property purchased within 5 years of receipt of grant by prior owner:	<b>B.I.G.</b>	<b>A.D.E.</b>
One year from receipt	\$2,000	\$1,000
Two years from previous receipt	\$4,000	\$2,000
Three years from previous receipt	\$6,000	\$3,000
Four years from previous receipt	\$8,000	\$4,000

### What is the Estimated Time Necessary to Complete the Project?

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

The work for which grant funds are awarded is required to be commenced following notice of approval and completed within 12 months of the date the applicant is notified of the approval of the grant application.

### Describe how the Proposed Project is to be Financed:

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### Will the Proposed Exterior Work Be Performed if the Grant Is Not Awarded?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

Explain Your Answer:

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### Past Improvements

To the best of your knowledge, describe any past efforts to improve the exterior of the building which has been performed within the past ten (10) years:

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## **STEP FIVE – GRANT PROCESS**

### **Commencement and Completion of Work**

If this application is approved by the Village Board of Trustees, the applicant will receive a Notice of Approval from the Village. Any work that is included in the Grant Application, whether funded by the Village or the Applicant, must not commence prior to the receipt of the notice of approval from the Village. If grant funds are requested for work which is a portion of a larger project, the project may permissibly commence prior to receipt of the notice of approval from the Village, but the portion of the project for which grant funds are required may not have started or commenced prior to the receipt of the notice of approval from the Village.

The applicant acknowledges the following:

- a. They are responsible for selecting the firms and contractors who will complete the work.
- b. They are responsible for financing all of the work.
- c. All work will be performed in compliance with the Policies and Procedures of the Building Improvement Grant Program.
- d. All work will comply with all applicable Village codes, policies, and procedures.
- e. The building and the activities within the building must be in compliance with all applicable Village codes, policies, and procedures.
- f. The applicant is responsible for applying for and obtaining any and all licenses and permits necessary to perform the work.

The date of the Notice of Approval triggers the following deadlines:

- The project must be completed within one (1) calendar year from the date that the Notice of Approval is issued.
- Documentation stated below must be provided to the Village within 18 months in order to receive reimbursement.

Failure to meet these deadlines shall result in the forfeiture of the grant award by the Applicant. Extensions of these deadlines may be granted by the Commission, at their sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances.

### **Disbursement of Funds**

Upon completion of the project, the Applicant must request reimbursement.

#### **Required for reimbursement:**

- Photographs of the completed project
- Itemized bills, invoices, or statements
- Proof of payment in the form of copies of cancelled checks and/or receipts

#### **Process for reimbursement:**

- Items stated above submitted prior to the end of the month
- Review and approval of the request for reimbursement by the Commission at its next regular meeting
- Approval of payment by the Village Board
- Check released for payment

### **Maintenance of Completed Improvements**

The applicant agrees to reasonably maintain the improvements funded by the Program for a period of at least five (5) years following completion of the work. Failure to maintain improvements in good order or to repair such improvements following a 30-day notice by the Village shall require the Applicant to reimburse the Village the amount of the grant award.

### **Permission to Use Photographs of the Project “Before” and “After” Completion**

The applicant agrees to allow the Village of Morton to use the photographs provided, and those which are taken by the Village independently, of the project site before and after renovations are completed. These photographs will be utilized solely for the promotion of the Building Improvement Grant Program.



## FINAL CHECKLIST

Prior to submitting your application, please be sure the following are completed and included:

- ☐ Review of the Project with the Planning & Zoning Officer, Village of Morton
- ☐ All fields completed on form
- ☐ \$250 application fee included
- ☐ Two estimates for work to be completed included
- ☐ Photographs of the Existing Building included
- ☐ Sketch of the Proposed Design included

### Grant Application Signatures:

The undersigned certifies that all of the information provided in this application, and all of the supporting documentation is true and complete to the best of the applicant's knowledge and belief and that the applicant will abide by all of the provisions of the Building Improvement Grant Program policies and procedures.

If the applicant is not an individual, the undersigned certifies that he/she is a duly-authorized representative of the applying entity with the authority to legally bind and commit the entity.

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Signature of Applicant or  
Applicant's Authorized Representative

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Printed Name of Applicant or  
Applicant's Authorized Representative

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Title (If Applicant Is Not an Individual)

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Date

## Potentially Eligible Improvements

- Structural additions to an existing building (building must be over 10 years old)
- Code required improvements to newly occupied location (building must be over 10 years old unless code requirement did not exist when built)
- Exterior façade improvements
- Signage
- Permanent landscaping
- Demolition cost for buildings to be replaced by new construction

## Ineligible Items

- Any improvements performed or in progress prior to notification of approval
- Any improvement which is not allowed by Municipal Code
- Improvements to a location with is less than 50% commercially occupied, unless the business employs 3 or more full-time equivalent employees
- Improvements which are considered maintenance or upkeep will be evaluated on a case by case basis and must be part of a larger overall project
- Labor for any project where the work is performed by the applicant or by the employees of a business owned by the applicant or related party. The grant would only cover the materials required in this situation.
- Work to be performed on the interior of a building, unless it is a code required improvement that is part of an expansion or new location
- Any exterior improvement that is not visible from the street
- Fencing
- Movable or temporary landscaping
- New construction on a building less than ten years old, other than signage
- Parking lots, including any areas which receive motor traffic
- Sidewalks, which are defined by use as a pedestrian right of way and does not include customer access to your building
- Digital signage is not eligible if within the “downtown area”. See the map in the application packet for definition of the downtown area.
- Tools or equipment (either purchased or rented)

## Eligibility Criteria and Conditions

- 1) Owners or tenants of commercial properties located within the Village of Morton’s Business District are eligible to apply.
- 2) Applicants must not have received reimbursement from this Program in the past five (5) years (based on the address of the building).
- 3) Applicants are required to properly maintain the improvements included in the application project in accordance with all relevant Village Codes for a period of five (5) years following reimbursement.
- 4) Applicant and/or building owner must be in good standing with the Village and not in arrears with any financial obligations to the Village, including, but not limited to; taxes, license fees, assessments, and/or utility bills or property taxes to the County of Tazewell.
- 5) The project must comply with all Village and State codes, requirements, and inspections.
- 6) If more applications are received than current funding levels will allow, the Village reserves the right to prioritize applications. The Village reserves the right to reject any or all applications at its sole discretion.
- 7) Projects are approved and grant dollars set aside on a first in, first awarded basis. The grant year begins May 1 and ends April 30.

## Application Process

- 1) **Contact Planning & Zoning** – The applicant should discuss the project with the Village Planning and Zoning department to determine if the project will meet Village guidelines and what permits, if any, will be required. The office number is 309-266-5361, extension 2252.
- 2) **Obtain Estimates** – Applicant must provide 2 estimates, dated within 60 days of application, for the project to be completed. Estimates must be from a business normally engaged in the work to be completed.

- 3) **Complete Application** – Tenants or Property owners may obtain a copy of the Building Improvement and Design/Engineering Grant Program application form at the Village Hall or on the Village website at [www.morton-il.gov](http://www.morton-il.gov).
- 4) **Return Application** – The completed application and an application deposit of \$250.00 must be delivered to the Village Hall prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- 5) **Interview** – Applicants are required to attend the Business District Commission meeting at their next scheduled meeting. Meetings are normally held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Applicants will be interviewed by the Commissioners to determine the scope of their project and answer any questions the Commissioners may have on their application.
- 6) **Approval** – The Commissioners will review the application and information received during the interview to determine if the project is eligible. The Applicant will be notified of approval by the Business District Commission and the Village Board of Trustees. This date of notification triggers the following deadlines:
  - a) The project must be completed within one year of the date of approval.
  - b) The Applicant must provide documentation for reimbursement within 18 months of approval.
- 7) **Reimbursement** – Upon completion of the project and submittal of the documentation for reimbursement, the Applicant will be reimbursed an amount not to exceed the amount of approval, along with a refund of their application deposit. If the project costs are lower than the proposed amounts, the Applicant will receive ½ of the costs, up to \$10,000 for construction and \$5,000 for design/engineering.
- 8) **Denials** – If the application is denied, the Applicant will receive a refund of their application deposit.
- 9) **Incomplete Projects** – If the application is approved, but the Applicant fails to complete the project or submit proper documentation within the time constraints stated above, the application deposit will be forfeited.
- 10) **Repayment** – If the applicant or property owner on the application sells the property within 5 years of reimbursement for improvements the applicant will be required to repay the grant on the following schedule:
  - a) within 1 year of grant receipt – 80% to be repaid
  - b) within 2 years of receipt 60%
  - c) within 3 years of receipt 40%
  - d) within 4 years of receipt 20%
  - e) after 5 years from receipt no repayment





Digital Signage is Not Eligible for any Location Within the Blue-Shaded Area

