



Building Improvement Grant Program Guidelines

- Purpose:** To support rehabilitation and preservation of commercial property; encourage new business; and retain, revitalize, and expand existing business in Morton.
- Approval:** Based on the merit and design of the project upon review by the Village of Morton Business District Commission and the Village Board. The Village reserves the right to prioritize applications on the basis of scope of work, level of private investment, and relative impact of the proposed improvements on the Business District.
- Assistance:** Property owners or tenants who propose to install at least \$1,000 of total improvements, are eligible to receive a grant equal to 50% of the total eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000. Property owners or tenants who propose to utilize design and or engineering costs are eligible to receive a grant equal to 50% of the total eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$5,000.
- Locations:** Commercially-zoned properties within the Village of Morton Business District. A map is available on the Village's website at www.morton-il.gov.

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 changed since 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.
- 4) **Return Application** – The completed application and an application deposit of \$250.00 must be delivered to the Village Hall prior to the 15th 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 2nd 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