



## **STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT APPLICATION** FUNDED BY: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)



**City of East Providence, Rhode Island**  
ROBERTO DASILVA, mayor

The City of East Providence is offering funding to qualified businesses for improvements to their storefronts utilizing funds awarded to the City by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Small businesses were hit particularly hard by the Pandemic and this program is a means of providing long-term benefit and improvement to small businesses and the corridors where their businesses are located. Storefront grants are being offered to business owners to improve or restore the original character of their building, increase their visibility, and improve their foot traffic.

### **The goals of the Program are to:**

- Bring energy to the commercial corridors of our City;
- Improve foot traffic and visibility for the businesses in our City;
- Preserve and beautify our City's commercial corridors;
- Create a pleasant walking environment by improving the visual aesthetics of commercial building in our City.

You may submit the application and supporting materials via email by sending it to [mspurr@eastprovidenceri.gov](mailto:mspurr@eastprovidenceri.gov)

**APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2024  
or, until the designated funds are allocated, whichever comes first.**

You may also mail a paper copy of the application and supporting materials to:

East Providence City Hall  
Office of Planning  
145 Taunton Avenue  
East Providence, Rhode Island 02914





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## GRANT AMOUNT

Eligible business owners can receive a grant up to \$40,000 for eligible storefront improvements.

For grant requests over \$10,000, applicants are required to provide a 25% match of the amount over \$10,000.

Grant amounts up to \$10,000 do not require a match.

The match may not be met using funds from other ARPA-funded programs.

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## WHAT IS A STOREFRONT?

A storefront is considered the front of the building; the part that faces the street. This includes the sides of the building readily viewed by motorists and pedestrians. This program also covers interior improvements to window displays. Note that this **does not** include the roof.



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## ELIGIBLE COSTS

This program covers window repair or replacement, doors, awnings, painting, siding, window stickers, re-pointing of brick, exterior lighting, decorative architectural details such as cornices/parapet walls, sidewalk planters, window boxes, landscaping, and signage.

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## ELIGIBLE BUSINESSES

Most businesses located in Qualified Census Tracts (see page 5) are eligible.

If you are outside the Qualified Census Tracts, you qualify if you were a *disproportionately impacted business* in these industries, as defined by ARPA:

- Arts;
- Entertainment;
- Recreation;
- Accommodation;
- Food Services;
- Personal Care Services.

*Businesses outside of the Qualified Census Tracts and not in a disproportionately impacted industry might be eligible for funding through this program. Preference must be given to businesses located in low-to-moderate income areas first, per ARPA and the US Treasury.*

### SMALL BUSINESSES ARE DEFINED HERE AS:

1. Having no more than 100 employees,
2. Being locally, independently owned and operated.



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## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- All storefront improvements must comply with City building and zoning standards.
- Most businesses located in Qualified Census Tracts (see page 5) are eligible for Storefront Improvement. Businesses not located in Qualified Census Tracts must be considered a “disproportionately impacted” business. (See Eligible Businesses section on page 2)
- Commercial tenants wishing to participate must do so with the signed permission of the property owner.
- The applicant must have no outstanding city taxes, fees, or other assessments due to the City.
- Chain franchises are not eligible for this program.
- The Planning Department reserves the right to make the final determination as to the design, appropriateness, and suitability of the improvements.

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## ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Signs and awnings;
- Exterior lighting;
- Painting and/or residing with wood, stone, brick, or other appropriate exterior siding material;
- Window replacement and window framing;
- Replacement or restoration of original architectural details;
- Removal of elements which cover architectural details;
- New storefront construction within an existing building;
- Interior improvements to enhance window displays (lighting, etc.);
- ADA-compliant entryways;
- Murals;
- Planters and window boxes;
- Landscaping;
- Removal of excess asphalt to create better drainage/ add rain gardens.

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## INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Projects that are underway or were begun prior to an agreement with the City;
- New construction;
- Internally lit signs;
- Roof repair;
- Removal of architecturally significant features;



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## CONSTRUCTION

All construction work must be undertaken by contractors that are licensed and insured to do business in Rhode Island. **Hiring of the contractor(s) will be the responsibility of the program participant.** The city will not direct applicants to particular contractors. The applicant must secure **at least two competitive bids** and then select the lowest qualified bid. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the contractor undertakes the storefront improvements in accordance with the plans approved by the City. Failure to ensure compliance will result in termination from participation in the program.

Some simple improvements can be done by the applicant.

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## FINANCIAL TERMS

Applicants can receive a grant up to \$40,000 for eligible storefront improvements. For grant requests over \$10,000, applicants are required to provide a 25% match of the amount over \$10,000. Grant amounts up to \$10,000 do not require a match. The match may not be met using funds from other ARPA-funded programs.

The applicant will receive payment in three installments: the first installment of 50% upon submission of an invoice from qualified contractors, a second payment of 25% when projects is half-completion, and the final 25% upon completion of all proposed improvements. The city will inspect the property before the first payment to ensure that the work has commenced and then authorize release of the final installment upon city's approval of work completed.

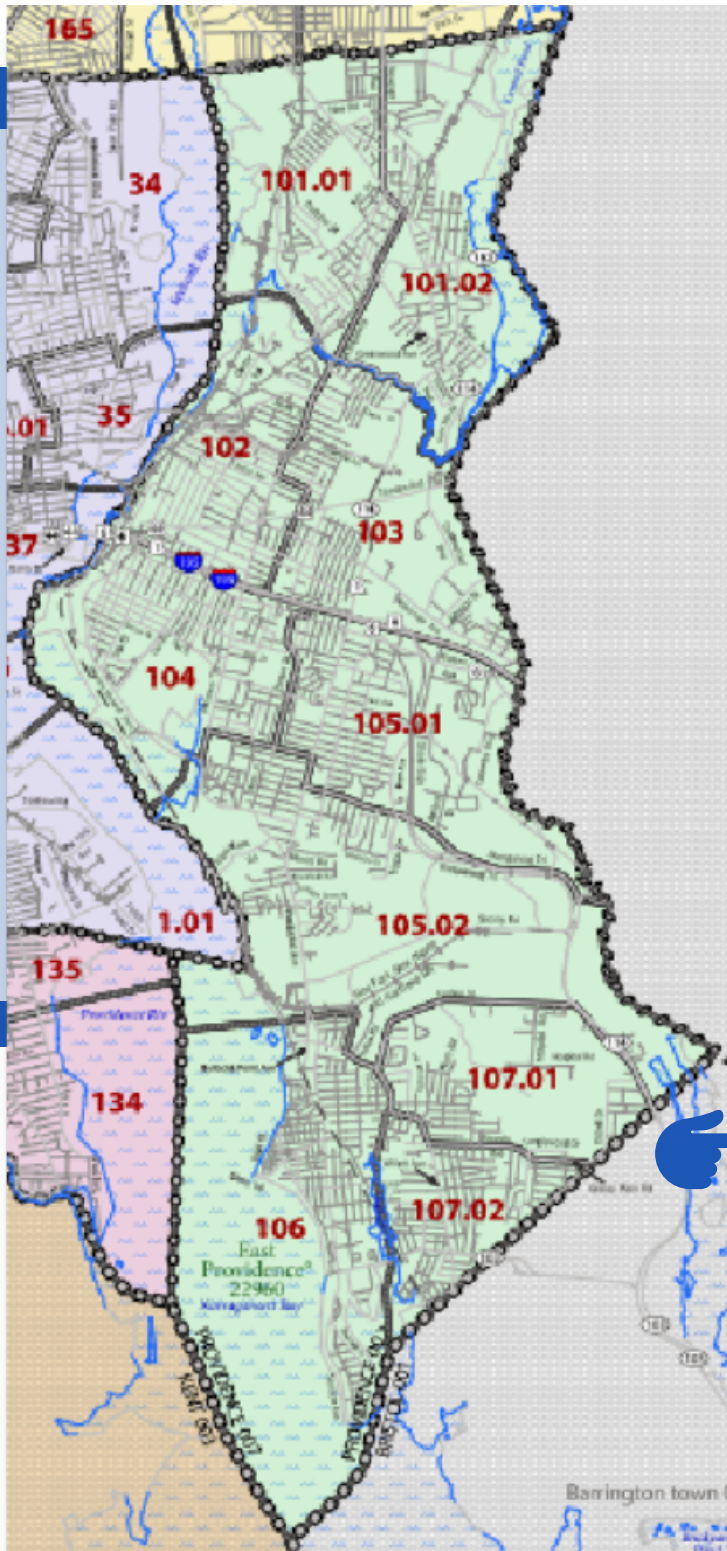
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## TERMINATION

The City has the right to reject the Storefront Improvement Program application or terminate any agreement if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines, fails to begin construction *within one year of an executed agreement* with the City, or has started the project prior to an executed agreement with the City.

Projects that do not adhere to the agreed design and concept or violate the agreement in any way will be suspended from the program, funding will cease, and a lien may be placed on the property until funds are recovered.





# EAST PROVIDENCE CENSUS TRACTS

Businesses located in these census tracts will have higher priority for funding, per ARPA and the U.S. Treasury:

- 103
- 104
- 106
- 102
- 105.01



Greatest emphasis will be paid to these specific areas:

- Waterman Avenue from Pawtucket Avenue to North Brow Street (Tracts 102 & 103)
- Riverside Square from the juncture at Willett Avenue to Crescent View (Tract 106)
- Warren Avenue area from Pawtucket Avenue to Water Street (Tracts 104 & 105.01)



To see an easier-to read version of this map, [click here](#).

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## TIMELINE FOR GETTING STARTED

- 1 Applicant submits application with required materials including a plan/sketch/photos or in the instance of larger projects a detailed set of drawings demonstrating the proposed work.
- 2 Property is evaluated and assessed for feasibility and eligibility.
- 3 Applicant secures bids from at least two qualified contractors.
- 4 Plans and design are reviewed for approval.
- 5 Application, including designs and all bids are submitted to the Economic Development Commission for review.
- 6 If approved, City issues letter of conditional approval.
- 7 Applicant obtains all necessary permits.
- 8 Applicant enters into agreement with the city.
- 9 Initial payment (50% of the total) is made to applicant and work commences.
- 10 When project is at half-completion, an additional payment of 25% will be processed.

Upon completion of project and approvals from any needed inspections, the final 25% is released to the applicant.

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## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to help you remember all the pieces you need to submit with your Storefront Improvement application.

Remember to include this checklist with your submission.

- Completed application**
- Application Checklist** (this form)
- Copy of property deed**
- Copy of lease** (if occupied by a tenant)
- Project description** A written statement of what the Storefront Improvement project will involve. Provide as much detail as possible, including what you are changing or replacing, the types of materials to be used, colors, etc.
- Drawings of proposed Storefront Improvement** A concept drawing of what the storefront will look like after work is completed. For larger projects, include site plans. For smaller projects, a simple sketch may be appropriate. The sketch must include sufficient detail, including product sample sheets of design elements such as windows, doors, lighting, awnings, colors, type of materials.





# APPLICATION for STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT FUNDING



**PROJECT INFORMATION**

NAME OF BUSINESS: [ ]

PROJECT ADDRESS: [ ]

ESTIMATED START DATE: [ ]

ESTIMATED END DATE: [ ]

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:  
[ ]

PROPERTY OWNER NAME: [ ]

OWNER ADDRESS: [ ]

EMAIL [ ]

PHONE [ ]

TAX ID NUMBER: [ ]

BUSINESS OWNER NAME, IF DIFFERENT THAN PROPERTY OWNER: [ ]

BUSINESS OWNER ADDRESS: [ ]

EMAIL [ ]

PHONE [ ]

BUSINESS OWNER TAX ID NUMBER: [ ]

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

FUNDING AMOUNT REQUESTED: [ ]

PROJECT LOCATION: [ ]

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN THE BUILDING: [ ]

TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: [ ]

TYPE OF OWNERSHIP:

- CORPORATION
- PARTNERSHIP
- SOLE PROPRIETOR
- LLC
- NON-PROFIT
- OTHER

DESIGN FIRM/ARCHITECT, if needed: [ ]

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN BUSINESS? [ ]

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

I/we attest that all information provided in this entire application is true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge and that no information has been excluded which might reasonably affect funding. I/we authorize the City of East Providence to obtain verification from any source provided.

NAME (printed): [ ]

SIGNATURE: [ ]

DATE: [ ]

NAME (printed): [ ]

SIGNATURE: [ ]

DATE: [ ]



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

**Please read the statements below and certify that you understand:**

- I/we certify that there are no current code enforcement actions pending against this property.
- I/we have attached a copy of all current leases.
- I/we certify that there are no outstanding property taxes, utilities, or other past due bills to the City of East Providence.
- I/we have attached relevant photos of the building facade(s) to be included in this program.
- I/we have reviewed the program overview and guidelines, have familiarity with responsibilities of each party and understand that the City shall not assume any liability for this or any such agreements.
- I/we have read and understand the City of East Providence's Design Guidelines, accept the qualifications and conditions, and through signature(s) below, certify that I/we are qualified and will abide by such conditions set forth in this application and all reasonable conditions which may be issued by the City of East Providence in the implementation of this program.
- I/we understand that this is a voluntary program, under which the City of East Providence has the right to approve or deny any project or proposal or portions thereof.

Applicant Name:

Applicant Name:

Applicant Signature:

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Date:

Property Owner Name:

Property Owner Name:

Property Owner's Signature:

Property Owner's Signature:

Date:

Date: