



CITY OF GROTON

Economic Development Commission

Business Soft Cost Grant Program – Overview

Description:

The purpose of this program is to strengthen the City's business base and stimulate growth by providing incentives to qualifying new or expanding* businesses.

In this initial phase, grant funds are available to reimburse all or part of the soft costs associated with opening or expanding a business in the City of Groton. Qualifying businesses shall be consistent with the City's Plan of Conservation and Development, City Land Use Regulations and any strategic economic development plans relevant to the City of Groton or southeastern Connecticut.

Eligible Applicant:

- Employ between 1 full time employee and 25 full time employees;
- Business owner/operator and property owner must be in good standing with the payment of all local taxes;
- Business must be located in a General Commercial (GC), Waterfront Business Residence (WBR), Five Corners (FC), Industrial/Technology (IT), or Technology Campus (TC) zone within the City of Groton. Exceptions may be made in transitional areas surrounding the aforementioned zones.

Ineligible Applicant:

- A home based business;
- Employ more than 25 full time employees or less than 1 full time employee;
- Business owner/operator and/or property owner with outstanding local taxes/fees;
- Business owner/operator and/or property owner are involved in litigation brought by the City of Groton or against the City of Groton; and
- Located in a zone other than General Commercial (GC), Waterfront Business Residence (WBR), Five Corners (FC), Industrial/Technology (IT), or Technology Campus (TC). (Exceptions may be made in transitional areas surrounding the aforementioned zones.)

Eligible Cost:

Soft costs directly associated with the opening or expanding of a business. Including, but not limited to:

- Architectural Fees;
- Survey and/or Soil Scientist Fees;
- Engineering Fees;
- Legal Fees (specific to planning and zoning issues); and,

*Expanding business is defined as, "growth in facility/physical space, increased number of employees, or value added to business (purchase of equipment/capital).

- Consultant Fees as pre-approved by Staff (deemed specific due to business operations).

Ineligible Costs:

- Permit Fees;
- Grant matching;
- Refinancing Debt;
- Payment of taxes or City/Town/State/Federal fees, assessments, interest, etc.

Funding Available:

Up to a \$1,000 grant per business. Grant is reimbursement of documented and eligible soft costs associated with opening or expanding a business in the eligible zones:

Selection:

The Economic Development Grant Review Subcommittee will review and evaluate applications. Recommendations for funding will be made to the EDC for approval.

Submit Applications To:

Economic Development Commission
C/O Planning Department
295 Meridian Street
Groton, CT 06340

Questions:

Contact: Barbara Goodrich
Planning and Development
Planning Department
goodrichb@cityofgroton-ct.gov
(860) 446-4169

*NOTE: For the purpose of this program, “expanding business” is defined as, “growth in facility/physical space, increased number of employees, or value added to business (purchase of equipment/capital).”



CITY OF GROTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BUSINESS SOFT COST GRANT PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I. PURPOSE

To strengthen the City's business base and stimulate growth by assisting new or *expanding businesses.

II. ADMINISTRATION

The Business Soft Cost Grant Program will be administered by the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The Grant Review Committee, a subcommittee of the EDC, will determine initial eligibility for the program and recommend, to the EDC, applicants and the level of funding for reimbursement. The EDC has the final authority for the approval of the request and the amount within the parameters of these Policies and Procedures.

III. PROGRAM AND TERMS

This program will provide up to \$1,000 in the form of a grant to reimburse qualified and approved property owners and/or business owners/operators for costs including but not limited to: Architectural Fees; Survey/Soil Scientist Fees; Engineering Fees; Legal Fees (specific to planning and zoning issues related to the business); and Consultant Fees as pre-approved by Staff (deemed specific/unique to the type of business operations). This program is designed to help fund soft costs only, no building renovation, purchase of property or equipment, etc. will be considered. Funding awarded may be a lesser amount than the amount requested. The final level of funding awarded is at the discretion of the Economic Development Commission (EDC).

This is a reimbursement grant program. Reimbursement is available to the applicant when the grant request application has been processed, approved and the work requested for reimbursement in the application has been completed and paid for. Proof of payment must be provided to the EDC at the time of request for reimbursement.

IV. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

All applications shall initially be processed by the Staff to the EDC. Eligible applications shall be reviewed by the Grant Review Subcommittee in accordance with the Program Objectives and Priorities as outlined below:

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- A. Priority will be given to new or expanding businesses that strengthen the City's business base, support existing businesses, stimulate growth, occupy or expand into vacant building space, meet zoning and the goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- B. Priority will be given to projects located in the Thames Street, Bridge Street, and Five Corners areas of the City of Groton.

V. ELIGIBLE COSTS

Grants up to \$1,000 are available to business owners and/or property owners. All businesses and properties must be located in a General Commercial (GC), Waterfront Business Residence (WBR), Five Corners (FC), Industrial/Technology (IT), or Technology Campus (TC) zone. All applicants must meet the following additional eligibility requirements.

- A. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Architectural Fees;
 - Survey /Soil Scientist Fees;
 - Engineering Fees;
 - Legal Fees (specific to planning and zoning issues); and,
 - Consultant Fees as pre-approved by Staff (deemed specific/unique to the type of business operations).
- B. Ineligible costs include:
 - Permit Fees;
 - Grant matching;
 - Refinancing Debt;
 - Payment of taxes
 - Payment to the business operator/owner and/or property owner or employee to reimburse their time applying for the grant.

VI. APPLICANT AND PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

- A. Applicants may be:
 - Individual property owners, including partnerships and corporations making changes to their buildings in support of a new or *expanding commercial tenant
 - Business owners and/or operators. (If leasing space, application must come with written approval of the property owner)
- B. Each applicant is eligible for one grant per project, per calendar year. The Grant Review Subcommittee and EDC may waive this provision, but in no case can the total reimbursement exceed \$1,000/year/address. Applications for work completed within the previous six (6) months prior to the submittal of a grant application, can be considered for this program. An individual property/address may receive more than one grant if each applicant applies separately, is proven to be a qualified single entity separate from the other applicant(s), the applications are reimbursement for separate, and distinct project costs, and the proposals meet the eligibility guidelines. For example, a property owner who also operates a storefront business under separate ownership may be eligible for two grants. One to reimburse survey costs for additional required parking (property specific) and one to reimburse the costs of a consultant to set up new software system for addition

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of a new product line (business). **(All proposals must comply with building and zoning requirements to be eligible. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their proposal complies with building and zoning requirements and have written approval from all appropriate City staff before funds are dispersed.)**

- C. Businesses/properties must be located in the previously listed eligible Zones.
- D. All real estate and personal property taxes due to the City of Groton and Town of Groton for the property or business, for which funds are requested, must be paid in full at the time of application.
- E. No applicant can be involved in litigation brought by the City of Groton or against the City of Groton.
- F. No applicant shall be eligible if they have been recently cited for existing zoning, building or property maintenance code violations at the location under consideration for program funds.
- G. Applicants who have outstanding water and sewer bills for any properties located in the City of Groton are not eligible unless a payment plan has been established with Groton Utilities or respective utility company.

VII. PROCEDURE

- A. Complete the Business Soft Cost Grant Program Application and submit it with all the required application materials to the Planning Department. Processing of applications will be on a “first come first served” basis. All applications must be complete and eligible within these policies, to be considered for review.
- B. Completed applications will be reviewed by the Grant Review Subcommittee to determine eligibility, and the amount of funding to be recommended to the EDC. The applicant will be required to attend that meeting.
- C. Eligible applicants will be notified and the applications forwarded to the Economic Development Commission for review and action at a meeting. The applicant will be required to attend that meeting.
- D. Upon final approval of the application the applicant will complete and sign all necessary Business Soft Cost Grant Program Agreements and/or Contracts.
- E. When a request for reimbursement is submitted with verification proving that the approved work is completed and paid for in full, the applicant will be issued the appropriate reimbursement – based on the grant award.

Note:

- **Any property or business owner/operator thinking about applying should contact the Planning Department. Staff will meet with and provide assistance as required.**
- **All applicants are responsible for the completeness and eligibility of their application.**
- **The Grant Review Subcommittee may reject applications deemed to be incomplete.**

VIII. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- A. Applicants must submit precise costs via an invoice or bill or an estimate signed by the contractor(s) doing the work. All costs will be reviewed to determine if the charge is reasonable (labor, material costs and standard going rates for the job or service).
- B. A project shall be considered eligible for reimbursement, when all the work as proposed has been verified as complete, and paid in full.

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- C. Reimbursement from this grant program may not exceed \$1,000.
- D. The applicant and owner of the property agree upon executing an agreement with the City of Groton, to indemnify and hold harmless the members of the Grant Review Subcommittee, the City of Groton, the Planning Department and its employees, contractors and agents against any claims, suits, liabilities or judgments for injury or injuries to persons, injury or destruction to owner's building(s), grounds or adjacent building(s) or grounds, loss to or interruption of the business or commerce of the owner, applicant, and/or the owner's tenants or agents due to work performed under said agreement. **Applicants must provide an insurance policy or certificate of insurance protecting the city from any loss, liability or damage that may result or accrue from or because of the proposed activity.**
- E. An applicant may appeal decisions of the Grant Review Subcommittee for the applicant's project only. Said appeal shall be reviewed by the Economic Development Commission (EDC). Appeals of the decisions of the EDC shall be reviewed by the Mayor and Council.

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