



Great Signs Grant Program FAQs

What is the Great Signs Grant Program?

The program is a partnership between the City and Beverly Main Streets to help downtown businesses upgrade their exterior signage with a projecting (blade) sign and/or vinyl lettering installed on windows and doors. The 2016 program is funded at \$25,000, and grants may be made up to \$2,500 per application. All signs must meet the requirements laid out in the City's sign ordinance.

How much money can I get?

Each grant can be up to \$2,500. Since it's a matching grant, that means for every dollar you invest, the City will match it, up to \$2,500.

When is the earliest I can start work and/or order materials for my project?

Once you receive news that you've been awarded a grant, you must present your proposed design to the Design Review Board, which meets monthly. Once you have their approval, you may order and install your sign and/or lettering.

Who can apply for a grant?

Owners of any 1st floor business in the Main Streets downtown district can apply (see map on www.beverlymainstreets.org); owners of businesses not on the 1st floor may apply for a projecting sign provided that the sign can be installed at 1st floor level (vinyl lettering is not eligible for non-1st floor businesses). No more than one grant will be awarded to a specific business in a 5-year period. Recipients of the former Façade and Sign Improvement Program must also follow the 5-year waiting period.

What is the deadline to apply?

You may apply at any time. The funds will be awarded on a rolling basis so email Gin Wallace before you start the process to make sure funds are still available (gwallace@beverlymainstreets.org).

What factors are considered in selecting the recipients?

The Committee looks at the overall impact the signage will have on the business and the whole block, and verifies that the signage meets the sign ordinance, Downtown Design Guidelines and Main Streets standards (available on www.beverlymainstreets.org). We want signs to support the fact that we now have an Arts District in the downtown so color, dimensionality and uniqueness will be considered along with how the sign will be illuminated.

In addition, we consider how well you maintain your property and sidewalks now and whether you respect and abide by all city ordinances, including but not limited to the sign ordinance. These are likely indications of how well you'll maintain the improved property.

Finally, we look at how your proposed improvements compare to other applications. We take this into account because we have limited funds and want to get the biggest impact for the money.

Do I have to pay the money back?

No. This is a matching grant program, not a loan. For every dollar you are awarded, you match it from your own funds.

Can I get the money before I start work?

No. After the signage is installed, the City will review it and insure that installation follows what was approved by the Design Review Board. At that point, you submit receipts and request reimbursement. The grant money is reimbursed only at the end of the entire project.

I've already done some work on my signage. Can I submit for reimbursement of that work?

No. The program does not cover costs incurred before all parties sign your grant agreement.

If I don't do all the signage that I apply for, can I still be reimbursed for what I do?

No. Reimbursement is made only if all signage approved by the Design Review Board is installed.

Where does the Great Signs Grant Program money come from?

The money comes from a variety of economic development grants which the City has received.

Where do I send my application?

You can mail or drop off your application: Beverly Main Streets, 248 Cabot Street, Beverly.

What do I need to submit?

You need to submit:

- Completed application with all required signatures (if you don't own the building, you'll need the owner's signature)
- 1-3 high resolution color photos of the building and signage as it looks today with nothing impeding the view (ie, no cars, snowbanks, etc)
- Renderings of your proposed sign and/or vinyl lettering in full color drawn by a professional architect / designer
- Perspective drawings of your building with signage in full color; this means your drawings must be to scale and must show the signs and/or vinyl lettering to scale in the appropriate locations on the building
- Paint samples of the proposed colors
- Images of the proposed hanging hardware (if applicable)
- Timeline and budget estimates on architect / designer's letterhead (note that design cost is not covered)

Who selects the recipients?

Planning Department staff from the City of Beverly and the Design Committee of Beverly Main Streets review all applications and score each application according to the same criteria.

What's my responsibility once the project is done?

The main thing you have to do is keep up the property once we have helped you improve it. When you accept your grant, you will sign an agreement that states that you will follow all city ordinances regarding signage and trash, that you will keep the sidewalks clear of litter and snow and that you'll maintain the signage as it appears after completion.

I have additional questions. How can I get answers?

Email Gin Wallace at gwallace@beverlymainstreets.org