



CITY OF COALINGA
The Sunnyside of the Valley

COALINGA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The Storefront Improvement Program (SIP) is designed to stimulate building improvements and upgrade the appearance of eligible: commercial properties, civic organizations and certified 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations in the redevelopment project area. The storefront rebates are provided in recognition of the extremely valuable impact these investments have on the vitality of Downtown Coalinga as well as the overall City and project area. The objective of this program is to encourage exterior revitalization of existing commercial, civic, and non-profit structures and replacement of nonconforming signs within the redevelopment project area.

All storefront improvements must be consistent with the guidelines established by the Downtown Design Guidelines. The administration of this program will be the responsibility of the Coalinga Redevelopment Agency (“Agency”).

These guidelines present basic elements of the SIP with specific emphasis on the eligibility criteria for applicants, types of improvements, and reimbursable expenditures. Details of the necessary documentation for processing rebates under the SIP are outlined in the procedural steps.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/AREA
BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE

A. Applicants

Owners and tenants of eligible: commercial, civic and non-profit property may apply for assistance. Tenants are required to provide documentation of the property owner’s consent to the improvements at the time of initial application. Written consent may either be in the form of a lease indicating the lessee’s authority for property renovation and repair or written documentation of the property owner’s agreement to the proposed rehabilitation. The Owner will also need to approve the required Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant, a copy of which will be provided with the SIP application (“Application”). There is a section on the application for the tenant to have the property owner sign granting authorization to do the rehabilitation work and agreeing to execute the Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant. The authorization letter must be signed and notarized.

B. Non-Eligible Applicants

In being that this program's intent is to provide a venue for business owners in high traffic commercial areas to make improvements to their storefronts, certain entities have been deemed "non-eligible" to allow for the funds to be used for its intended purpose. Non-eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, the following entities:

1. Home-occupation businesses;
2. Churches;
3. Special districts supported by tax revenues.

C. Eligible Area

Eligible: commercial, civic, and non-profit properties which are located in the Redevelopment Area are eligible for SIP Funds. The Redevelopment Area generally includes all areas located within the City limits with a few exceptions.

D. Building Code Compliance

An application for a SIP rebate will be summarily rejected if the improvements are proposed for a building in which the building or associated property is not in compliance with applicable Municipal Codes, including building, neighborhood preservation, and nuisance ordinances. An exception may be made where the proposed improvements will bring the building into compliance with the Municipal Code. A building and property inspection will be required before approval of an application.

REBATE AMOUNT

Approved property owners and merchants who install at least \$500 of improvements per storefront are eligible for a rebate of up to 100% of the costs subject to a maximum rebate of \$5,000 per storefront for all approved improvements. If a building has several storefronts, each storefront may be eligible for a rebate not to exceed \$5,000 per building or business. The Agency may rebate 100% of the cost to remove non-conforming signs. Sign removal will not be included in the \$5,000 maximum rebate allowance. The availability of rebates will depend upon budgeted funds for the fiscal year. In unusual or exceptional circumstances, the Agency Board may consider rebates in excess of \$5,000. Amounts in excess of \$5,000 shall be at the sole discretion of the Agency Board.

ELIGIBLE TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS AND REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Eligible improvements include storefront renovation, signs, doors, windows, awnings, minor exterior electrical, landscaping, painting, and other capital improvements which the Executive Director determines is important to incorporate as an integral part of the total storefront improvement design.

For this program, "storefront" is defined as follows:

The entire exterior front surface of a business, from grade to the roofline. Where one or more businesses occupies the same building, whether adjacent, above, or below another business, each business shall be considered one storefront.

Improvements above the storefront level, including roof repairs and roof replacement, are only eligible when performed in conjunction with storefront improvements.

Where a building abuts two streets and/or an alley, empty lot, parking area, or open space, such building may have other faces considered storefronts if visible from the main commercial strip.

Decorative fencing and landscaping of vacant parcels adjacent will also be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Although not required, it would generally be expected that all storefronts within a single building that are in need of improvements will be improved concurrently and, if appropriate, applications for rebates made simultaneously.

Architectural and administrative fees, such as for building permits, sign permits and site plan reviews, may be included in the total storefront improvement costs. The SIP program will also pay 100% of the cost for removal of non-conforming signs (not to exceed the \$5,000 grant award amount). All improvements must conform to the City of Coalinga building codes and the Downtown Design Guidelines. Proposals will be subject to design review and approval by the City of Coalinga Community Development Department.

REQUEST FOR REBATES

Rebates will be provided for improvements started and completed after the Agency's authorization to proceed and will be made after improvements are completed in accordance with the approved plans. Receipt of the rebate is conditioned upon completion of the improvements and when all permits have been finalized. The rebate will be issued after an inspection by Agency staff and upon submission of the following:

1. Approved SIP Application;
2. Invoices and/or contracts from a licensed contractor who performed the work. Note: The applicant is required to obtain at least three (3) bids from licensed contractors before proceeding with the work;
3. The applicant's cancelled checks or receipts, showing that work has been paid in full;
4. Confirmation from the City of Coalinga Community Development Department affirming that the completed improvements are in substantial compliance with the original approved design;
5. A copy of the approved final building inspection;
6. Releases and/or waivers of all contractor's liens;
7. A photograph of the building after completion of the improvements; and,

8. The signed, notarized, and recordable Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant requiring that the improvements and property be maintained for a period of ten years.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

A. Minimum Criteria.

All exterior modifications including painting (color) must be in keeping with the Downtown Design Guidelines. All signs covered under this program shall be in conformance with the City of Coalinga's sign ordinance.

Landscape improvements require detailed information on the types and sizes of plant materials and the irrigation system.

To obtain funding a proposal must at a minimum meet the following:

1. Result in the removal of all nonconforming signs, sign brackets, mounting frames or sign structures that do not conform to the present ordinance or are in excess of the applicants needs.
2. Represent a standard of design that is consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines and utilizes quality materials.
3. Where painting is required, repaint buildings with colors approved by the Agency.

B. Priority Funding.

Where multiple applications for rebates are made and there is insufficient funding for all eligible applicants, priority for approval will be based upon the following criteria as applied in the discretion of the Economic Development Coordinator and Community Development Coordinator:

1. Businesses located in the "Downtown Corridor" or more specifically businesses located:
 - a. Zone 1: E. Elm Avenue from 3rd Street to 7th Street
 - b. Zone 2: E. Durian Avenue from 4th Street to 6th Street
 - c. Zone 3: 5th Street, from Elm north to E. Birch Avenue
 - d. Zone 4: 5th Street, from Elm south to W. Glenn Avenue
2. Applications to improve an entire building.
3. Applications for existing businesses and businesses with tenants scheduled to open after the improvements are completed.
4. Improvements that result in returning a building to its historically correct appearance, which may include the addition of canopies.

Any disputes over application of these criteria shall be resolved by the Executive Director.

STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM **PROCEDURES**

- STEP 1: Initial contact is made with the applicant. Agency staff will conduct this step. The initial contact should determine whether the project is located within the eligible area and if the proposed activities are within the Downtown Design Guidelines. A copy of these SIP Guidelines, Downtown Design Guidelines, the Application, and the Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant will be provided to the potential applicant.
- STEP 2: Merchant or property owner fills out Application and returns the Application to the Agency with:
- a) A photograph of the storefront
 - b) If tenant is making the application, authorization from the property owner to perform the renovation work and agreement to execute the Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant.
- STEP 3: Application is reviewed by Agency staff to determine whether the activities are within the SIP Guidelines and Downtown Design Guidelines.
- STEP 4: Inspection of building and property is made by the City of Coalinga Building and Planning Departments.
- STEP 5: Preliminary plans, color samples, awning designs (if included), and cost estimates are submitted for exterior site plan review and approval by the City of Coalinga Planning Department. Sign Permit Application must also be submitted to the Planning Department for approval. Planning Department staff will inform the applicant of the level of City review necessary for project approval and submission materials needed for this review.
- STEP 6: Upon approval of the preliminary plan, the applicant should prepare and submit final plans, specifications and detailed cost estimates to the Agency. Agency staff will review the application to determine eligibility and approval. The applicant is responsible for providing at least three (3) bids from licensed contractors for completion of the improvements. The applicant shall select from the list of bidders or, with the consent of the Agency, solicit additional bids. If the lowest bidder is not selected, the applicant shall satisfactorily demonstrate to the Agency why selection of a different contractor is appropriate. The actual rebate amount will be contingent upon the actual costs associated with the final approved plans.
- STEP 7: Upon approval by the Agency, an approval letter indicating the rebate amount will be sent to the applicant. If the improvements require building permits, the applicant must submit final plans to the Building Division.
- STEP 8: After completion of the work, the applicant can request payment by submitting:
- a) Invoices and/or contracts;
 - b) Cancelled checks or receipts, showing that the work has been completed in full;

- c) Confirmation from the City of Coalinga Community Development Department affirming that the completed improvements are in substantial compliance with the original approved design or any approved change order;
- d) Copy of the approved final building inspection;
- e) Releases and/or waivers of all contractor's liens;
- f) Photograph of the building after completion of the improvements; and,
- g) Signed, notarized, and recordable Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant

STEP 9: After receipt of complete documentation, Agency verifies that the work has been completed in compliance with the SIP Guidelines.

STEP 10: Agency records the Facade Easement and Maintenance Covenant

STEP 11: A rebate check is sent to the applicant within thirty (30) days of the Agency's receipt of complete documentation.

Revision Summary

Revision 1 *March 16, 2010*:

1. Added Criteria for Approval: Priority Funding: Item #1
2. Added Section B. Non-eligible Applicants to the Eligible Applicants/Area Building Code Compliance section.
3. Added verbiage regarding administrative fees being an allowable reimbursement to the Eligible types of Improvements and Reimbursable Expenses section.