

**OAKLAND PARK COMMUNITY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**



MERCHANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Phase I

MERCHANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Phase I

About the Program

The Merchant Assistance Incentive Program (Program) is designed to assist merchants in increasing sales through design and merchandising techniques. The Program is available only to restaurants located in the Downtown Mixed Use District (DMUD) in Oakland Park along Dixie Highway and NE 12th Avenue, between Oakland Park Boulevard and NE 38th Street. The incentive is limited to the following activity; reconfigure design and re-merchandise an occupied space, advise restaurant operators in advertising, marketing, promotion, sales and service techniques and other related tools and to stimulate sales for business retention purposes.

Criteria

- a. Must be an established restaurant or culinary related use for a minimum of two (2) years and be located in the Downtown Mixed Use District (DMUD) in Oakland Park along Dixie Highway and NE 12th Avenue, between Oakland Park Boulevard and NE 38th Street.
- b. Must be able to justify economic distress and/or outside factors that are negatively affecting sales/cash flow and sustainability.
- c. Business owner must be willing to work one-on-one with a retail consultant provided by the CRA in design, merchandising, advertising, promotion and related training.
- d. Business owner must continue to use materials provided including materials for display, visual representation of merchandise, and other instruments recommended by the consultant.
- e. Business owner must attempt to implement recommendations related to sales and customer service techniques.

Program Goals

- Provide interior renovations that have a substantial visual impact.
- Provide training to merchants and their employees.
- Increase sales of existing business to ensure viability and retention.
- Attract additional business to the district by upgrading the existing.

Program Specifications

The CRA will provide a grant of up to \$10,000 per business inclusive of consultant's time to be used for guidance as well the aesthetic improvements to the interior of a business including but not limited to painting, lighting, accessories, interior décor and display materials. Disbursements of the Grant proceeds may be made on a reimbursement basis or paid directly to the Service Provider, in accordance with the Scope of Services attached to application and provided applicant first approves of payment to Service Provider.

Businesses listed for sale may not apply. Properties and/or businesses that are sold within twenty-four months of receiving assistance and/or grant funding must repay the full amount.

Please Note

Property to be improved must be free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or government encumbrances of any kind. This provision can be waived by the CRA Board of Commissioners if development plans for said property meets the goals and objectives as a culinary related business within the DMUD. Upon grant approval, said property must remain free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or encumbrances of any kind under the term of the agreement.

Should an applicant choose to engage the services of an agent (individual or company) to assist/represent applicant in this aspect of the process, the expenses for the agent's service will be borne by the applicant. Such expenses are not reimbursable under the terms of any of the CRA's incentive programs. CRA funds cannot be applied to services other than architecture, engineering, etc. related to the construction of the interior or exterior of the building.

The Merchant Assistance Program benefits are contingent upon funding availability and CRA approval and are not to be construed as an entitlement or right of a property owner or applicant. Properties in the designated CRA areas are not eligible for CRA funded programs when such funding conflicts with the goals expressed in the CRA Strategic Finance Plan or Community Redevelopment Plan.

Application Checklist

Every application package must include the following items before it will be processed and considered for approval:

- Signed and completed application form
- Business Plan or Executive Summary, including a narrative describing the business, its operations, and
 - its business principles
- Detailed 3-year budget projections of revenues and expenses
- City and County Business Licenses
- Confirmation that property is free of all municipal and county liens and judgments
- Historical financials for 3 years (in a sealed envelope)
- Copy of signed multi-year lease agreement if applicable, with at least two years remaining on term
 - (including express written permission from the property owner to make changes outlined in the
 - project), or copy of Warranty Deed showing ownership of the property by the business owner
- Sketch or rendering of proposed improvements *
- Current photograph of existing property conditions*
- Narrative description of entire project being undertaken, including sources of financing*
- Detailed budget for entire project with estimates from sources. Estimates shall be from licensed
 - contractors for applicable work*
- The Consultant will prepare these items during the planning phase with the business owner.

ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES

Business and property owners in the Downtown Mixed Use District (DMUD) may qualify for the following additional incentives based on the City of Oakland Park Code of Ordinances, Chapter 24-276(d). Business considered for these incentives are limited to those related to and supporting the Downtown Culinary Arts District.

The following incentives are available:

1. Waiver of fees.

The city manager shall consider the waiver of one (1) or more of the following fees for qualifying businesses enumerated under subsection (A) 24-276 (below), which are determined to establish a positive standard for developments within the downtown mixed use district leading to improved aesthetics in the district and the elimination of blight and underutilized properties. (These waivers shall include a waiver of the requirement to pay a fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) fee for each parking space which is not provided on site):

- (a) Payment in lieu of onsite parking
- (b) Landscaping code adjustments subsections 24-105(C)(1),(2), (3) and DMUD landscape design guidelines
- (c) Park and open space fee
- (d) Local transportation fee
- (e) Development review fee

2. Permitting assistance

For those businesses related to and supporting the Culinary Arts District expedited permitting by the City of Oakland Park may be considered through City's Platinum Certification in the Broward Alliance's expedited permitting program. Expediting permitting is also provided in the Interim Regulations Ordinance Sec. 24-276.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PRIOR TO APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

- Properties listed for sale may not apply. Properties sold within twenty-four months of receiving grant funding must repay the full amount.
- Prior to application submittal, a preliminary review of proposed renovations to property must be completed by the Planning Department.
- After the approval process, the CRA will provide the applicant with an approved Grant Agreement for signature. It is recommended that **NO CONSTRUCTION** begin until the Grant Agreement is signed by all parties. Improvements completed prior to approval by the CRA Board may not be eligible for reimbursement.
- If deemed necessary, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) reserves the right to have the application and its contents evaluated and analyzed by an outside third party, including but not limited to: the proposed business plan; partnership/ownership information with equity positions; mortgage on the property; lease agreements; letter of intent from lending institutions and any other documents provided by the applicant.
- If your site plan or application request includes landscaping, the landscaping must be a species and variety of native plants that are drought tolerant, require little irrigation and withstand the environmental conditions of Oakland Park. Irrigation systems must prevent overspray and water waste and it is recommended a drip irrigation system be installed.
- Property to be improved must be free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or government encumbrances of any kind. This provision can be waived by the CRA Board of Commissioners if development plans for said property meets the goals and objectives as a culinary related business within the DMUD. Upon grant approval, said property must remain free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or encumbrances of any kind under the term of the agreement.

I have read completely and understand the program, including the application guidelines and grant reimbursement process.

Business Owner Signature

Property Owner Signature (if different)

Print Name

Print Name

MERCHANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATION

Date of Application _____

1. Address of Business requesting assistance:

2. Name of Applicant:

Address of Applicant:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

3. Does the applicant own property? _____ Yes _____ No

If "No" provide valid lease and written letter of consent from the property owner indicating their approval for the use of this program.

4. How long have you been in business in Downtown Oakland Park? _____

5. Restaurant Description:

6. Have sales decreased in the last 1 year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years _____
(Check all that apply)

7. What actions have you taken to try to increase sales or improve business; attach advertisements or describe other materials or techniques used to improve sales.

8. Are you willing to work one-on-one with consultant to address modifications related to your business? Yes No Maybe

9. Describe the physical improvements you believe would help increase sales.

10. Describe other improvements you believe your business could make that would increase sales.

Authorized Representative

Restaurant Owner Signature

**Property Owner Signature
(If different)**

Print Name

Print Name

The Merchant Assistance Program benefits are contingent upon funding availability and CRA approval and are not to be construed as an entitlement or right of a property owner or applicant. Properties in the designated CRA areas are not eligible for CRA funded programs when such funding conflicts with the goals expressed in the CRA Strategic Finance Plan or Community Redevelopment Plan.

Please Note

Property to be improved must be free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or government encumbrances of any kind. This provision can be waived by the CRA Board of Commissioners if development plans for said property meets the goals and objectives as a culinary related business within the DMUD. Upon grant approval, said property must remain free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or encumbrances of any kind under the term of the agreement.