



Grant Program Guidelines and Application (11/29/17)

Please return completed application with necessary attachments and signature to:

City of Converse
Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
110 W. Legion Drive
Converse, TX 78109
info@converseedc.com

If you have any application questions, please contact
Converse EDC Executive Director
210-659-9163.



Converse EDC Grant Program Guidelines and Application

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Converse EDC has established a comprehensive **Grant Program to benefit existing businesses located in the city limits of Converse**. This program includes: **Façade and Signage Improvement Program (FSIP)**, and a **Capital Investment Program (CIP)**:

1. **The FSIP program** provides technical and financial assistance to property owners or business tenants seeking to renovate or restore their exterior signage, lighting or commercial building facades. The FSIP is designed to impact properties in need of revitalization, resulting in the improved exterior, visibility and presentation of a business. The FSIP is not designed to subsidize corrections to building code violations that prolong the life of a commercial property.

FSIP will provide a **grant of up to \$10,000** for the funding of well-designed improvements, including City-approved signage, which will coordinate all the important features of the storefront into a more attractive image while creating, if necessary, an accessible entrance for the public. This may include the restoration of architectural details, better windows and doors, and well-proportioned signage and lighting. EDC and City staff will be available to provide assistance to applicants through the conceptual stage at no cost to the applicants. Applicants, however, will be responsible for hiring licensed architects and contractors to refine this conceptual design depending on the scope of work. ****Contractors must be registered with the City of Converse in order to perform the work.****

2. **The CIP program** provides financial assistance to business owners for equipment purchases that will increase sales and create jobs. The purpose of the CIP program is intended for equipment related directly to the business enterprise, such as kitchen

equipment or CNC machinery or other such industry-specific, special-purpose equipment. The CIP program is not designed for purchase or installation of equipment that represent facility-related equipment that is suffering from deferred maintenance, such HVAC, plumbing or electrical equipment. The CIP program does not pay for interior renovations.

The CIP Program provides a **grant of up to \$2,000** toward the purchase of such equipment. If the total cost of the equipment is more than \$2,000, applicants will be responsible for the balance of the cost. Applicants, however, will be responsible for cost of sales tax and installation. CIP program funds may only be applied against the cost of the actual equipment itself, and not for extended warranties, etc.

****Although applicants may request and receive funding under both programs, no one applicant shall receive a combined allocation of more than \$10,000 per fiscal year (October-September).****

B. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply to the terms used in this Policy:

Applicant: the Property owner or business owner signing the Grant Application.

Grant Committee: the EDC Grant Subcommittee that reviews all grant applications and prepares a recommendation to the EDC Board.

Eligible Enhancements: the improvements identified as eligible in Section C herein.

Façade: the portion of the building parallel to the primary right-of-way as determined by City.

Notice to Proceed: a written notice from EDC Staff authorizing the Applicant to begin construction as approved by the City.

Performance Agreement: the contract between the Converse EDC and the applicant receiving the allocation under this program.

Property: the physical lot and/or building to which improvements are being made.

EDC Staff: the EDC Director or his/her designee(s).

C. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following criteria must be met for participation in Grant Program:

1. Applicants must be commercial property owners or commercial tenants located in the City of Converse at the time of approval;
2. Tenants must have written approval from property owners to participate in program;
3. Nonconforming signage on property, if applicable, must be permanently removed as part of the improvement;
4. Applicants must be up to date on all municipal taxes prior to participation in the program;
5. Applicants must disclose any and all liens against property via certified letter.
6. Applicants must comply with all Federal/State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code and zoning requirements;
7. Understanding that the overall objective of the FSIP is to improve the exterior, visibility and presentation of a property; the EDC has the discretion to decline an application while suggesting enhancements that would enable future acceptance.
8. Preferential consideration to be given to applicants relying on the services of Converse businesses which would perform the work to the extent possible.
9. General contractor must be registered with the City of Converse to perform the work.
10. Ineligible businesses: non-profits, sectarian or religious facilities, government offices, residences and home businesses.
11. Related parties – No member of the City Council of the City of Converse, or any member of any Converse boards, commissions or corporations, or any member of their immediate family may participate in this program.

D. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR FSIP

Improvements to be funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building as well as meet City standards with regards to latest construction and design trends. Buildings with significant architectural qualities are strongly encouraged to restore and maintain these features. Improvements for buildings not having such architectural features should still be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to substantially enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes.

1. Eligible Façade/Signage Improvements:
 - a. Restoration of details in historically contributing or significant buildings, and removal of elements which cover architectural details;
 - b. Window replacement and window framing visible from the street which is appropriately scaled to the building;
 - c. Visually appealing and appropriate City-approved signage, including monument signage, pole signage, electronic message boards and other signage as specified in the City's codes;
 - d. Lighting which is visually appealing and appropriately illuminates signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of a building façade;
 - e. Awnings or canopies which can be both functional and visually appealing;
 - f. Curbing, irrigation, approved trees, landscaping beds (not including planting material) or other landscaping features where appropriate;
 - g. Cleaning, repainting or residing of building;
 - h. Resurfacing of parking lots visible from street;
 - i. New storefront construction, appropriately scaled within an existing building;
 - j. Removal of architectural barriers to public accessibility;
 - k. Replacement or repair of the portions of the roof that are visible from an adjacent public street;
 - l. Replacement or repair of existing gutters and/or downspouts;
 - m. Installation of new sidewalks and/or the replacement or repair of existing sidewalks.

2. Ineligible Improvements/Expenses:
 - a. interior building system improvements in disrepair/deferred maintenance (HVAC/plumbing/electrical systems)
 - b. exterior improvements located on the sides or rear of buildings;
 - b. interior improvements;
 - c. outdoor dining/seating;
 - d. playground or recreational equipment;
 - e. structural changes;
 - f. burglar bars;
 - g. security/alarm system;
 - h. "Sweat equity";
 - i. new commercial construction;
 - j. benches/porch swings;
 - k. umbrellas;
 - l. gazebos;
 - m. trellises;
 - n. window boxes;
 - o. permitting fees;
 - p. architectural, survey or other professional fees;
 - q. asbestos testing, removal, abatement, or remediation;
 - r. improvements for which insurance monies are received; or

s. outline lighting on building (John Quintanilla's staff is researching)

3. Prior Improvements/Purchases

Permit applications, alterations, or improvements relating to the FSIP application and equipment purchases under the CIP application made prior to receiving a "Notice to Proceed" are not eligible for reimbursement without approval of EDC Board.

E. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

1. Financial Assistance

a. FSIP Funding offered is a grant in which the Converse EDC reimburses Applicant **up to a \$10,000 maximum** for façade improvements inclusive of City-approved signage. Architectural design fees may not be included in the total cost of eligible improvements.

b. CIP Funding offered is a grant in which the Converse EDC reimburses Applicant **up to a \$2,000 maximum** match for equipment purchases.

c. See Paragraphs A.1. and A.2. above for more information.

d. For improvements that exceed the grant allotment, applicant may include financial aid (grant or loan) received from other agencies and/or banks, but may not be "in-kind." Each Program will only provide reimbursement after Applicant has paid their contractor and vendor(s) in full and after the project is determined to have been completed in accordance with the Performance Agreement.

****Although applicants may request and receive funding under both programs, no one applicant shall receive a combined allocation of more than \$10,000 per fiscal year (October-September).****

2. Application and Information

To participate, please contact the Converse EDC, (210) 659-9163 office or e-mail staff@converseedc.com. Applications are available on line.

3. Funding is available on a 12-month fiscal year cycle (October-September).

F. PROCEDURES

Applicant must follow the procedures in the order outlined below.

1. Applicant meets with Economic Development Director for initial project discussions and files an application.

2. Applicant meets with City Staff to discuss building program and design alternatives.

3. Applicant's architect prepares final design drawings and submits them to City Staff for review and approval.
4. Proposed project will be presented to the EDC Grant Committee for review. The proposed project will then be presented to the EDC Board for final review/approval.
5. Converse EDC and Applicant execute a Performance Agreement.
6. EDC sends applicant a "Notice to Proceed." Any work completed prior to receiving the "Notice to Proceed" will not be reimbursed (unless specifically approved by the EDC Board). Applicant has sixty (60) days from the date of the Notice to Proceed to begin making improvements as specified in the final design. Completion will be within one year of the Notice to Proceed.
8. Applicant notifies EDC once project is completed. Reimbursement will follow 100% completion of the project.
9. Applicant must submit copies of all paid invoices to the Converse EDC, who then submits request for reimbursement check.

The Converse EDC reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.

G. TERMINATION

The Converse EDC has the right to terminate any agreement under either grant program if: 1) a participant violates any conditions set forth in these approved guidelines or any Performance Agreement; or, 2) the project has been started prior to an executed Performance Agreement or 3) prior to receipt of a Notice to Proceed.

City of Converse EDC
Grant Program Application

Please return completed application with necessary attachments and signature to City of Converse Economic Development Office, 110 W. Legion Drive, Converse, 78109. If you have any application questions, please contact the Economic Development Director at 210-659-9163.

Applicant Name	Date
This Grant is for (check one or both, as applicable): _____ Façade & Signage Improvement Program (FSIP) _____ Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	
Business Name	
Mailing Address	
Contact Phone	
Email Address	
Building Owner (if different than applicant)	
Project Site/Address	
I am _____ or I am not _____ current on all municipal taxes (for example: property & sales taxes)	
There are _____ or there are not _____ liens against the property where my business presides. If there are any liens on the property, disclose any & all liens to EDC offices via Certified Letter.	

Type of Work: (check all that apply)

Façade **Landscaping** **Signage** **Awnings**
Parking & Driveways **Pedestrian Amenities** **Equipment**

Details of Planned Improvements relating Grant Request (attach additional information if necessary)

How will this project benefit the community?

FSIP Expenditures	Estimated Costs	Grant Requested
Façade / Building Rehab		
Signage / Lighting		
Landscaping		
Parking / Driveways		
Awnings		
Pedestrian Amenities		
Total		

PROPOSED FSIP PROJECT BUDGET \$ _____

TOTAL FSIP GRANT REQUEST *(May not exceed \$10,000)* \$ _____

Attach with final design drawings and photographs of building's exterior façade.

CIP Expenditures	Estimated Costs	Grant Requested
Equipment		
Installation		
Total		

PROPOSED CIP PROJECT BUDGET \$ _____

TOTAL CIP GRANT REQUEST *(May not exceed \$2,000)* \$ _____

Project Timeframe: Estimated Start: _____ Estimated Completion: _____

Applicant Signature

Date

Building Owner Signature

Date