



DOWNTOWN BROWNSVILLE RENT SUBSIDY GRANT

The BIG Grants Goals:

The goals of the Brownsville Business Improvement & Growth (BIG) Programs are to restore the existing downtown property to a condition that facilitates economic activity, downtown living, beautification and occupancy.

BIG Downtown Brownsville Rent Subsidy Grant: Maximum grant amount \$7,800

The Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC) is providing rental assistance for up to 12 months for eligible businesses that choose to locate in the historic Downtown Brownsville Area (see Exhibit A). Additionally, BCIC may provide assistance for existing businesses to expand their gross rentable space. In every case, the Board reserves the right to deny Applicants at its sole discretion. Funding is subject to availability of resources and to the applicant business's potential to strengthen, compliment and diversify the existing business makeup, as determined solely at the discretion of the BCIC Board.

Any eligible business may apply for assistance and grants, but those falling into the following categories may be given greater consideration.

- Restaurants, coffee shops, specialty food & entertainment
- Artisan shops
- Upscale apparel/accessories, footwear
- Electronics – computers, phones, digital equipment
- Specialty retail: toys, sporting goods, transportation
- Home furnishings and appliances
- Visual and performing arts, galleries

For a new business, applicants are required to submit a completed application form, a copy of an executed lease between the applicant and property owner, a business plan and a proposed budget, financials and marketing plan.

For the expansion of an existing business, the application for rental assistance should include a minimum a completed application form and profit and loss statement. Rental assistance application for a business not related or similar to the existing business is required to submit a full, new business application package.

Eligible applicants may be awarded rental assistance up to 50% of the monthly lease amount for the first six months, not to exceed \$800 per month, and for month seven through 12, payments will be at 30%, not to exceed \$500 per month. The maximum eligible rental assistance amount per business is \$7,800.

Rental assistance will be reimbursed monthly directly to the tenant once proof of payment has been made and only after the business has received Use Permit. Reimbursement will be made within 10 business days once tenant submits proof of rent payment and includes a paid receipt from the landlord.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant Name:

Mailing Address:

Zip code:

Email Address:

Phone:

Applicant is a corporation partnership proprietorship, or individual

II. Rent Assistance Request

A. Rental Assistance Request: \$ _____/month Monthly Rent: \$ _____/month

Utilities Included in Rent: Yes No

II. LEASE INFORMATION

A. Name of Business:

Federal Tax ID Number:

Business Address:

Business Category:

Lease Start Date:

Lease Expiration Date:

Total Square Footage:

New or Existing Business: New Existing

If new business, estimated business opening date:

If existing business, provide how long you been in operation:

B. Number of New Jobs that will be created:

Full Time: Hourly Wage: Part-Time: Hourly Wage:

Existing Number of Jobs: (if applicable) Full Time: Part-Time:

C. Are any upper stories currently occupied? Yes No

Type: Retail Service Professional Residential Other: _____

D. Current Landlord:

Mailing Address:

Email:

Phone:

E. Does any property owner or landlord have a business or familial relationship to the business that will occupy the property? No Yes – Please explain:

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- a. A signed two- year lease agreement.
- b. Business open at least six days a week, minimum of eight (8) hours a day, and open past 6:00 p.m.
- c. Arrange a meeting with a business advisor from either Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Women’s Business Center of the RGV, or UTRGV Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center to establish or review a Business Plan Executive Summary and a One Year Business Pro Forma.
- d. Provide financial information related to the startup and operation of the business.
- e. Attend training and workshop opportunities that deal with a variety of topics that will help your business succeed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If funding is approved by the BCIC Board of Directors, the Applicant will assure:

I have reads the Downtown Brownsville Business Rent Subsidy Grant Program Application description and agree to all terms contained therein, including compliance with all applicable city, state, and federal codes. An application for funding is not a guarantee of funding and disbursement of funds will be made in compliance with the terms of the program. I understand that approval by BCIC Downtown Brownsville Business Rent Subsidy Grant Program is subject to the discretion of the Board.

I certify that all figures, facts and representations made in this application, including attachments, are true and correct to the best of our knowledge. I also acknowledge that failure to complete the application will disqualify this application for consideration.

Applicant Signature

Signature

Printed Name

Date

GUIDELINES:

Please read carefully the following guidelines and keep for your records.

1. The tenant may apply for multiple grants in any given year (i.e. tenant can receive funding for work on the exterior of the building, and also receive funding on the same application that replaces a sign or does interior work to the same building). Rent subsidy assistance application must be applied on a separate application but can apply during the same time or year with the other grant opportunities.
2. This grant is intended for new businesses that are about to open the business to the public or an existing business that has plans to expand their gross rentable space. No grant will be awarded to an applicant that has a current business open at the lease property.
3. The applicant may be invited to attend a review meeting to be available for questions and answers pertaining the application.
4. All rental assistance award payments will be paid as a monthly reimbursement to the tenant once proof of payment has been submitted monthly to the BCIC office.
5. Rental reimbursement will begin once the business receives its Use Permit.
6. The applicant must not be involved in any litigation, owe taxes, or have liens filed that would affect the property for which the grant is intended.
7. The applicant must agree to allow the City of Brownsville, Main Street Brownsville and BCIC to promote the project and property including, but not limited to, using photographs and descriptions of the project and property in printed promotional materials, press releases, websites, and social media outlets.
8. Building owners and business owners agree to have a sign / banner placed on their building during the 12 months to acknowledge the BIG Grant Program. The sign will be provided by BCIC.
9. The applicant must notify the BIG Advisory Committee in writing if the applicant has any changes to the lease agreement during the 12-month agreement period. The committee reserves the right to reconsider the application based on the changes to the original agreement.
10. Appeals to the approval will go before Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation Board. The board's decisions on all appeals will be final.
11. Approval of all applications shall be with the understanding and agreement that, in the event the business (applicant) fails to remain open, or the business or property is sold or transferred and subsequently closes, during the twelve (12) month agreement, the applicant shall be considered in default of its obligations under the grant, and shall be required to reimburse the BCIC the grant money received.
12. The applicant must agree that, in the event of default of its obligations, the applicant shall repay to the BCIC the amount of grant funds it has received, with interest, at the rate of 10% per annum, within thirty (30) days after the BCIC notifies the applicant of the default. The form of such payment shall be a cashier's check or money order, made payable to the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation.
13. BCIC shall have the authority to bring a civil action to recover any amounts that the applicant must repay to the BCIC under paragraph 11 and 12 of this Section, and in such action may recover court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

A. Application Submission

1. The Downtown Brownsville Rent Subsidy Grant application form is being accepted online using the BCIC grant application portal <http://bcic.us>. Visit the funding section in the menu selection. Click apply now. **It is highly recommended to submit the grant application online.**
2. Applications are also available to download and submitted via email to Cori Peña at cpena@bcic.us or delivered on a USB drive with one (1) printed copy to the BCIC office (location listed on the cover page of this document). Application can be downloaded at the BCIC website <http://bcic.us> under funding. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.
3. Applicant may also apply (different application) for exterior, interior and sign improvements at the same time or year.
4. Applications are accepted monthly. The deadline to apply is 12:00 p.m. the last Friday of each month to be reviewed at the next scheduled BIG Advisory Committee meeting (typically held monthly every 2nd Thursday at 12 p.m. in at the BCIC office). Applications received after the due date, will be reviewed the following month's meeting.
5. The application must be completed in its entirety and include all requested documentation listed on the application including but not limited:
 - Copy of the lease agreement;
 - W 9 Form;
 - Assume Name Certificate (dba);
 - Business Plan Executive Summary;
 - One-Year Operating Pro Forma; and
 - Previous two (2) years of personal or business tax returns

B. Application Review

1. The BIG Advisory Committee will review submitted applications on a monthly basis and make recommendations for approval or rejection to the BCIC Board of Directors at the next scheduled monthly BCIC meeting.
2. The BIG Advisory Committee will review the grant applications based on criteria including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Is the leased property in the designated BIG corridor?
 - Is the business to be open at least six (6) days a week, a minimum of eight (8) hours a day, and open past 6:00 p.m.?
 - Did the applicant submit a Business Plan Executive Summary?
 - Did the applicant submit a one-year Business Pro Forma?
 - Leased property must meet local code and be "rent" ready.
 - Applicant has signed a minimum two (2) year lease.
 - What is the overall economic impact of the business to the downtown area?

3. The committee is comprised of BCIC Board members, Main Street Advisory Board members, Historic Preservation & Design Review Board members, Historic Preservation Officer, Downtown District Manager, Building Permits Officer, and one BCIC staff member.
4. The committee will make their recommendations decision and present the application to the BCIC Board for final approval determination. The BCIC Board has discretion to approve, modify, or reject the application and is not bound by any committee recommendation. The BCIC Board typically meets every 4th Thursday of the month at the City Commission Chambers, 1001. Elizabeth St, 2nd floor at 12:00 p.m.
5. Applicant will be notified in writing as to the status of the application, approved, amended, or rejected. BCIC reserves the right to postpone the decision.
6. If approved, applicant will sign a 12-month rental assistance agreement.
7. After the 12-month agreement, applicant and a BCIC staff member will meet to discuss the impact of the rental assistance.

REIMBURSEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT & PROCEDURE:

In the event, the Application has received final BCIC Board approval, a Commitment Letter will be issued to the Applicant stating the amount of approved grant funds allocated to the tenant, the establishment of a commitment period for completion of the agreement and information regarding the execution of the required Reimbursement Grant Agreement (The Agreement) between the Applicant, now referred to as the “Contractor” (individual or entity responsible for payment of the rental expenses), and the BCIC. The Agreement will have been prepared and will accompany the Commitment Letter. The tenant’s information and specifics and the terms and conditions of the Contractor’s obligations for receipt of grant funds are outlined in the Agreement including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Property location/identification along with lease information;
- b) Maximum amount of the approved allowed reimbursement grant funds;
- c) Contract performance deadlines and dates;
- d) Monitoring by BCIC staff;
- e) Compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws;
- f) Promotional rights to BCIC and City of Brownsville;

B. REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS:

1. Reimbursements will be made monthly after proof of rent payment has been made to landlord.
2. The Contractor will be required to submit proper documentation to be included in the reimbursement request:

- a) A completed reimbursement request form with proof of payment/paid receipt from landlord as documentation monthly lease has been paid.
3. Allow 10 to 14 business days for processing of the reimbursement request. The payment will be processed in the form of the check made payable to the Contractor. The Contractor will be notified once the check is available for release and will require signature by an authorized party.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR APPLICATION

- ✓ Copy of Certified Lease Agreement
- ✓ W-9 Form; Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- ✓ Assumed Name Certificate (dba)
- ✓ Business Plan Executive Summary
- ✓ One-Year Operating Pro-Forma
- ✓ Previous two (2) years of personal tax returns or business tax returns

Contact Information:

BROWNSVILLE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION



BIG Grant Programs:

Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC)
500 E. Saint Charles, Brownsville, TX 78520
Main Phone: (956) 545-0353
Website: <http://bcic.us>

- Cori Peña, Administrator of Grants and Contracts
Email: cpena@bcic.us | Phone: (956) 545-0438

Contact any of the following Business Advisor below to schedule your appointment to discuss your business plan and operating pro forma that is required with the application.

Business Advisors:

- **UTRGV Small Business Development Center**
Website: <https://www.utrgv.edu/sbdc/> | Phone: (956) 665-7535
- **UTRGV Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center**
Website: <https://www.utrgv.edu/ecc/> | Phone: (956) 882-4119
- **Women's Business Center of Rio Grande Valley**
Website: <https://joinwbc.com/> | (956) 542-5322