



STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Purpose of Program

The Storefront Improvement Grant Program is intended to support local businesses in enhancing the appearance, quality and curb appeal of their storefronts. By providing financial assistance for exterior improvements, the program aims to encourage investment in attractive, well-maintained commercial frontages that contribute to a vibrant and welcoming streetscape. These enhancements help strengthen customer appeal, increase foot traffic and support a thriving commercial environment within St. Albert.

Review and Approval Level

The Storefront Improvement Grant program is assigned as level 1 (*Policy C-CC-23 Civic Granting*) for review and approval of funding allocations.

- Review/Recommendation: CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) or designate
- Final Allocation Approval: CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) or designate

Grant Intake Date(s)

Application intake begins in January of each year. Applications will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis up until **November 30** of each year.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must meet the following criteria to qualify for the Storefront Improvement Grant Program:

- Operate a customer-facing commercial storefront within St. Albert. A *storefront* is defined as a street- or sidewalk-facing commercial business location that is accessible to the public, with a physical entrance or façade visible from the public realm.
- Hold a valid and active St. Albert business license.
- Be the business owner or authorized representative of the eligible storefront location.

Non-commercial entities such as public schools, government buildings, and other institutional uses do not meet the definition of a storefront and are not eligible for this program. This program is designed to support local commercial businesses.

Home-based businesses do not qualify.

A business may submit multiple applications; however, applications will be processed in the order in which they are received.

Eligible Improvements

Eligible improvements must enhance the customer-facing, street-visible areas of a business and contribute to the overall vibrancy of the commercial area.

All improvements must be visible from the public street or sidewalk and support an attractive, welcoming storefront environment.

1. Patio & Pergola Development

The program's primary focus is to support businesses in creating inviting outdoor spaces that encourage customer activity and enhance street vibrancy.

Eligible elements include:

- Development or enhancement of outdoor patios, seasonal seating areas or semi-permanent patio spaces
- Construction or installation of pergolas, shade structures or small-scale architectural features that enhance the patio environment
- Integrated décor, planters or lighting used to improve the overall patio aesthetic

Patio improvements must comply with all applicable City permits, design standards and safety requirements.

2. Street-Facing Enhancement Elements

Smaller-scale improvements that complement the storefront and create a more welcoming frontage:

- Street furniture such as benches or bike racks
- Planters, hanging baskets, flowers and outdoor greenery
- Decorative exterior elements that enhance curb appeal or customer experience

3. Storefront Signage

Improvements that support business visibility and brand presence:

- Exterior storefront identification signage, including small-scale A-frame signage or similar customer-facing identification elements that enhance visibility from the street or sidewalk

Maximum reimbursement for exterior storefront signage is \$500 per application/project.

- Perpendicular (blade) signage

Perpendicular or blade signs are mounted at a 90-degree angle to the building façade, allowing the sign to project outward over the sidewalk and be visible from both directions of travel.

Eligible program element only within the Perron District and may receive up to \$3,000 in matching funds

4. Exterior Decorative Lighting

Lighting elements that contribute to storefront visibility, safety or ambiance, including:

- Architectural or accent lighting
- Decorative or thematic exterior lighting visible from the street

Winter Beautification or Storefront Improvement Elements

Winter improvements must be visible from the street, installed by December 1, and remain in place for at least three months.

Applications must be submitted by the **November 30** deadline to be considered.

Eligible winter elements include:

- Outdoor heat lamps*
- Ice sculptures
- Cold-weather tolerant plants
- Additional outdoor lighting*

Storefront improvements must comply with all applicable City permits, design standards and safety requirements.

Funding

Applicants can receive up to 50% reimbursement of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$3,000 toward approved program elements.

To receive reimbursement, applicants must submit:

- Copies of receipts for all eligible expenditures
- Photos showing the installed storefront improvement elements

The program accepts applications and provides funding after the completion and installation of eligible beautification elements, unless pre-approval has been granted. Applicants must submit unique, project-specific receipts and invoices for all eligible expenses. Receipts cannot be shared, split, or reused to support more than one application, whether by the same applicant or by multiple businesses or organizations. Expenses claimed for one application cannot be claimed again by another business, organization, property owner, or association. Projects completed on multi-tenant or shared properties must ensure that each individual business submits its own distinct expenses. Duplicate, overlapping, or jointly funded receipts will not be accepted.

Businesses may request **optional pre-approval** before making purchases. Pre-approval temporarily reserves funds for up to 30 days, ensuring that applicants can proceed with confidence and that funding remains available while they complete their improvements.

To request pre-approval, applicants may email the Economic Development department (economicdevelopment@stalbert.ca) with a brief description of the proposed improvement and anticipated costs to confirm eligibility prior to proceeding.

If a business has received the maximum allowable grant in any program element (up to \$3,000), it may only apply for up to \$500 per element in each additional calendar year. Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with the property, professional installation, maintenance and any ongoing repair or replacement of the improvement. All improvements must be kept in good and safe condition at all times

Grant Acknowledgement

Successful applicants are asked to provide acknowledgement of the City's contribution to their Storefront improvement project as appropriate.

Additional Requirements

Some improvements and obstructions require further authorization through the issuance of a development permit (i.e., permanent structure placement of patios/bike racks/furniture).

Applicants are encouraged to contact economicdevelopment@stalbert.ca to discuss their project prior to application.