



**PINELLAS COUNTY**  
**Community Redevelopment Agency**  
**Program Guidelines for Lealman Community Redevelopment Area (CRA)**  
**Residential Improvement & Demolition Program**

**OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Residential Improvement & Demolition Program is to reduce or eliminate the costs associated with improving and enhancing the **exterior** appearance of the applicant's home and property, or to assist in the removal of substandard structures when the cost to rehabilitate is not feasible. Properties must be located within the boundaries of the Lealman CRA to be eligible for grant funds. These guidelines are designed to assist with determining an applicant's eligibility for the program. All information used to make the decision must be supported by written documentation. When the standard documentation does not provide enough information staff will request additional supporting documentation and written explanations to document with the grant package.

**GRANT FUND AMOUNTS**

Grants will be provided using the following schedule below:

<b>LEALMAN CRA RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Grant Type</b>	<b>Eligible Amount</b>
Residential Improvements	\$1,000 - \$10,000
Demolition	\$1,000 - \$7,500

**PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY**

***Residential Improvement Program*** - Eligible properties include single-family detached houses, townhomes, villas, cooperatives, condominiums and manufactured housing. The property must be structurally sound, meet Florida building codes, and local housing codes.

***Demolition Program*** - Any residential site within the Lealman CRA where there is substandard or deteriorated structure or part thereof. The structure must be functionally obsolete or economically unfeasible to repair. Residential structures must have been abandoned or vacant for at least a year before they can be demolished under this program.

**APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

A property owner or leasehold tenant are eligible to apply. Leasehold applicants are required to obtain written and notarized approval from the property owner prior to submission of an application. Applicants must be able to demonstrate (with assistance provided by County staff):

- Ownership of the property (or notarized written approval from property owner)
- The property must be located in Lealman CRA of Pinellas County.
- The applicant(s) must be current on all property taxes.



- The property must not have any outstanding liens or Code Enforcement violations.<sup>1</sup>
- Property must not be in foreclosure.
- Properties are eligible for Lealman CRA Improvements grants once per every five years.

#### **METHOD OF DETERMINING GRANT AWARD AMOUNT**

The amount of funds provided to an eligible project shall be determined based upon a review of the activities proposed in the application. If any health and safety issues are identified on the property, grant funds must be used to address them as part of the approved scope of work.

***Residential Improvement Program*** - Funds are available to eligible applicants on a ***first-come, first-served*** basis to program participants. Eligible applicants may receive a grant up to a maximum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) with a minimum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). Residences abutting two public rights-of-way and/or located on a corner having two sides facing a right-of-way are considered to have two facades, and may qualify for up to two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) in additional funds. Applicants must demonstrate a need for the additional funds that directly relates to having dual frontage/two facades. There is a limit of one (1) funded application every five years, per eligible applicant.

***Demolition Program*** - Funds are available to eligible applicants on a ***first-come, first-served*** basis to program participants. Eligible applicants may receive a grant up to seven thousand, five hundred dollars (\$7,500) for the cost of demolition and clearance of a site. The minimum demolition grant is one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). Alternatives to the program's standard reimbursement funding process may be considered on a case by case basis if the applicant demonstrates a financial hardship that prevents them from participating in the grant program. Cost of asbestos survey, if applicable, shall be considered the applicant's sole responsibility.

#### **ELIGIBLE & INELIGIBLE GRANT ACTIVITIES**

##### ***Residential Improvement Program – Eligible Improvements***

- ADA Improvements (exterior only)
- Driveway and pedestrian walkway repair or replacement (pavers are eligible)
- Exterior porch lighting fixture installation/replacement
- Exterior painting
- Front door replacement
- Fencing (front yard only; side yard eligible for corner lots; chain link fencing is ineligible)
- Garage door, carport (repair or replacement)
- Landscaping (must be Native or "Florida-Friendly" plants and pre-approved by Pinellas County)
- Mailbox and house number replacement
- Rain gutters (repair or replacement)
- Property clean-up (removal of hazardous debris, etc.)
- Stucco/masonry/siding (repairs only; full home replacement ineligible)
- Permitting/Architect/Engineering fees (not to exceed 10% of grant award)
- Window awnings and shutters (including hurricane shutters; replacement or repair)

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<sup>1</sup> Properties with limited Code Enforcement/Utility liens made be considered on a case-by-case basis.



### ***Residential Improvement Program – Ineligible Improvements***

- Work performed by an unlicensed contractor
- Improvements completed or in process prior to approval of the grant application
- Interior repairs or renovations
- New building construction
- Improvements to residences constructed within the last 5 years
- Roof repairs or replacement
- Exterior security systems (including metal roll down gates, window bars, cameras)
- Routine maintenance
- Improvements to non-residential structures

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

An application for the Residential Improvement and Demolition Program must be submitted and approved prior to commencing work. Any expenses incurred prior to an approved application are ineligible. Applications can be found at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/cra/lealman> and submitted electronically by emailing [LealmanCRA@pinellascounty.org](mailto:LealmanCRA@pinellascounty.org) or via hand delivery to the Lealman Exchange, located at 5175 45<sup>th</sup> St. N., St. Petersburg 33714. Hand-delivered applications will be time and date stamped by the Office Specialist and forwarded to the Program Manager. The Program Manager will review the following to determine applicant eligibility:

- Ownership of the property
- The property is located in Lealman CRA.
- The applicant(s) must be current on all property taxes.
- The property must not have any outstanding liens or Code Enforcement violations.<sup>2</sup>
- Verify the property is not in foreclosure.
- Review of proposed activities to determine eligibility.
- Confirmation applicant has not received a Residential Improvement grant within the last five years.

If the applicant is denied services for any reason during the review process, the Program Manager shall send a letter informing the applicant of the reason why the application for assistance was rejected.

If the above criteria have been met, the Program Manager shall forward a copy of the application to CRA Manager for comments within 5 days. Once comments are received and any comments addressed, the Program Manager will prepare a file for the client.

Once an applicant is deemed eligible, the Program Manager will engage a third-party provider to perform a cost estimate of the grant activities listed in the application. Upon receipt of the third-party cost estimate, the Program Manager will request a tele-conference or in-person meeting with the applicant to review the estimate and assist them with seeking bids from licensed contractors to perform the work. Generally three bids will be required for the work performed. However, in instances where multiple licensed contractors will be performing services, Pinellas County, at its sole discretion, may waive the

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three-bid requirement if the contractor's estimate is within 10% of the initial cost estimate provided by the County's third-party entity.

Once acceptable bids are provided and contractor(s) selected, an Acceptance of Grant Funds agreement will be provided to the applicant identifying the contractors selected and the grant funds to be provided for the respective services. Next, three-party contracts will be issued for each of the contractors selected. The three-party contract will be between the contractor, applicant and the Pinellas County Redevelopment Agency. Upon receipt of the signed Acceptance of Grant Funds Agreement and the three-party contracts, the County will execute an Escrow Agreement with a title company that will be responsible for distributing draw payments and collecting all lien waiver release forms.

The Program Manager now sets the activity up in OPUS for processing and receiving funds. The fully executed check request vouchers are forwarded to the CRA Manager for review and approval and returned to the Program Manager for copying and processing by the Office Specialist. A copy of the contract, escrow agreement, and award letter should be included as back-up for the payment request to the Title Company. The Program Manager will request a hold for pick-up to hand deliver to the Title Company upon receipt. Once the title company receives the grant funds, the Program Manager will issue the applicant a Notice to Proceed with the approved work.

#### **DRAW PAYMENT INSPECTIONS**

The contractor may submit partial payment requests according to the schedule outlined in the scope of work included in the three-party contract. If the contractor desires partial payments, a schedule of values must be included with the three-party contract. The schedule must individually identify which items are being requested for payment and the amount.

Prior to full payment of any scope of work line item, staff will verify that the requested services have been completed, including the final permit, if applicable. The Program Manager verifies that the requested amount is equal to the work that has been completed through a site visit. The Program Manager will prepare a Progress Payment Request Form and meet with the homeowner and contractor to verify work completed. If the homeowner is satisfied with the request, they would sign the Progress Payment Request Form.

The Program Manager will send over the approved request and schedule of values in writing, letting the title agent know that the funds requested may be released. Once funds are released, the title agent is required to email a current disposition of funds statement and release of liens for each associated payment. If there are cost savings and remaining funds in the escrow account, alternate items from the bid may be approved.

#### **CHANGE ORDERS**

A change order describes any modification to the scope of work provided in either the Acceptance of Grant Funds agreement or the three-party contract. The modification might be relatively minor or incorporate major changes, but a change order must be executed for any difference, addition, or deletion made to the original proposal/bid/work write-up. It must be a written document signed by all parties prior



to the work being completed. The scope of the change order should be consistent with the standards of the original contract and must include the cost of the changes. The Project Manager must compare the request of the change order to the maximum award amount of the grant to make sure that the funds provided do not exceed the program requirements. Any change order costs that exceed the maximum allowable grant award shall be the responsibility of the applicant. However, if the change order is related to repairs that would affect the health and safety of the building's occupants, the applicant may request additional grant funds to complete the work. Such requests will be assessed by and at the sole discretion of CRA staff on a case-by-case basis.

#### **FINAL INSPECTION**

Prior to issuing the final payment, a final verification of work will be completed to ensure that all work is complete per the contract and the work write-up. The contractor must provide the Permit Placard and ensure that all open permits have been successfully finalized, if applicable. Final photos should be taken and a Homeowners Evaluation Form should be given to the homeowner for completion. When possible, wait for the completion and collection of this form before leaving.

#### **GRANT CLOSE OUT**

All final documents, release of liens, final disposition of funds, and photos should be in the file. Make sure that the homeowner receives any warranty information and that a copy of that information is placed in the file.

\*Any exception to the policies contained in these guidelines must be approved in writing by CRA staff.