



## **Storefront Improvement Program**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Am I accepted into the program as soon as I submit my application?**

No. Once the program staff receives an application, it will be reviewed in approximately seven business days. Program staff will reach out with any requests for further information and inform you of your status. You will be notified by an email that announces official acceptance into the program.

#### **The application asks for my City of San Diego Business Tax Certificate. Where can I find that?**

The City of San Diego requires all businesses to have an active business tax certificate (BTC). The BTC is different from your [IRS Employment Identification Number](#) (EIN) and [California Sellers Permit](#). You can [learn more here](#) as well as contact the Office of the City Treasurer to find your business tax certificate number or apply for one online.

#### **Can I choose my own architect?**

Yes. The program incentive provides free concept design services with architects that have a current contract with the program. However, due to the popularity of the program, there is a waiting list to meet with a contracted architect. If you would like to avoid the wait or have a preferred architect, you may hire a California-licensed architect to create the design rendering. Please contact our program staff before taking this step.

#### **Can I qualify for the storefront improvement project without getting an architect rendering?**

No. All projects must have a design rendering on file created by a California-licensed architect.

#### **I just rent my storefront; does my property owner need to apply for the program?**

No. Both tenants and property owners can apply for different incentives through the program. If you are not the property owner, please note that you will need to provide proof that the property owner approves of the final design rendering.

#### **Can I get reimbursed for work that has been started or completed before applying?**

No. Prior to doing any of the work on your storefront, you must apply for the program, have a design rendering completed by a California-licensed architect and have the rendering approved by the Storefront Improvement Program Manager.

#### **Can I do the work on my storefront myself?**

Yes. Any work that is completed is required to be up to San Diego Municipal Code standards permitted if required. Applicants may only request reimbursement for labor costs if it is done by a California-licensed contractor with an active City of San Diego Business Tax Certificate.

#### **I'm making improvements to my entire business; does this program cover more than the storefront?**

No. Eligible expenses are only those that are along the street-facing portion of the building. For example, the costs of painting the back of the building or the inside of your business are not eligible.



**How long does the program take?**

This depends on the length of the waiting list to obtain design assistance and how quickly the applicant gets the project completed. The design phase takes approximately 4 weeks. The applicant has six-months from the time he or she is accepted into the program to obtain a final design rendering. The applicant then has one-year from the date the final design is approved to incur and submit reimbursement requests for project related costs.

**How long does it take to receive my reimbursement?**

It takes approximately 5-6 weeks to receive your reimbursement from the time you submit your request for reimbursement, receipts and proofs of payment. At least two of the proposed improvements must be completed prior to requesting reimbursement.

For further questions, please contact program staff:

Phone: 619-236-6700

Email: [sdbusiness@sandiego.gov](mailto:sdbusiness@sandiego.gov)