

## The City of El Paso's Green Building Grant Program Guidelines

### **Objective**

The goal of the City of El Paso's Green Building Grant Program is to encourage private sector builders to build sustainable buildings within the City of El Paso that will serve as examples for future projects to emulate. Providing incentives for the design of buildings certified under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED® Green Building Rating System™ underscores the City's commitment to improving the quality, cost effectiveness and safety of the built environment while conserving energy and reducing stress on the natural environment. The City of El Paso finds that the development and implementation of a grant program intended to increase the construction of sustainable buildings within the City of El Paso is a benefit to the environment and is therefore in the best interest of the public and will benefit the City of El Paso and its citizens. As such, the implementation of the City of El Paso's Green Building Grant Program constitutes an important public purpose or benefit to the City, for which the City is willing to expend its resources.

### **Possible Grant Award Amounts**

Subject to these guidelines and the availability of funds, Green Building Grant awards may be awarded to successful applicants intending to construct, renovate or remodel commercial or mixed-use properties, in amounts not to exceed the following:

#### **New or Existing Buildings**

- LEED Certified \$50,000
- LEED Silver \$100,000
- LEED Gold \$150,000
- LEED Platinum \$200,000

#### **Multistory Existing Building**

- LEED Certified \$100,000
- LEED Silver \$200,000
- LEED Gold \$300,000
- LEED Platinum \$400,000

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### **Grant Award Eligibility**

All new construction or major remodels of commercial and mixed-use properties, as such terms are used within the El Paso City Code, are eligible for Green Building Grants. However, Multistory Existing Buildings are defined as those existing buildings that consist of a minimum of five (5) floors available for commercial or mixed-use occupancy, of which a minimum of fifty percent (50%) has been vacant for at least five (5) years prior to the submission of the Grant Application. Such construction or major remodel projects must be for a minimum construction cost of \$250,000.00 and at least two (2) times the value of the value of the Green Building Grant being applied for. Grants may be awarded up to the amounts referenced above, not to exceed the construction cost of the project and shall not include the cost of the land. Green Building Grant Awards may not be awarded to employees of the City of El Paso or applicants owing any debts to the City of El Paso, including but not limited to taxes, fines and penalties.

Grants will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis pursuant to the submittal date of the completed Grant Application. City staff shall review all applications for completeness. The City shall reserve funds for any approved Grant Applications, subject to the availability of such funds. However, Grantees will be required to provide verification of LEED registration (see below) and receive a Certificate of Occupancy before any grant funds are released. To be eligible for a grant, the project must: (i) include the construction, renovation or remodeling of a minimum of FIFTEEN THOUSAND (15,000) square feet; and (ii) also achieve a minimum of ten (10) of the seventeen (17) point requirement noted in the "Energy and Atmosphere" section of the LEED Project Checklist, in addition to all other LEED Green Building Rating System requirements.

### **About the LEED<sup>®</sup> Green Building Rating System<sup>™</sup>**

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) identifies itself as a coalition of environmental leaders from across the building industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. More information on the USGBC and its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System (LEED) is available at [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org). The USGBC created the LEED Green Building Rating System in order to:

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- Define "green building" by establishing a common standard of measurement;
- Promote integrated, whole-building design practices;
- Recognize environmental leadership in the building industry;
- Stimulate green competition;
- Raise consumer awareness of green building benefits; and
- Transform the building market.

### **Requirements of Grant Recipients**

In order to be eligible for the award of any Grant Funds, Grant Recipients shall, at a minimum, commit to the following:

- Provide verification to the City of all statements made in the Grant Application;
- Provide verification of project completion to the level specified in application by submitting LEED Certification and other documentation from the U.S. Green Building Council to the satisfaction of the City;
- Allow the City to evaluate the payback and performance of the building;
- Cooperate in the City's creation of educational materials, case studies, or photos; and,
- Agree to make the building available for green building tours, upon reasonable notice and request by the City in advance.

### **Application Requirements**

Grant funds are reserved for projects with complete and accurate applications. Complete applications will consist of the following:

- Complete application form;
- Proof of LEED Registration; and

### **Grant Application Review and Approval Process**

#### 1) Submit Application.

Applications with all supporting documentation are to be submitted to the City's Economic Development Department. City staff shall review the application for completeness and shall return incomplete applications to the applicant for additional information.

#### 2) Reservation of Grant Funds.

Subject to availability of funds and upon verification of completeness, the City shall reserve grant funds for all projects that meet eligibility requirements on a first-come first-

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served basis. These funds will be placed in reserve until a Certificate of Occupancy is attained or the Reserve Period, as described below, expires.

### 3) Funding.

- a) Funds will be held in reserve for a maximum of eighteen (18) months from the date of the City's acceptance of a complete Grant Application. A grant will become void and those funds may be awarded to other grantee applicants if a Certificate of Occupancy is not issued within this Reserve Period. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the City Council, upon grantee's presentation of a request and the Council's finding that such request is reasonable, provided the circumstances of the delay and the scope of the proposed project.
- b) Grant Funds will be awarded when a Certificate of Occupancy is issued and all LEED credits have been verified.

### 4) Forfeiture of Funds.

Funds must be refunded to the City of El Paso if the Certificate of Occupancy or LEED certification is revoked within one (1) year of issuance. Partial refunds to the City will be required if the building is not certified at the level applied for in the initial application.

(END OF GUIDELINES)