



# CITY OF HARVEY SIGNAGE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

## New City Grant for Business Signage!

The City of Harvey announces a new pilot program for grants to cover up to 50% of the cost of new business signage! The maximum grant is 50% of your project cost or \$10,000 (whichever is less) to purchase and install new signage. You may also be eligible for no-interest loans for signage projects.



## GRANT DETAILS:

This is a Pilot  
Program for 2022  
and 2023

Initial Grants Are for  
Businesses in TIFs

For More  
Information Contact  
Nick Greifer

[ngreifer@cityofharveyil.gov](mailto:ngreifer@cityofharveyil.gov)

708-341-1316

CITY OF HARVEY

[www.cityofharveyil.gov](http://www.cityofharveyil.gov)







# **SIGNAGE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

GUIDELINES AS OF NOVEMBER 9, 2020  
GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION  
BY THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR OR HIS DESIGNEE

## I. Signage Program Overview

The fundamental goals of the Signage Modernization Program (the “Program” or “Signage Program”) are to promote business retention, enhance the appearance of the City of Harvey’s TIF Districts, and address deterioration and obsolescence within the districts. To achieve these goals, the City of Harvey (the “City”) has established the objective to improve the appearance and functionality of **signage** on street-level commercial buildings located in the City’s TIF Districts.

The Program is a voluntary program, whereby Program applicants may receive a municipal subsidy in connection with the construction of high-quality signage. Program participants are eligible to receive a grant to reimburse up to 50% of the signage costs and/or a 0% interest loan (in the form of a grant that reduces the interest rate to 0%) upon the disbursement of the loan to finance the eligible sign improvement project (the “Project”).

Program applicants would follow a 3-step process to obtain City assistance:

- Step 1 – Submittal of Program application to Community and Economic Development Department (“ED”) staff at a meeting with ED staff
- Step 2 – Submittal of building permit application to ED staff
- Step 3 – Submittal of loan application to participating bank (optional).

As noted, the Program participant has the option of obtaining a subsidized loan that, as mentioned, would reduce the interest rate to 0%. The interest on a sign improvement loan applies to a maximum loan amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) amortized over a maximum loan period of four (4) years and a maximum loan subsidy amount of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00). *NOTE: Business applicants may obtain a larger loan over \$10,000 or a term exceeding 4 years if approved by the participating bank, but the City subsidy is limited to \$1,000.*

The Program is managed and administered by the Economic Development Department.

## II. Eligibility Criteria

Eligible participants of the Signage Program include property owners and tenants of street-level commercial spaces within one of the TIF Districts in Harvey. Eligible participants must have an approved City building permit for the signage improvement project. The City Administrator is authorized to waive 50% of the building permit fees for the signage improvement project.

A property owner or a business that is leasing space must:

- Be current on all fees and taxes owed to the City;
- If a property owner - must show proof of ownership of the property to be improved;
- If a business that is leasing space - must have a current executed lease with a minimum of three (3) years remaining from the date of Application; and
- Provide written approval and consent from the property owner to participate in the Program.

Note: Properties will not be considered eligible that are being renovated without a tenant or without a signed lease with at least three (3) years remaining on the lease.

Storefront Sign Improvements: Storefronts are defined as the portion of a building that faces the public right-of-way and is fronted by a sidewalk or similar pedestrian-oriented pathway. Eligible improvements include signage contributing to the visual enhancement of a property as it relates to the public right-of-way.

For the purposes of considering projects, a storefront is considered the entire length of the building that faces the street, regardless of how many individual storefronts comprise the building. For example, a property with three tenants will not be considered three individual projects with the ability to apply for the maximum storefront improvement amounts for each storefront.

Ineligible improvements include any improvements not visible from the public right-of-way, and any improvements deemed to be inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and objectives.

Ineligible Participants of the Program include:

- National franchises/for profit corporations with more than twenty locations outside of the City;
- Occupants or owners of buildings that are not current with property taxes or water bills;
- Persons or businesses that have one or more outstanding City parking tickets or property maintenance violations;
- Churches or other religious organizations; and
- Government offices and agencies (non-governmental tenants are eligible).

### **III. Signage Program Administration**

The Signage Program provides participants the opportunity to receive a grant upon the disbursement of their sign improvement loan or completion of their approved Project, up to an approved amount, based the maximum amounts set forth in the sections below.

Funding Source(s): The Projects will be funded through tax increment financing (TIF) within applicable TIF Districts.

Grant: The grant is in the form of a payment to reimburse the participant up to 50% of the signage costs and a 0% interest loan. The reimbursement payment would be the lesser of 50% of the signage cost or \$10,000 whichever is less.

Regarding the 0% interest loan, participants can receive a subsidy for up to a maximum loan amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) amortized over a maximum loan period of four (4) years and a maximum loan subsidy amount of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00).

Timing of Grant: The grant shall only be made after the Project has been completed and passed building permit inspections. If applicable, the subsidy for the 0% interest loan shall only be made after the loan for the Project has been approved by a participating financial institution.

Eligible Costs: Signage improvement costs eligible for incentives include the following: professional and consultant fees, sign cleaning, painting, construction, reconstruction,

rehabilitation and restoration of the signage. Business applicants are required to post a temporary public notice indicating that financing is being provided jointly by the bank and the City of Harvey.

## IV. Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are in place to (a) ensure signs meet minimum code requirements and (b) go beyond the minimum to implement harmonious, high-quality signage (e.g., harmonious sign colors). In addition to meeting minimum City ordinance requirements per the Signage Code and the Zoning Code, the business applicant must meet the following guidelines.

### General Guidelines

- A. All signs shall be limited to the business conducted upon the property. Signage shall be limited to business name, logo graphics, address, and directional identification.
- B. One business identification sign shall be allowed per street frontage. The sign's purpose is to identify the business and/or the products sold or services provided by the business. Therefore, signs will not be allowed to have excessive information. Signs that are easily read and concise make viewing easier for pedestrians and motorists.
- C. Sign materials shall be consistent with other building materials and utilize a set of harmonious colors on the façade. Special consideration should be given to the existing architectural elements on the façade, and the sign should enhance rather than detract from these features.
- D. The size of the sign shall be in direct correlation to the scale of the building and the surrounding buildings. Signs shall not project more than 12 inches from the façade of the building.
- E. Lighting of signs shall not move, flash or make noise.
- F. Multiple tenant signs are to be located on the façade of the building adjacent to the entrance.
- G. Roof-top signs, commercial advertising signs and portable signs are prohibited.
- H. Refer to the Chapter \_\_ of the Harvey Code "Signs" for additional information.

### Types of Signs

The types of signs eligible for the Program are limited to the following:

- A. Individual letters mounted to the façade.
- B. Silkscreened lettering on awnings.
- C. Plaques that are mounted to the façade.
- D. Permanently applied window signs.

The following additional requirements apply to participating businesses.

- 1. Back-Lit Box Signs.** Back-lit box signs are prohibited, whether projecting, wall, or freestanding signs. Back-lit box signs include any sign with a box configuration and lighting within the box, shining through the front panel, whether the panel is opaque or translucent.
- 2. Plastic.** Plastic is permitted only to be utilized for separate alphanumeric characters or logos on any sign type. Translucent or plastic panels are prohibited for all sign types.
- 3. Freestanding Signs.** Freestanding signs including pole-mounted signs are prohibited with the following exception:
  - a. Monument Sign. Freestanding signs may be constructed as monument signs with a maximum overall height of **6 feet**. A monument sign includes a base with a

sign panel mounted directly upon the base. The base height shall be less than 30 percent of the overall sign height.

**4. Projecting Signs.** Projecting signs shall be oriented to the pedestrian on the sidewalk and limited to a maximum of 7 square feet for each sign face. Projecting signs may be mounted no higher than 16 feet from the sidewalk elevation. A maximum of one pedestrian-scaled projecting sign is permitted for every 30 feet of storefront façade.

**5. Wall Signs.** Wall sign letters are limited to a maximum of 2 feet in height and shall not cover any architectural detail on the building. Separate letters, each pin-mounted, are preferred to panels.

**6. Total Signage.** The total square feet of signage for each street face shall not exceed 150 square feet.

## V. Signage Program Steps

Signage Program applicants must follow a 3-step process to obtain City assistance. At any point in the process a business participant can be pre-qualified for the bank loan (i.e., is not required to wait until Step 3).

Step	Action	Purpose
Step 1	Meet with Economic Development Department (“ED”) staff and submit Signage Program application	To determine preliminary qualification for City incentive
Step 2	Submit building permit application to ED	To determine compliance with City building safety codes and final qualification for City incentive
Step 3 (optional)	Submit loan application to ED-approved participating bank	To obtain loan to start project

**Step 1: Meet with ED and Submit Signage Program Application.** Applicants must schedule a meeting with the Community and Economic Development Department to discuss the program, ask questions, and obtain application materials (also available online or by email). The purpose of the meeting is to provide an early assessment that the applicant signage project is “on track” and is likely to meet the Design Guidelines as defined herein (including Section IV criteria). Applicants should contact:

Nicholas Greifer, Economic Development Director  
 Harvey City Hall  
 15320 Broadway Avenue  
 Harvey, Illinois 60428  
 (708) 341-1316  
[Ngreifer@CityofHarveyil.gov](mailto:Ngreifer@CityofHarveyil.gov)

Signage Program applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year as long as funding remains available. Applications can be accepted at the time of the meeting, if the application package is complete. Complete submissions must include the following:

- Completed Signage Program application form;
- Two (2) color photographs of the property “as is”;



- Illustration/design of proposed Project to be completed; and
- If the property owner is the applicant, evidence of ownership of the property, e.g., copy of recorded deed, copy title policy. (If tenant is the applicant, please furnish a copy of the lease, and a letter of support from the property owner indicating he/she is supportive of the Project and has reviewed the terms and conditions of the Program

All applications, photos, and supporting documents shall be submitted to the City Planner.

**Step 2: Submit Building Permit Application for Review.** Like other building projects, a signage project must follow the standard municipal building permit review. The ED Director can provide assistance on completing the normal Building Permit application.

Additionally, when the building permit application is submitted, the Economic Development Department will:

- Verify that the Signage Program Application is complete;
- Confirm eligibility of proposed location in terms of meeting location requirements, Section II qualification criteria and Section IV design guidelines; and
- Prepare a recommendation for approval of grant to the City Administrator.

The ED Director will submit an electronic copy of a letter indicating approval and that Steps 1 and 2 have been satisfied to the participating bank and business applicant.

**Step 3 (Optional): Submit a Loan Request.** Signage Program applications that have been approved on a preliminary basis in Step 1 and formally approved in Step 2 as part of the standard building permit review subsequently would meet with the participating financial institution. In connection with the meeting the business would file an application for a 0% interest loan from the participating bank.

#### Participating Financial Institutions

First Merchants Bank  
135 E. 154<sup>th</sup>  
Harvey, IL 60428  
Phone: (708) 263-6414