

## **PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **2008 COMMERCIAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

#### **A. Program Description**

The City of Toronto provides funds to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and business associations to help develop strategies to improve the economic viability of their commercial areas. Eligible research projects include:

- Development of business or strategic plans for commercial areas;
- Development (not execution) of new street festivals or special events;
- Studies to improve the organizational capacity of a BIA or business association;
- Market analysis studies; and
- Customer surveys.

For 2008, priority research projects are those involving the development of BIA multi-year business and strategic plans which include a streetscape-planning component.

The available funding covers up to 50% of eligible research project costs to a maximum grant of \$10,000.00. The BIA or business association must pay the balance of the project costs.

In order to receive Commercial Research Investment funding, the BIA or business association research project must satisfy the conditions for support described in Section C of the Program Guidelines.

In the event the total eligible funding requests exceed the program budget, recommendations for support are based on the evaluation criteria set out in Section D.

All research projects receiving funding must be completed, and the final submission made to the Director of Small Business and Local Partnerships, within one year of the date of the funds being approved by Council.

#### **B. Program Objectives**

1. For 2008, the primary program objective is to assist BIAs retain professional assistance in the preparation of multi-year business or strategic plans which include a streetscape-planning component.
2. To assist BIAs or business associations in making effective use of professional calibre research to plan and implement programs which improve the economic viability of their commercial areas.

3. To gain public access to research projects undertaken by BIAs or business associations, and thereby develop a resource centre on commercial revitalization issues for use by City staff, business associations across the City, and the general public.

### **C. Conditions for Support**

1. The sponsoring BIA or business association has adopted a "Non-Discrimination Policy", as this is a condition for receiving all City of Toronto grants. Please complete the enclosed Declaration of Non-Discrimination form.
2. The sponsoring BIA or business association has sufficient funds to pay for its share of the project costs. If the applicant is a BIA, provision for the project should be made in the BIA's budget. Other business associations must indicate how the required funds would be raised.
3. The Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division will have free access to the information provided by the research project and may distribute it to the general public, subject to the normal restrictions ensuring the confidentiality of individual respondents or businesses.
4. By submitting an application, the sponsoring BIA or business association agrees to complete and submit the research project within one year of the date the funds were approved by Council.

### **D. Evaluation Criteria**

Where eligible applications for support exceed the program budget, priority for funding will be given to the research projects that best satisfy the following criteria:

1. The BIA or business association has limited funds available, and requires support in order to undertake the research project.
2. The research project is appropriate to the BIA or business association's stage of development and needs, and has a high likelihood of being implemented.
3. The research project will provide information or a model that is useful from the standpoint of other BIAs and business associations or the City as a whole.

The Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division reserves the right to require any or all applicants to make a brief presentation on their submission to the Program's application review team.

## **E. Program Administration**

1. The sponsoring BIA or business association is responsible for managing the day-to-day operation of the research project and for paying the consultant(s).
2. The sponsoring BIA or business association is responsible for ensuring that the completed research project is consistent with the project described in the application submission and approved by Council for funding. The sponsoring BIA or business association is responsible for contacting City staff for authorization if a revision(s) to the project description, as outlined in the application, is desired. Completed research projects that are not consistent with the approved project will be ineligible for the funding.
3. Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division staff is available as a resource to the BIA or business association. The Division may be able to contribute data and statistics, information from other studies, and/or general advice and suggestions.
4. The funds are released at the conclusion of the project after the BIA or business association submits a letter to the Director, Small Business and Local Partnerships, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division:
  - (a) Indicating that the project has been completed within one year of Council's approving of funding and providing three (3) copies of the final research document(s);
  - (b) Verifying that the consultant(s) has been paid a minimum of one-half the research project costs; and
  - (c) Commenting on how the project will be used by the BIA or business association.

## **F. Application Procedure**

Required Content of Application\*:

- (a) A letter addressed to Karen Keskull, Community Partnership Advisor, 77 Elizabeth Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Toronto, M5G 1P4 setting out:
  - The reasons why the BIA or business association wishes to undertake the research project and how it intends to use the results in its program;
  - A detailed description of the work to be undertaken, including end products from the research, and confirmation that the completed research project will be submitted within one year of the date of Council's approval of funding; and

- Cost estimates from 2 prospective consultants including a copy of the proposal call to the consultant(s), total project budget and requested funding amount (maximum 50% of total project budget), and an indication of how the BIA or business association will raise its share of the project costs.

(b) Completed Part A – City of Toronto Grant Application 2008 (enclosed)

*(Please note: If Part A has already been completed as part of another City of Toronto grant application, simply provide a copy)*

- Organizational overview
- Service overview
- Membership
- Board of Directors
- In-kind support
- Income and expenditure detail

The following questions in Part A are not applicable to Business Improvement Areas: 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26. Please mark these questions, and others that do not apply to your organization, with an N/A.

(c) Signed City of Toronto Non-Discrimination Policy Form (enclosed).

**Completed Application Deadline: 4:30 PM, Tuesday, March 11, 2008 \*\***

**\* Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and will not be considered.**

**\*\* Late applications will not be considered.**