

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

2009 COMMERCIAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT PROGRAM

A. Program Description

The City of Toronto's Commercial Research Investment Program ("CRIP") funds Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and business associations ("eligible applicants") to prepare plans and strategies that will improve the economic viability of their commercial areas. Eligible research projects include:

- Preparation of business or strategic plans for commercial areas;
- Urban design and streetscape plans;
- Studies to improve the organizational capacity of an Eligible applicant;
- Planning (but not execution) of new street festivals or special events;
- Market analysis studies; and,
- Customer surveys.

Priority research projects are those involving preparation of BIA multi-year business and strategic plans which include a streetscape design component.

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

Eligible CRIP research projects must satisfy the conditions for support described in Section C of the Program Guidelines.

Recommendations for support are based on the evaluation criteria set out in Section D. Total eligible funding requests may exceed the program budget, in which case the criteria will be applied.

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. To assist BIAs/business associations retain professional assistance in the preparation of multi-year business or strategic plans which include a streetscape plan.
2. To assist Eligible applicants effectively use professional research to plan and implement programs to improve the economic viability of their commercial areas.
3. To increase access by BIAs/business associations to completed research projects and provide a resource on commercial revitalization issues.

C. Conditions for Support

1. The BIA/business association must adopt a "Non-Discrimination Policy" and complete the enclosed Declaration of Non-Discrimination form.
2. The BIA/business association must have 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 must have access to the information provided by the research project and be permitted to distribute it to the general public, subject to the normal restrictions ensuring the confidentiality of individual respondents or businesses.
4. The sponsoring Eligible applicant must agree to complete and submit the research project within one year of the date the funds were approved by Council.

D. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. The research project, if implemented, will have significant economic impact.
2. The research project is appropriate to the applicant'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/business associations or to the City as a whole.
4. The applicant requires support to undertake the research project.

Applicants may be asked to make a brief presentation on their submission to the Program's application review team.

E. Program Administration

1. Approved applicants must manage the day-to-day operation and contract administration of the research project.
2. Approved applicants must ensure that the completed research project is consistent with the project submitted in the application and approved by Council. After approval, City staff must give prior authorization if the project applicant wishes to revise the approved project. Completed research projects that are not consistent with the approved project will not be funded.

3. Staff can act as a resource to approved applicants and may be able to contribute suggestions, data and statistics, or information from other studies.
4. Funds are released at project conclusion after the approved applicant submits a letter to the Manager, BIA office:
 - (a) Indicating that the project has been completed within one year of Council approval of funding and providing three (3) copies of the final research;
 - (b) Verifying that the consultant(s) has been paid a minimum of one-half the research project costs; and,
 - (c) Describing how the project will be used.

F. Application Procedure

Required Content of Application*:

- (a) A letter addressed to George Wheeler, Community Partnership Advisor, 77 Elizabeth Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, M5G 1P4 setting out:
 - The reasons why the applicant wishes to undertake the research project and the intended use of the research;
 - A detailed description of the work to be undertaken, research outputs, confirming the completed research project will be submitted within one year of the date Council approves project 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 eligible applicant will raise its share of the project costs.
- (b) Completed Part A – City of Toronto Grant Application 2009 (enclosed)
(Please note: BIAs are exempt from completing Part A. If an eligible business association has already completed Part A as part of another City of Toronto grant application, simply provide a copy).
- (c) Signed City of Toronto Non-Discrimination Policy Form (enclosed).

The application deadline is 4:30 PM, Thursday, 12 March 2009. Late applications will not be considered. Incomplete applications will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant.