



City of Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency

Guidelines & Procedures for Job Creation Assistance Program Revised August 2021

Purpose:

The purpose of the CRA Job Creation Assistance Program is to incentivize the creation and retention of full-time employment within Panama City's four CRA Districts by providing grant payments that will encourage increased economic activity and investment in the CRA Areas. The objectives are to lower vacancy rates, increase employment levels, raise the tax base, diversify economic opportunities and promote redevelopment goals. Projects that are especially encouraged for job growth and expansion involving the development of new business practices, technology, innovation, target new growth oriented markets, expand the growth of retail goods and services, provide for energy conservation and/or develop practices/programs will help the CRAs become self-sustaining in the long term and distinguish Panama City as the premier city to live, work and play.

There are four levels in which Job Creation assistance shall be awarded:

Level 1: \$3000 per business that is created or expanded, creating at least two jobs paying the Bay County annual average wage or greater.

Level 2: \$5,000 per business that is created or expanded, creating at least four jobs paying the Bay County annual average wage or greater.

Level 3: \$8,000 per business that is created or expanded, creating at least seven jobs paying the Bay County annual average wage or greater.

Level 4: Up to \$15,000 per business that is created or expanded, creating at least ten or more jobs) paying the Bay County annual average wage or greater.

Bonus: \$1,500 per business that is created or expanded, creating at least 5 jobs paying 30% or greater over the Bay County annual average wage.

(All awards are based on budget availability that may differ per year and per district budget allocation).

Program Rules:

The following rules are intended to inform a potential grant applicant of the extent and scope of the program. The desired result will stimulate economic growth, stabilize property values, improve and upgrade the appearance of the area, and facilitate and encourage redevelopment activity in the CRA districts.

1. Business Owners expanding, relocating or starting their business within the boundaries of a CRA District are eligible to apply.
2. Applicant business must create a minimum of two or more full-time equivalent positions whose hours worked must equal at least 40 hours/week and retain these positions for at least one full year (365 days)
3. Jobs created must meet or exceed the current annual average wage of Bay County
4. Jobs created must be Net new jobs to the CRA area. A net new job cannot be a replacement of a current employee.
5. Employees hired under the Program must remain employed by the company for at least twelve months for the company to claim the incentive.
6. The incentive will be paid at the end of the twelve-month period. The applicant business shall incur all upfront costs of hiring new employees and may only receive the incentive after successfully employing two or more full-time positions (as previously described) for one year and has supplied all required reporting documentation.
7. The business must physically maintain its principal place of business within the CRA boundary for a minimum of 2 years after the date of the application.
8. Only one (1) Job Creation Grant application will be accepted per business, per annual grant cycle. The Job Creation Assistance Program is only available to applicants that have not received previous grant funding for the same business in the last three (3) years.
9. Applicant property must be current on all City and County property taxes with no outstanding debt.
10. Applicant property may not have any outstanding City of Panama City liens or code violations. CRA grants will not be awarded until the complete satisfaction of any City of Panama City liens.
11. Applicant business and property must not be a sexually oriented business as defined by Article III, Section 7-82, Panama City Code of Ordinances

12. All Job Creation Assistance Grants shall be available to anyone meeting the eligibility requirements and no one shall be denied the benefits of said program because of race, color, national origin or sex.
13. Any and all conflicts of interest must be declared upon submission of an application.

Application and Program Procedures:

1. An applicant seeking a Commercial Improvement Grant may secure an application from the City of Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) located at 501 Harrison Ave, Room 206, Panama City, FL 32401, phone (850) 872-7230 or download the application from www.pcgov.org
2. Applications will be accepted no sooner than October 1, and no later than June 1 of each fiscal year.
3. A checklist of required documents and forms can be found with the grant application. The fully completed application and supporting documentation should be submitted in person to the CRA office, or via email at CRAs@pcgov.org
4. The CRA Grants Coordinator undertakes the initial review of the application and determines if the application is complete. If the application is found incomplete, the applicant will be granted time to complete and resubmit the application. Once complete, application will be date-stamped as received. **Acceptance of completed application packet is not a guarantee of funding.**
5. Within two (2) weeks, or ten (10) business days, of receipt of the completed application, the CRA Grants Coordinator will conduct a full review to ensure compliance with the CRA Grant Program Criteria. The CRA Grants Coordinator will forward a recommendation to the CRA Program Manager, CRA Director and City Manager for final approval.
6. An official notification from the CRA Grants Coordinator will be delivered to the Applicant within two (2) weeks, or ten (10) business days, of recommendation, informing them of the approval or denial of the application and may include approval **with conditions**. Failure to comply to conditions in a timely manner may result in the revocation of grant approval.
7. All Grant funding decisions provided by CRA staff and Director are final. Applicants that are formally denied a CRA grant may appeal staff decisions in writing to CRA Director for review by City Manager and/or, finally the CRA Board if applicable.
8. Applicant must return the signed grant agreement award letter, indicating acceptance or refusal of the grant award, to the CRA office in person or via email to CRAs@pcgov.org within two (2) weeks of notification of approval.

9. By accepting the Job Creation Assistance Grant, applicant agrees to comply with monthly updates to the CRA Grants Coordinator.
10. CRA staff may conduct site visits (announced or unannounced) to ensure compliance of the terms set forth in the grant agreement.
11. For a net new job within the CRA limits, the one-year reporting requirement will begin on the date in which final written grant approval is received. For a net new job from outside of the CRA limits, the net new job is considered an employee that has been employed full time for at least one year but less than 2 years at the applicant's company.
12. Any unforeseen changes in employment that will affect this grant must be reported to the CRA Office immediately. If for any reason an employee hired under this Program does not complete the twelve-month employment period and the position is not filled within two (2) weeks of vacancy, the grant agreement shall be reconsidered for continued eligibility. Funds may be reduced, or agreement terminated if found to be out of compliance with program requirements.
13. Required documentation for reimbursement of Job Creation grant awards must include copies of certified payroll checks for each employee for the duration of one full year (365 days). For net new job from outside the CRA limits, certified payroll checks of the eligible employee for the duration of one full year (365 days) will be required at the time of the application for grant.
14. The CRA reserves the right to verify all required documentation for which reimbursement is requested and award grant funds in a manner consistent with the CRA Plan and general operating policy of the CRA.