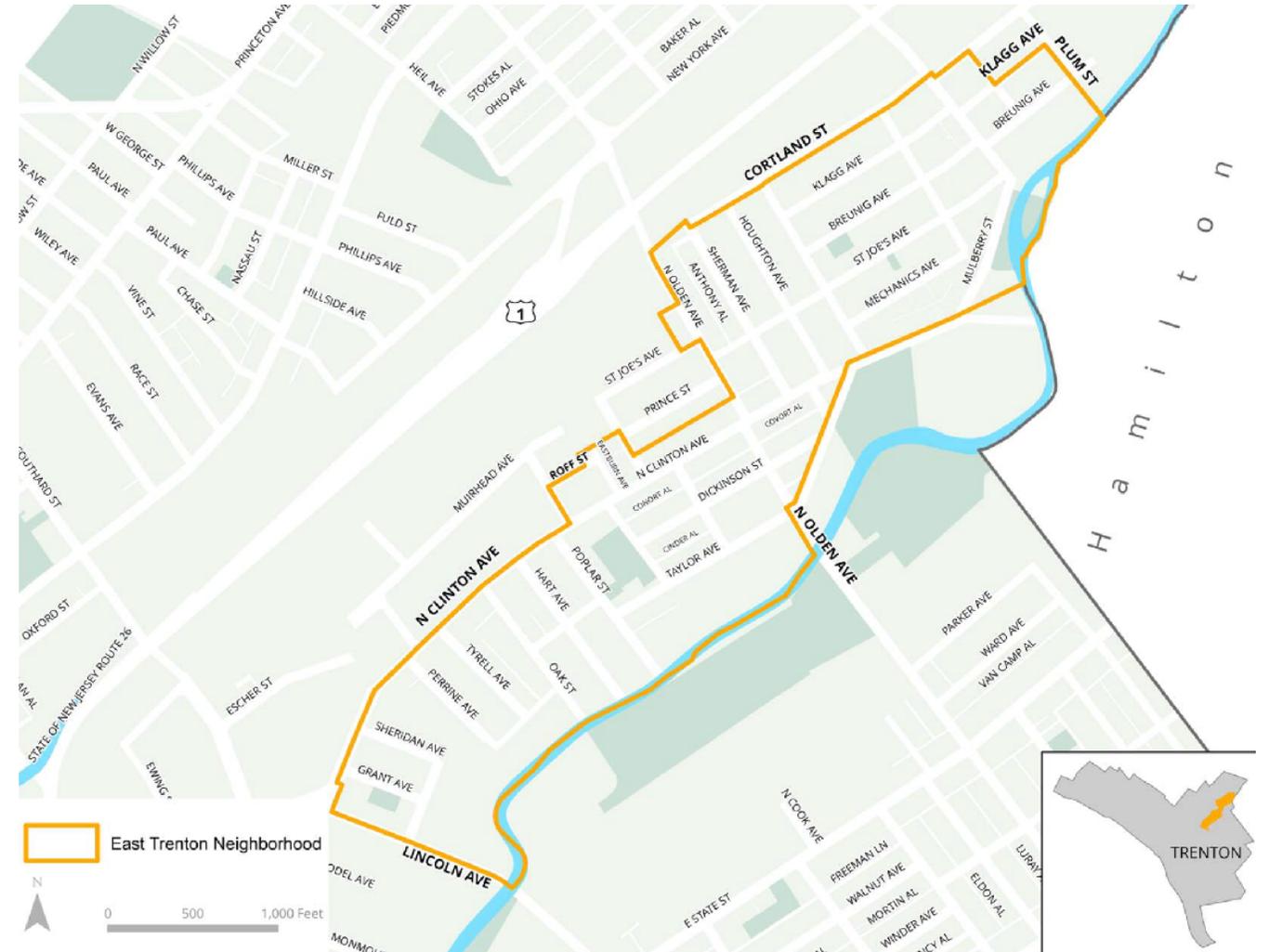


## **Business Improvement Program Guidelines**

Recognizing that small businesses have always been a part of the East Trenton community, the East Trenton Collaborative (ETC) Business Improvement Program is intended to assist **small businesses operating in the neighborhood, including retail, service, or industrial, or real estate businesses** (see map) to improve or enhance their capacity to (1) provide goods and services to neighborhood residents or (2) provide job opportunities to local residents, with the goal of helping small businesses be a more active, positive presence in East Trenton.

### **The East Trenton Neighborhood**



### **Eligibility**

Only **existing businesses that currently operate** in the East Trenton neighborhood (see map) are eligible to apply.

Eligible businesses include:

- Businesses who have physical storefront space in the East Trenton neighborhood
  - Examples include but are not limited to restaurants, bars, grocers, or liquor stores, retail stores, auto mechanics, or other service providers.

- Industrial Businesses who have manufacturing or warehouse space in the East Trenton neighborhood.
- East Trenton residents who own and operate rental properties for housing or commercial space.
  - Note: Purchases of residential properties are eligible for this assistance only for East Trenton residents who currently live in East Trenton and who are seeking to purchase properties located in the East Trenton neighborhood. Other purchases, such as mixed use, commercial, or industrial spaces are eligible for this assistance only for non-residents who are operating a business in East Trenton and are seeking to purchase properties in the East Trenton neighborhood.
- Other business types that are registered in the East Trenton neighborhood or are owned by East Trenton residents will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Priority will be given to businesses whose owner lives in the neighborhood, who have a significant proportion of their employees living in the neighborhood, or who are collaborating on larger neighborhood improvement efforts, though any business can apply. Rejected applicants may reapply, but businesses may only receive **one grant per calendar year**.

**While this program is currently aimed at existing businesses**, entrepreneurs planning to start a business in the neighborhood should contact the East Trenton Collaborative to discuss their plans and determine the most appropriate way the Collaborative can assist them.

### **Eligible Expenses**

This grant is intended to support **long-term, tangible investment** that will help the business become a more active and positive presence in the East Trenton community. Businesses may apply for up to **\$6,000 in grant funds** for eligible expenses to improve or enhance their capacity to (1) provide goods and services to neighborhood residents or (2) provide job opportunities to local residents. These can include such improvements as:

Physical improvements to existing storefront or street side presence:

- Physical renovation of storefronts, including interior fixtures, lights, countertops, piping, etc.
- Renovation or improvement of facades, including side walls that face the street, as well as signage, awnings, etc.
- Lights or other security equipment

Acquisition of space for conducting business

- Financial assistance for defraying the associated costs of purchasing a property, including down payment, appraisal, architectural or structural engineering, trash out, or other expense
  - Note: Purchases of residential properties are eligible for this assistance only for East Trenton residents who currently live in East Trenton and who are seeking to purchase properties located in the East Trenton neighborhood. Other purchases, such as mixed use, commercial, or industrial spaces are eligible for this assistance only for non-residents who are operating a business in East Trenton and are seeking to purchase properties in the East Trenton neighborhood.

Improvements to Business Operations and Capacity

- Training or consulting services to strengthen the business
- Technology, such as sales tracking or accounting software, or other media development such as website design

- Purchase or repair of equipment that is critical to the business, particularly if it will enable the business to employ additional people, extend its hours, or otherwise become more active

This list is not exhaustive, and applications will be reviewed individually. Businesses should understand this program as an investment in their physical, visible presence in East Trenton.

The grant **cannot support** operating expenses, including the following:

- Salaries or wages,
- Operating inputs, such as raw materials or consumables
- Inventory for sale
- Debt reduction, back taxes, or other financial liabilities
- Marketing, advertising, etc.

### **Owner match**

If the applicant is requesting more than \$1,500 in grant funds, the applicant must show that they are “matching” the grant with a significant investment of their own resources. This can include covering a portion of the proposed work out of pocket, or documentation of the cost of physical repairs the business has already carried out within the past six months.

There is no set match proportion, but applicants that show a larger match will be given priority and have a higher likelihood of receiving the grant. The intent is to assist businesses that are making their own investment in the neighborhood.

### **Grant Timeline**

- This program is intended to have rapid, visible results. **Grantees are expected to do all work within 90 days** of their grant agreement.
- Grantees will receive **one-half** of their grant amount in advance, upon signature of their grant agreement. The balance will be released upon the submission of a **satisfactory interim report** and a **site visit** from the East Trenton Collaborative, to verify progress.

If a grantee requires an extension for exceptional circumstances, the request must be submitted in writing to the Small Business Committee at least **one month before** the end of the grant period along with a detailed justification. The Small Business Committee will review the request and approve or reject it. **Only one extension of up to two months will be given.**

If the grantee is unable to complete the project within the approved timeframe, they will be required to return the full amount of the grant to ETC.

### **How to Apply**

1. Complete the **application form**, with information about your business, the proposed work, and the total budget for the improvements. The application form is on the next page.

2. Attach the following required documents:

#### **For physical improvements to existing storefront or street side presence**

- **Photographs** of the existing storefront and any other relevant items (equipment to be purchased, fixtures to be repaired or replaced, etc.)
- **A design sketch** of what will be built / repaired, if applicable
- **Two quotes** for the proposed work or equipment
- **Documentation of your “match”** – the amount you will be contributing from your own resources. This can mean covering a portion of the total cost of your project, or documenting recent physical renovations you have made to your storefront in the past six months.

- **The written agreement of the landlord**, if the business does not own the building.

**For acquisition of space for conducting business**

- **Photographs** of the space to be acquired
- **A design sketch or description** of how the space will be used
- **Contract of sale or other documentation** of intent to acquire the property as well as sale price
- **Documentation of your “match”** – the amount you will be contributing from your own resources. This can mean covering a portion of the total cost of acquiring or renovating the property.

**For improvements to business operations and capacity**

- Description of scope of services of training provider or consultant, technology, or equipment to be purchased.
  - Description of how the training, consultation, technology, or equipment will improve business operations/capacity.
- Documentation of the cost of training, consultation, or purchase of technology or equipment.
- **Documentation of your “match”** – the amount you will be contributing from your own resources. This can mean covering a portion of the total cost of your project, or documenting recent investments you have made to your storefront **or business** in the past six months.

Applications can be submitted in hard copy to the East Trenton Collaborative during regular working hours, or via email to [etc@urbanpromisetrenton.org](mailto:etc@urbanpromisetrenton.org).

**Application Review**

Applications will be reviewed by a sub-committee of the East Trenton Collaborative, which will schedule a site visit and interview with the business owner, and will additionally verify that the property is current on its City of Trenton property taxes. The committee may request modifications to the proposed work, request additional documentation, or recommend only a portion for funding.

If the application is approved, the business will be required to sign a grant agreement before receiving any funds.

**STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION**

**Applicant Information**

1. Applicant's Contact Information

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

What's the best way to contact you?  Email  Text  Phone

Are you an East Trenton Resident?  Yes  No

If so, what is your address? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please describe your business in brief (types of products sold, customers served, etc.).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How long has your business been located in the East Trenton neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many employees do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many of your employees live in the East Trenton neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Information**

6. Check which assistance type you are applying for:

Physical Improvement (Go to Question 7, then skip to Question 10)

Acquisition of Space (Go to Question 8, then skip to Question 10)

Improving Operation/Capacity (Go to Question 9, then continue to Question 10)

7. Physical Improvement

a. Do you own your storefront? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

b. If not, please provide the landlord's contact information:

Name

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Address

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Phone

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Email address

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c. Application Summary

Please provide a short description (1-2 sentences) of the proposed storefront improvement work for which you are applying.

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**Required attachments:**

- Photographs of the current condition of the relevant parts of the storefront
- At least **two** contractor cost estimates
- Renderings or sketches of what the improvement will look like
- The written agreement of the landlord, if the business does not own the building.

8. Acquisition of Space

a. Please provide information of the space to be acquired:

Current Property  
Owner/Seller

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Address

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Sale Price

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b. Application Summary

Please provide a short description (1-2 sentences) of the proposed use of the property to be purchased.

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**Required attachments:**

- Photographs of the space to be acquired
- A design sketch or description of how the space will be used
- Contract of sale or other documentation of intent to acquire the property as well as sale price

9. Improving Operation/Capacity

a. Check which assistance type you are applying for:

\_\_\_ Training \_\_\_ Consulting \_\_\_ Equipment

b. Please provide information of the vendor that will provide the training/consulting/equipment to be acquired:

Vendor's Business  
Name

Address

Business Phone

Mobile Phone

Email Address

c. Application Summary

For Training: Please provide a short description (1-2 sentences) of the training, including what topics it will cover and who will attend.

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For Consulting: Please provide a short description (1-2 sentences) of the consultant and the project the consultant will complete. (Please attach consultant's resume or sample of past work.)

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For Equipment: Please list the equipment you intent to purchase and the benefit the equipment will provide to your business.

**Required attachments:**

- Documentation of the cost of training, consultation, or purchase of technology or equipment.

**Fund Request**

Funds requested from this program: \_\_\_\_\_

Total cost of planned project: \_\_\_\_\_

**Improvements (Demonstration of Match)**

10. Please list any improvements you have made to your business in the past 6 months, if any.

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**Required attachments:** If you would like to claim any of these as a “match” for your grant request, please attach **photographs of the improvements** as well as **copies of receipts**.

Question 11 continued on next page.

