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### Program Description

The Clearwater Downtown Development Board (DDB) offers financial assistance to qualified business owners or commercial tenants furnishing approved outdoor café areas within the Downtown Core. The **Outdoor Café Grant Program** provides reimbursement grants of up to **\$8,000.00 per business**, including umbrellas and furniture listed in an approved outdoor café application.

This initiative supports the DDB's placemaking and business assistance goals by improving the street-level experience, increasing visual consistency, and encouraging continued use of outdoor dining spaces.

### Financial Availability

Funding for the Outdoor Café Grant Program is allocated through the DDB's FY 25-26 budget and is available on a **first-come, first-served basis**

### Eligibility

Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria to qualify:

- Located within the Downtown Core.
- Have a valid **Outdoor Café Application** in good standing (i.e., original permit issued, renewal processed, up to date insurance provided, and all fees paid).
- Hold a current **Business Tax Receipt**.
- Have **no outstanding code violations** or unpaid fees or judgments.
- Submit a **completed grant application**, including the approved outdoor café site plan and item specifications.
- Ensure that all reimbursed items are **clearly shown on the approved outdoor café site plan**.
- Ensure continued **compliance with all City codes and regulations**.
- Submit an application **before purchasing** items to be eligible for reimbursement, unless meeting criteria under the retroactive purchase exception.

## Retroactive Purchase Exception

The DDB will allow a **one-time retroactive exception** for businesses that purchased qualifying outdoor café umbrellas or furniture eight months **prior to the approval of the application** provided all the following conditions are met:

- **Purchase Date:** Items must have been purchased **on or after eight months of the application date**.
- **Compliance:** Items must fully comply with all current program specifications, including size, material, and placement requirements.
- **Documentation:** Applicant must provide dated proof of purchase (invoices and receipts), photographs of the installed items, and confirmation that items are included in the approved outdoor café site plan.
- **Permit Status:** Applicant must have a current Outdoor Café permit in good standing dating back to time of purchase.
- **Application Submission:** A completed application must be submitted, to qualify for the retroactive reimbursement.

Note: The retroactive purchase exception is granted at the **discretion of the CRA Director** and is **not guaranteed**.

## Qualified Furniture and Umbrellas

Only outdoor furniture and umbrellas that meet the following specifications will qualify:

### Umbrellas

- **Size:** 10 ft x 10 ft with 8 ft minimum vertical clearance.
- **Style:** Cantilever (side pole).
- **Material:** Solid-color canvas fabric; no stripes, patterns, gradients, logos, or branding.
- **Color:** Applicants shall choose a color of their choice so long as the color is not currently in use by other program applicants.
- **Base:** Minimum 88-lb commercial-grade base designed for wind resistance; must be secure and safe for public use.

### Furniture (Tables and Chairs)

- **Material:** Commercial grade, designed for permanent outdoor use.
- **Placement:** Must match the approved layout in the Outdoor Café Application.

- **Accessibility:** Cannot block ADA paths or pedestrian clear zones.
- **Condition:** Maintained in clean, safe, and functional condition.

Applicants are **strongly advised** to consult with staff prior to purchasing furnishings to ensure compliance.

### **Maintenance and Safety Responsibility**

Grant recipients are fully responsible for the ongoing maintenance, cleanliness, and safe condition of all outdoor café furnishings. For public safety and asset longevity, it is strongly recommended that umbrellas and furniture be removed and securely stored during inclement weather, including high winds, heavy rain, or hurricane conditions.

### **Application, Review, and Award Process**

**Step 1.** Applicants are encouraged to contact staff to receive program guidance and pre-approval guidance.

**Step 2.** Applicant submits a completed Outdoor Café Grant Program application, including an approved Outdoor Café Permit, site plan, and item specifications.

**Step 3.** Staff reviews the application for completeness and compliance with all program criteria and makes a recommendation for approval or denial.

**Step 4.** Staff notifies applicant in writing of approval or denial. If approved, the applicant may proceed with purchasing the approved furnishings. If denied, the applicant may appeal to the CRA Director within ten (10) business days. Decisions of the CRA Director are final.

**Step 5.** After installation, the applicant shall submit:

- Proof of purchase and payment;
- Photographs of installed furnishings; and
- Signed grant agreement.

**Step 6.** Staff conducts a site inspection to confirm compliance and thereafter issues reimbursement funding.

### **Noncompliance and Future Grant Eligibility**

If a business is found to be noncompliant with the Outdoor Café Grant Program requirements—either during the inspection process or after reimbursement, the DDB shall provide notice of such noncompliance with the business. A business that does not take corrective action within the timeframe specified in the notice may be prohibited from receiving future grant funds from the DDB, the Community Redevelopment Agency, or the City. Such determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis by the CRA Director, considering the nature and severity of noncompliance. Businesses will be notified in writing and may request reconsideration.

### **For More Information**

#### **Outdoor Café Grant Program**

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