



Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program Policy



Adopted January 25, 2024

Program Overview

LJURA, through the Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program, may provide a reimbursement grant of 25% of the project amount and a loan of 50% of the remaining of the project amount after the grant. (See chart below as an example.) The loan percentage rate is 2.5% for up to 72 months (6 years.)

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL TIERED FUNDING STRUCTURE				
PROJECT TIER	PROJECT COST RANGE	GRANT 25% OF PROJECT AMT	LOAN 50% OF REMAINING AMT	TOTAL LJURA CONTRIBUTION
TIER 1: MICRO	\$0-\$100,000	up to \$25,000	\$37,500	\$62,500
TIER 2: SMALL	\$100,001-\$200,000	up to \$40,000	\$60,000	\$100,000
TIER 3: MEDIUM	\$200,001-\$300,000	up to \$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000
TIER 4: LARGE	\$300,001-\$500,000+	up to \$75,000	\$175,000	\$250,000

*Criteria considered for a larger grant percentage include, but are not limited to, the value added to the City of La Junta, it's impact on the Economic Development of La Junta, and the number of jobs created.

Any projects over the amount of \$500,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis as long as funds are available. Once an application is approved, a contract will be entered into by the applicant and/or owner and the LJURA.

The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance for the removal or reduction of blight as defined by the state statute; the increase in life safety through the installation of fire suppression, safety code and accessibility requirements necessary to bring older buildings into compliance with current and applicable building and fire codes; and to increase physical accessibility through compliance with codes. The program incentivizes owners and tenants within the District to update and improve existing commercial and multi-family properties and buildings to increase the economic vitality of the buildings and increase sales and property values, while preserving and enhancing La Junta's architectural and cultural history.

Program Objectives

- Encourage the elimination or remediation of conditions that qualify as blight per the state statute.
- The elimination or remediation of conditions that could be injurious to public health, safety, and welfare.
- The remediation of issues that affect physical accessibility.
- Encourage private investment in commercial and housing within the District through the use of public incentives.
- Stimulate economic vitality and business development within the District



Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program Policy



by providing safe and blight free environments for workers, businesses, and the public.

- Stimulate redevelopment to increase sales revenues and property values.

Process Overview

The full completed application form must be submitted to be considered for approval. LJURA may assist as many eligible applicants as possible with the limited program funds available each year.

General Timeline

Funding approval from the Board in a formal meeting can be expected between 30 and 45 days after a completed application has been submitted. **No applications can be submitted for work that has been started or is in progress.** An application can be submitted at any time. The review process will take place as follows:

- Review by staff for complete application (information is included or attached per application requirements). Applicant notified if application is complete or incomplete.
Five (5) business days.
- Applicant resubmits, if needed, with corrected, completed, or updated information.
Five (5) business days.
- Staff reviews application to ensure it meets LJURA application guidelines, state requirements, and definitions. Applicant is notified by email of meeting or not meeting guidelines based on the staff report to the Board.
Ten (10) business days.
- Application and staff recommendation is submitted to the LJURA Board for review and comment. Board members complete a scoring rubric in advance of the board meeting.

At a regular monthly board meeting, held the 4th Thursday of each month, the application will be approved or denied by the Board. The LJURA will issue a formal letter of approval/denial and a contract will be drawn up and signatures obtained.

Within two (2) business days of the regular board meeting.

- Project construction must begin within sixty (60) days from the approval date. Work must be completed within one hundred eighty (180) days after construction begins. If unable to complete within the one hundred eight (180) days, applicant may request a thirty (30) day extension upon the Board's approval.



Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program Policy



- For GRANTS: once the project is completed and documentation has been approved for reimbursement, a check will be distributed within three weeks.
- For LOANS: monies will be distributed once a signed contract has been received. Periodic inspections will be performed to ensure the project is progressing as scheduled.

Program Eligibility

Eligible Area: Structures that are located in La Junta's Urban Renewal Tax Increment District.

Eligible Improvements: Eligible improvements must be the removal or reduction of blight as defined by the state statute; the increase in life safety through the installation of fire suppression, safety code, and accessibility requirements necessary to bring older buildings into compliance with current and applicable building and fire codes; and/or to increase physical accessibility through compliance with codes. Please refer to the Dangerous Buildings Guide from the City of La Junta for more information.

Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- City required life safety code improvements.
- Electrical upgrades to meet code.
- Plumbing upgrades to meet code.
- Fire separation between floors or adjacent occupancies.
- Fire/smoke alarm/sprinkler systems.
- Fireproofing floors, ceilings, walls, and/or stairwells.
- Repair/replacement/installation of fire escapes, fire rated walls or windows.
- Additional means of egress (for example: doors and windows).
- Demolition of unsafe (by building code) interior or exterior improvements.
- Renovations and improvements for accessibility requirements for restrooms and public entrances.

The recipient must be the owner(s) of record or the tenant with the owner's written and signed authorization to make the proposed changes to the building.

- Qualifying buildings must be used for commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family housing purposes. Buildings used exclusively for single family residential use do not qualify for this program.
- Work completed prior to or underway at the time the application is submitted will not qualify.
- Owners must certify and provide proof that title to the property is free and clear



Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program Policy



of any adverse judgments and there are no outstanding or unpaid fines, fees or unpaid taxes owed to the City or other taxing authority.

- Priority will be given to projects that will increase commercial tenancy in the Urban Renewal District with an emphasis on increasing the number of retail, restaurant, entertainment, and hospitality establishments.
- Professional fees (e.g., architectural and/or engineering fees) incurred by the applicant are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Funding may not be used to pay the owner or owner's family members, or tenant or tenant's family members for labor unless there is clear proof that the rates are competitively bid, and the work is being completed by a business in compliance with all Colorado state laws.
- Funding may not be used for finishes such as paint, flooring, furniture, blinds, lighting fixtures, or anything exterior to the building that would not qualify for blight or life safety.
- The applicant must show financial proof and a written financial plan so that the improvements to the property can be funded and maintained for a minimum of five years or the life of the loan.

Conditions of the Financial Assistance Program

The following conditions apply to any approved Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility application as follows:

- All financial assistance is subject to budget availability and the sustainable financial viability of the project.
- The amount of the funding awarded is based on the number of blight and life safety improvements approved and the costs of each improvement.
- Consideration will include the necessity of the repairs or improvements and the benefit to the building and the general public.
- Blight, life safety and accessibility improvements must comply with all state and local laws including all ordinances and regulations of the City of La Junta.
- The owner and/or tenant must comply with all local and state laws and regulations affecting the property, its rehabilitation and future use.
- Grant funding is provided on a reimbursement basis only after all project expenses have been paid by the owner and upon acceptance of work by the City of La Junta, as the jurisdiction with authority under the applicable building codes.
- Project Duration: Commencement of construction or installation of improvements that have been approved under this program must begin within sixty (60) days from the date of approval and must be completed within one hundred eighty (180) days from the beginning of construction, or monies for said project will not be distributed, and will be re-obligated to the program fund. An applicant may request a thirty (30) day



Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program Policy



extension upon the board's approval.

- Changes to Approved Project: Changes in the project for which funding has been approved must be reviewed and approved by the LJURA Board during a public meeting. Any changes made prior to approval will become ineligible for reimbursement.
- Reimbursement checks will only be issued to the owner of the property, or to the tenant with written consent of the owner.
- Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this Program may result in denial of reimbursement. LJURA board, in its sole discretion, may determine whether there have been violations of any terms or conditions of this Program.

Requests for the Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Grant/Loan

Submittal Requirements: Eligible property owners or tenants, as described above, interested in the program should submit completed application and supporting documentation via email to:

Melanie Scofield, City Clerk

melanie.scofield@lajuntacolorado.org.

City Permits and Licenses: The applicant is required to obtain all required permit(s) from the City before construction can begin. Permitting will vary depending on the improvements planned. Applicants should contact the City of La Junta for building code or permit information specific to their project. All work performed will be inspected and must be in compliance with all applicable building codes before reimbursement is paid.

The applicable building code's fire suppression and safety requirements and the City of La Junta Municipal Code will serve as the basis for reviewing the proposed blight, life safety and accessibility improvements. Building codes are available at the Municipal Building or at <https://codes.iccsafe.org/codes/colorado>. The City's Municipal Code may be found on the City's website. Additional information may be required by staff as needed. The applicant and/or owner will have an opportunity to present information to the Board during the open, public meeting.

Staff Review: City staff will review the application to ensure it is complete and will work with the applicant to ensure understanding of the requirements. Staff will write a staff report and recommendation based on whether the application meets the adopted guidelines and place on a Board agenda. Additional information may be requested, if needed.

LJURA Board Review: Each application will be evaluated by the Board with a scoring rubric to make a determination on whether the proposed improvements are eligible and viable and in compliance with the applicable building code and program requirements.

Board Approval: The Board shall consider the application at a public meeting and may



Blight, Life Safety and Accessibility Financial Assistance Program Policy



approve, approve in part, conditionally approve, or deny the application. The applicant will be informed, requested to attend, and invited to present the application during that meeting. The Board will issue a formal letter of approval or denial to the applicant following the Board meeting.

Project Construction: Project construction must begin within sixty (60) days from the approval date and must be completed within one hundred eighty (180) days from the beginning of construction, or monies for said project will not be distributed, and will be returned to the program fund.

Contact Information: Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk
La Junta Urban Renewal Authority
601 Colorado Avenue/P.O. Box 489
La Junta CO 81050
719.384.5991
melanie.scofield@lajuntacolorado.org

Inspections: Inspections may occur periodically throughout the construction or installation. At the completion of construction, the applicant will request a final inspection by the City of La Junta. A final inspection is required prior to requesting reimbursement. The Building Official will verify that all work approved for assistance is completed in compliance with the approved application and all applicable codes. If state approval is required for the improvements, the applicant will be responsible for ensuring that inspection occurs, and the work is approved by the state. The City will not approve any work until state approval has been received.

Reimbursement: Once the final inspection has been completed and the improvements have been approved by City staff and other agencies with authority over the improvements, the applicant may submit for reimbursement. Documentation of payments must be submitted with a written request for reimbursement. Acceptable proof of payment for reimbursement includes, but are not limited to the following:

- Itemized invoices with the corresponding receipts and/ or cancelled checks.
- Paid Invoices for materials and/or supplies, with the corresponding receipts and/or cancelled checks, or a release of lien from contractors, sub-contractors, and/ or suppliers.
- All copies of checks should show both sides of the checks (to prove the checks were submitted and paid)

The applicant will supply any additional documentation as required by LJURA to confirm expenses.