



Hamilton

Planning and Economic Development Department
Urban Renewal Section
71 Main Street West, 7th Floor
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5
Phone: (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2755
Fax: (905) 546-2693

OFFICE TENANCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Office Tenancy Assistance Program (the “Program”) provides financial assistance to either building owners or tenants for eligible leasehold improvements to office buildings located within Downtown Hamilton, Community Downtowns, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and the commercial corridors along Barton Street, east of the Barton Village BIA and along Kenilworth Avenue North as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area. The intent of the Program is to facilitate the increased attractiveness and marketability of the office stock and reduce the office vacancy rate by attracting new office tenants and owner-occupied office uses from outside the City, and to assist existing businesses to expand.

Acting as a lender, the City provides financial support for the Program in the form of a low interest loan. Development arising from the Program must be consistent with the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan and other policies and regulations as may be applicable, such as the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan, the Zoning By-law, Urban Design Guidelines, and building permit requirements.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Buildings must be located within Downtown Hamilton, Community Downtowns, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) or, the commercial corridors along Barton Street, east of the Barton Village BIA and along Kenilworth Avenue North as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area.
2. Either owners of eligible buildings, or tenants within eligible buildings, may apply to the Program.
3. Leasehold improvements made for a tenant establishing a new office location in the City of Hamilton are eligible for the Program. Each application must involve leasehold improvements by a minimum of 1,000 square feet of gross leaseable office space. The minimum square foot requirement may be subdivided within a larger building.
4. Leasehold improvements made for a tenant expanding/relocating from a location already within the City of Hamilton must be increasing their current leasehold area by a minimum of 1,000 square feet of gross leaseable office space to be eligible for the Program. For the purpose of calculating the loan amount, the total eligible leasehold improvement costs will account for the expansion area only.

5. Eligible leasehold improvements include leasehold improvements required by the tenant in order to lease the space, but that will become the property of the landlord upon termination of the lease. They include alterations or improvements to the building that cannot be removed upon termination of the lease because they are attached to or form part of the leased premises. They may include:
- alterations to a building such as interior walls, ceilings and doors;
 - paint, wallpaper, window coverings and flooring;
 - phone and data cabling;
 - fixed lighting, HVAC, electrical or plumbing upgrades.

Ineligible leasehold improvements would include items that can be moved or taken out of the building, such as mobile partitions, furniture and equipment, appliances, pictures, signs, and carpeting/rugs that are not attached to the floor. Capital improvements to a property are not eligible e.g. additions, roofing.

6. For the purpose of this Program, eligible leasehold improvements are to be made to space within eligible buildings that is devoted to office uses, where permitted by the zoning by-law, in which management, clerical, administrative, consulting, advisory, training or teaching services are offered or performed, including call centres and educational establishments. Other uses may include commercial school, communications establishment, financial establishment, medical office, and medical clinic (excluding methadone clinics), where permitted by the zoning by-law. City Council at its sole discretion may deem other uses eligible for the program that are not listed above.

Leasehold improvements to space within eligible buildings that is devoted to more commercially-oriented uses are ineligible, such as retail, restaurant, personal services, commercial entertainment, commercial recreation, hotel, conference or convention centre uses.

7. The improvements made to buildings shall be in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and in compliance with all applicable City by-laws, official plans, zoning regulations, design guidelines and site plan approvals.
8. Improvements commenced prior to submitting an application are ineligible. Improvements commenced after submitting an application but prior to application approval do so at the applicant's risk.
9. Prior to a loan being approved, property taxes are required to be paid in full as billed.
10. Approval of the loan application is at the absolute discretion of the City and subject to the availability of funds.
11. Without limiting the discretion as set out in paragraph 10 herein, the City Council, whether or not an applicant satisfies the requirements of the Program, may reject any application received from an applicant where, in

the opinion of Council, the commercial relationship between City and the applicant has been impaired by, but not limited to, the applicant being involved in litigation with the City. Applicants are individuals; or, corporate entities and individuals behind the corporation (e.g. Officers/Directors/Shareholders).

12. Without limiting the discretion as set out in paragraph 10 herein, City Council, whether or not an Applicant satisfies the requirements of the Program, may reject any application received from an applicant where there are property tax arrears owed on the subject property or on other properties owned by the Applicant within the City of Hamilton.

TERMS OF THE PROGRAM

13. The maximum loan amount will not exceed \$450,000 per application.
14. The loan amount will be based on the lesser of either a) or b):
 - a) 90% of invoiced eligible leasehold improvement costs;
 - b) i) in the case of applications by an owner or tenant involving a lease, the square foot area multiplied by the appropriate \$ amount based on the term of the lease, as indicated in the table below;

<i>Term of Lease</i>	<i>\$ amount</i>
12 to 35 months	\$10
36 to 47 months	\$15
48 to 59 months	\$20
60 months or longer	\$25

The lease must be for a minimum of one year.

- ii) in the case of applications by an owner not involving a lease (i.e. owner-occupied office space), the square foot area multiplied by \$25.
15. City Council at its sole discretion has the option, at the time of initially approving a loan commitment, of providing a grant or forgivable loan versus a loan when an applicant is a not-for-profit publicly-funded educational establishment establishing its presence in the Downtown Hamilton. Approval of a grant would be contingent on an appropriate funding source being identified as part of the approval process.
16. The annual interest rate on the loan will be 1% below the prime rate as established by the Royal Bank of Canada. Such rate shall be established at the time the first instalment of the loan is advanced by the City, and reset annually on the anniversary date of the first advance.

17. The maximum loan term is the term of the lease and shall not exceed five (5) years (subject to prior termination on default) from the date of the final loan advance. In the case of applications for owner-occupied office space, the maximum loan term shall not exceed five (5) years (subject to prior termination on default) from the date of the final loan advance.
18. All applicants will submit a completed Program application form, financial statements, a business plan in a format acceptable to the City in its absolute discretion, and any other documentation or evidence the City may require to evaluate the loan application.
19. All applicants receiving approval for a City loan under this Program shall be required to enter into a Loan Agreement with the City with provisions including but not limited to the terms and conditions set out herein, and execute a General Security Agreement.
20. Loans are conditional upon the City being provided with a copy of the executed lease, in a format acceptable to the City in its absolute discretion. This Program term does not apply in the case of applications for owner-occupied office space.
21. The loan under this Program, once approved, may be advanced in up to three (3) stages, upon completion of 50%, 75% and 100% completion of the improvements, based on 90% of the actual eligible leasehold improvement costs incurred as evidenced by copies of paid invoices
22. Prior to each loan advance, realty taxes are required to be paid in full as billed.
23. Prior to the final advance, final inspection will be completed for all building permits required in relation to the leasehold improvements.
24. Loan repayments will commence one (1) month following the final advance and no later than four (4) months following the first advance. The four (4) month period may be extended by the City in its absolute discretion in cases where an applicant submits a work schedule in a format acceptable to the City. The work schedule must be submitted no later than the time of the first advance (i.e. 50% complete) and demonstrate that a longer period is required to complete the balance of the leasehold improvements.
25. Loan repayments will be a blend of interest and principal based on the term of the loan and the interest rate set at the first advance. Payments will be adjusted annually at the time the interest rate is reset (i.e. the anniversary date of the first advance).
26. Interest on arrears will be such tax arrears interest rate as may be established by Council from time to time.
27. If the applicant is the owner, in the event of the sale, conveyance, transfer or entering into of any agreement of sale or transfer of the title of the property by the owner, the City shall have absolute discretion to request the full repayment of any outstanding loan under this Program together with the interest accrued to date.

28. In cases where the applicant is a corporation, the applicant covenants and agrees that in the event that there is a change in the effective control of the majority of the voting shares of the corporation, the City shall have absolute discretion to request the full repayment of any outstanding loan under this Program together with the interest accrued to date.
29. If the applicant is a tenant, in the event that the tenant vacates the office space prior to the end of the loan term (i.e. the end term of the lease or five (5) years from the date of the final loan advance, whichever is less), the City shall have absolute discretion to request the full repayment of any outstanding loan under this Program together with the interest accrued to date.
30. An Office Tenancy Assistance Program loan may be received by an applicant in conjunction with other available City incentive programs in support of the redevelopment/development of the property.
31. Approval of the loan application is at the absolute discretion of the City and subject to the availability of funds.
32. An application fee of \$440.00 must accompany the application. All fees will be authorized through a user-fee by-law passed by City Council, and may be changed from time to time as approved by City Council.