



2026-2027 Graham Business Beautification Grant

The Business Beautification Grant is a matching grant program funded by the City of Graham to encourage private investment in the renovation and rehabilitation of existing properties along the City's corridors. The program will provide financial assistance in the form of a grant to non-residential property owners for the purpose of improving the street-side appearance of their existing buildings and site features. The goal is to enhance the City's corridor appearance and achieve compliance with current regulations where necessary.

Application Process

- Applications **must be submitted by 5PM on Friday October 23rd, 2026 to:**
 - City of Graham Planning Department, attn: Jonathan Buckley, PO Drawer 357, 201 South Main Street, Graham, NC 27253 or;
 - Email jbuckley@cityofgraham.com
- Applications are reviewed and processed by the Graham Appearance Commission at their meeting on **November 2nd, 2026 at 6:00PM** at City Hall 201 S. Main Street, Graham, NC 27253. Applicants are highly encouraged to attend this meeting to answer any questions the Commission may have about their project.

Award Criteria

- The Graham Appearance Commission will determine grant awards based on an on-site evaluation and the [scoring matrix](#) established by the Commission.
- Project scope, cost, and proposed building elevations/ materials and site improvements must be approved by the City prior to final award determination.
- Only one (1) award is made per owner or tenant within a twelve-month period, per platted lot.
- First-time applications are given priority.
- Projects are funded on a 50-50 matching basis up to a maximum \$5,000 per award.
- Applicants shall not be awarded more than 50% of the total project costs through any combination of funds from City of Graham grant programs.
- Applicant agrees to maintain all improvements in "like new" condition for a period of five (5) years after completion of the work or until property is sold.

Eligibility

- Applicants may be either owners or current tenants (must provide owner's written consent) of existing non-residentially-developed properties fronting on a roadway corridor within the city limits or ETJ of Graham.
- Current or proposed use of the property must conform to applicable zoning regulations. Nonconforming uses will *not* be considered.
- Applicant shall not have any outstanding debt to the City.
- Projects located in the Graham Downtown Historic District must receive an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) for the work submitted in this application prior to the Appearance Commission meeting in which these grant funds will be awarded. **October 6th, 2026 (COA applications due September**

29th) is the last HRC meeting before the awarding of the grants in November.

- At least one quote must come from independent contractors/vendors without a direct familial relation (as defined by 160D- 109) to the applicant or companies owned by the applicant for the purpose of meeting the required number of quotes.

Eligible Expenses

- **Streetside Exterior Improvements, including but not limited to:**
 - Installation of public or handicap accessible sidewalks.
 - Signage.
 - Landscaping.
 - Removal of non-conforming or illegal site elements.
 - Wood and masonry repair.
 - Roof repairs and awning installations.
 - Exterior painting.
 - Outdoor lighting.
 - Applies only to elements visible from the abutting street or public right-of-way.
- All contractor expenses incurred by the applicant for material and labor *are* eligible for reimbursement.
- The finished product must match the drawings and materials submitted by the applicant and granted approval by the City for reimbursement eligibility.
- Partial or incomplete work is not eligible for reimbursement. In order to receive funds, a completed project shall be submitted.

Reimbursement

- Submission of completed work shall be received by the City of Graham no later than close of business on **May 1, 2027**.
- Reimbursement is given from the City within forty-five (45) days after completion of the project and City approval of applicant's written request for reimbursement.



2026-27 Business Beautification Grant Program Application

Property Information (Please type or print clearly)	Applicant Information (Please type or print clearly)
Street Address:	Name:
Tax Parcel ID#:	Phone Number:
Owner's Name:	Email:
Use of Building:	Relationship to Property <i>(check one)</i> :
Business Name <i>(if applicable)</i> :	Property Owner ☐ Tenant/Business Owner ☐

Description of Proposed Improvement

Write a brief description below and attach 1) an existing photo of the project area; 2) a drawing, sketch or picture of the proposed improvement. **(Please type or print clearly)**

Total Estimated Cost *(lowest bid quote)*: \$ _____

Attach at least two itemized cost estimates from vendors/contractors for proposed work.



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I [have ☐ / have not ☐If you answered "Have", please state from what source, amount and date of award.

Checklist for a Complete Application

- ☐ I have read the City of Graham *Business Beautification Grant Program* overview and fully understand the agreement.
- ☐ I have met with the City Building Inspector and
My project [does ☐ / does not ☐- ☐ The owner's written and signed permission is attached, if applicant is not owner (leave blank if not applicable).
- ☐ An existing picture of the project area and a drawing, sketch and/or picture of the proposed improvement are/is attached.
- ☐ At least two itemized project cost estimates are attached.
- ☐ If located in the Graham Historic District, I have received Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) approval for the work submitted in this application prior to the Appearance Commission meeting in which these grant funds will be awarded.
- ☐ I understand in order to receive reimbursement, my project must be completed, inspected, and approved by the City's Inspections and Planning Departments.
- ☐ I understand in order to receive reimbursement all paid receipts must be submitted to the planning department.

Initials

I understand that the City of Graham *Business Beautification Grant Program* must be used in the manner described in this application, with all of the work herein described prior to the reimbursement of any funds.

Initials

I understand the application must be approved by the Graham Appearance Commission prior to commencement of any project.

Initials

I understand that failure to comply with the approved application may result in a forfeiture of all grant funds.

Initials

I understand that failure to complete the project by **May 1, 2027** will result in the forfeiture of all grant funds. A request for an extension filed in writing prior to the deadline may result in an extension until no later than **June 1, 2027**.

Applicant Signature

Date