

**Bristol Tennessee Industrial Development Board  
Existing Business Expansion Grant  
Program Guidelines**

**Applications open:** January 31, 2022 to March 25, 2022

**Winners announced:** April 2022

**I. What is the purpose of the Existing Business Expansion Grant (EBEG) program?**

The objective of the Existing Business Expansion Grant (EBEG) program is to encourage the growth and expansion of businesses located within the City of Bristol, Tennessee. This program provides matching grant funds (in the form of a forgivable loan) for property owners in Bristol to expand their business efforts in an effort to revitalize and strengthen businesses, and encourage private investment throughout the City.

The EBEG program is sponsored by the Industrial Development Board of the City of Bristol, Tennessee (the "IDB"). Under state law, the IDB has the power to enter into loan agreements with respect to projects, upon such terms and conditions as the IDB's board deems advisable. Such loans can support many different kinds of projects, including the equipping of manufacturers or processors of agricultural, mining or manufactured products, or commercial enterprises engaged in selling, providing or handling financial services or in storing, warehousing, distributing, or selling any products of agricultural, mining or industry (collectively, a "Business"). (See Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 7-53-101 and 7-53-302 for more information on the statutory authorization for the EBEG program.)

**II. Who is eligible to apply for an EBEG?**

Business owners located within the corporate limits of Bristol, Tennessee are eligible to apply for an EBEG if the following *minimum* requirements are satisfied:

- The Business operates in compliance with applicable zoning ordinances of the City of Bristol, Tennessee;
- The property on which the Business is located cannot be exempt from property taxation (i.e., property used primarily for religious or charitable purposes);
- The primary structure used by the Business must be at least 15 years old;
- The Business must have been in continuous operation for at least 18 months at the time of submitting their application; and
- Both the Business and the Property on which it is located must be current on all City of Bristol taxes and fees (real and personal property taxes, business license fees, stormwater fees, etc.).

Businesses are ineligible for this program if they are:

- Stand-alone retail chains, national franchises, or residential buildings/complexes;
- Non-profit charitable, religious, or civic organizations;
- Owned by a City of Bristol employee or elected official, Industrial Development Board (IDB) Director, or their spouse, parent(s), step parent(s), grandparent(s), sibling(s), child(ren), or step child(ren), of such employee, elected official, or director. .

The applicant is responsible for providing documentation of the minimum requirements. If the EBEG will be used to improve real property, then the applicant must be the owner of the property.

**III. Types of improvement that the EBEG can be used for include, but are not limited to:**

- Equipment to allow service for more customers
- Accessibility ADA compliant projects (ramps, thresholds, removal of barriers)
- Removal/replacement of architectural exterior and interior finishes and materials to increase space to allow for an increase in customers
- Restoration of architectural details or removal of materials that cover architectural details for purposes of business growth
- Upgrades to parking surface areas in order to add additional parking for customers

**IV. What types of improvements can the EBEG *not* be used for?**

- ✗ Billboards
- ✗ Chain-link fencing
- ✗ Current code violations
- ✗ Interior work or improvements not directed towards job creation or new revenue for the business
- ✗ Improvements in progress or completed prior to approval
- ✗ Mechanical and HVAC systems
- ✗ Installation, repair or replacement of exterior signage
- ✗ New construction
- ✗ Pylon or temporary signs
- ✗ Decorative items and furniture
- ✗ Security systems (metal roll down gates, window bars, cameras, etc.)

**V. How much money can I receive from an EBEG?**

The City of Bristol EBEG program is a matching grant program. A grant match is *required* in order to receive grant funds. **The maximum EBEG amount available for any approved application is \$10,000.** Grant funds are available for up to 75% of eligible improvement costs.

## **VI. Are there any restrictions?**

Funding is available on a first come, first served basis until program funds are depleted. Grants may be awarded to applicants who have provided a complete application package and have received approval by the EBEG Committee, and the Bristol Industrial Development Board (IDB).

All recipients of an EBEG are required to sign a Grant Agreement. This document will establish the conditions of approval and terms of grant disbursement. In no event will funds be disbursed in a ratio higher than the matching requirements. Proof of costs paid by the applicant will be required before grant funds are to be disbursed. Grants will take the form of a loan that will be forgiven in full by the IDB at the expiration of the loan term established by the Grant Agreement. Grants do not require repayment *unless* a project is not completed according to the terms established in the Grant Agreement, or, for EBEGs used to fund real property improvements, unless the applicant moves its business to another location prior to the expiration of the loan term. Grant payments *will not* be made if improvements deviate from those outlined in the Grant Agreement and/or have not been previously approved.

Grants are for use for a single business located at a single address. Applicants seeking to improve multiple properties must submit an application for each property separately. If awarded an EBEG, recipients must have the eligible improvements completed within one calendar year (365 days) of the date on the signed Grant Agreement. Properties improved using these grant monies are not eligible for an additional EBEG until a 36-month period has elapsed from the date of final check disbursement.

In no event will a grant be awarded solely for repairs or improvements if there are already cited code violations at the property requiring corrective actions. In no event will a grant be awarded to only meet the required improvements associated with the proffers of a Conditional Rezoning, the conditions of a Special Use Permit, or the requirements of a Special Exception.

No grant shall be awarded if the Business or its owner is the petitioner in a pending bankruptcy matter.

## **VII. What do I need to apply for an EBEG?**

To be considered for an EBEG, applicants must submit all of the following documents to the Bristol Industrial Development Board:

- 1.** Completed application form
- 2.** Valid applicant identification
- 3.** Photographs of project (must show areas to be improved or items to be purchased)
- 4.** Written project description of intended improvements
- 5.** Renderings, drawings, pictures and/or other material samples to show intended improvements (if building improvements are being made)
- 6.** At least two (2) bids or quotes from vendors establishing the project cost
- 7.** Evidence of financial ability to meet matching requirements (bank statement, loan commitment letter, etc.)
- 8.** Schedule of completion

\*Please note that the City retains the option to obtain its own cost estimates for any project.

The Business may be owned and operated by a sole proprietorship (in which case the applicant is the

proprietor), or an entity (in which case the business itself is the applicant, and the person signing the application must represent that they have the authority to apply for the grant on behalf of the Business). Priority will be given to those who demonstrate need because they're unable to get funding from other sources for the grant amount.

### **VIII. How do I apply for an EBEG and what happens after I turn in my application?**

1. *Before applying, you should discuss your project with the City of Bristol, Tennessee Department of Economic Development staff, and arrange for a preliminary review with the EBEG team.*
2. *After discussing your project, gather your application documentation and materials and submit them with a completed application form to the Bristol, Tennessee IDB.*
3. *Once your application has been received, the EBEG Team reviews your application to ensure the project meets the minimum requirements.*
4. *When all requirements have been met, after review and recommendation for approval from the EBEG Team, the applicant will present to the EBEG Review Committee for consideration of whether to award an EBEG. The Committee will normally notify you the decision result within 30 days of consideration of the application by the IDB at a regular or called meeting.*
5. *If your application is approved by the IDB, you will coordinate with Economic Development staff to establish the terms of your Grant Agreement. If your application is denied by the IDB, the IDB will state on the record the reasons for its denial. If your application is denied, you may appear at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the IDB to request the IDB to reconsider its decision, at which time the IDB may uphold or reverse their decision.*
6. *Once you have agreed to and signed the Grant Agreement, you may begin your improvement project. No work begun prior to the date of the Grant Agreement will be eligible for reimbursement. The date on the signed Grant Agreement serves as the project's commencement date. All purchases/work for the project must be completed within 365 days of this date. When your project is complete, you must notify Economic Development Department staff. An EBEG team representative will inspect the project to ensure compliance with the Grant Agreement and approved application. You will then receive a letter of completion.*
7. *Grant payments will not be authorized until you submit color digital images of the new improvements or purchases, as well as documentation showing all applicable paid invoices, receipts, etc. All payments to contractors/vendors for work completed must be documented and verifiable in order to receive grant payments. Documentation for costs paid in cash will be subject to review and approval by Economic Development staff. You should receive payment within 30 days of receipt of your completed documentation.*
8. *To the extent permits are required by applicable law or code in order to proceed with or complete the project, the applicant is responsible for obtaining those permits and any necessary inspections. No reimbursement will be made for work performed without necessary permits or inspections from the City of Bristol, Tennessee.*

Applications are considered on a rolling basis. Inability to submit complete documentation will result in delayed processing and/or ineligibility for grant funds. Final approval authority rests with the IDB.

**IX. Who can I contact if I have more questions?**

Matt Garland

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Email: [mgarland@bristoltn.org](mailto:mgarland@bristoltn.org)

Questions will be referred to appropriate EBEG Team members.