



Community Re-Investment Program – Instructions for Application

Thank you for your interest in the Community Re-Investment Program (CRP)!

The CRP is a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement grant program up to \$25,000 in total reimbursement.

The CRP for 2026 will be focused on addressing structural issues, roof issues, and the necessary structural and utility improvements to get vacant spaces to become occupied spaces.

Applicants are subject to a structural review by Bluffton NOW! and City of Bluffton representatives of the exterior and interior of the building prior to approving a project for funding. Any structural issues discovered in this review must be addressed as part of the project.

Please review and complete the necessary documentation to apply for the Community Re-Investment Program (CRP) included with this letter. Each application must be submitted and approved by both Bluffton NOW! and the City of Bluffton before your project begins.

All necessary state, county, and city permits must be obtained prior to work commencing.

Funds will be distributed by the City of Bluffton on a reimbursement basis after pre-approved work has been completed by participants. Proper documentation of work completed with paid invoices and a completed reimbursement claim form, and a satisfactory inspection by the City of Bluffton Building Inspector will be required for all projects before funds will be reimbursed from the City of Bluffton Clerk-Treasurer's office.

Please contact me at any time should you have any questions or concerns.

THIS IS A COMPETITIVE GRANT AND WILL BE AWARDED BASED ON THE COMPLETENESS OF THE APPLICATION, THE QUALITY OF THE PROJECT AS DETERMINED BY THE GRADING POINTS, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

Completed applications can be submitted at any time.

Sincerely,

Nick Huffman
CRP Chairman
260-827-8255

blufftonnow@gmail.com

Community Re-Investment Program

Overview

The Community Re-Investment Program (CRP) is to be used to rebuild, repair, renovate or improve the exterior façade, roofs, structural and mechanical components, and interior elements of buildings located in the city center in a way that is consistent with the current city design and style. The projects must adhere to all state and local codes and ordinances. Funds are available for the demolition of unsafe buildings if the project includes the replacement of said building. Funds cannot be used to purchase personal property items such as furniture, inventory, decorations, and other similar items. Please note that the CRP is not a loan, this is a reimbursement grant for city center improvements.

Use of Reimbursement Grant

Funds provided are to be used for improvement only and will not be eligible for purchasing real estate or starting a business. A list of “qualified improvements” are listed below:

Funds are to be used for “qualified improvement,” defined as:

- Exterior façade improvements including but are not limited to: paint, awnings, windows, siding, brickwork, roofing, signage, LED lighting, etc.
- Interior improvements including, but are not limited to: flooring, paint, carpentry work, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, water or fire restoration, LED lighting, ceilings, etc.
- Parking and Sidewalk improvements
- A project must address any broken or boarded up windows on the building (property owners may darken windows if they wish).
- Major structural and mechanical defects that affect public safety must be corrected first (to be determined by the City of Bluffton, Building Inspector) as discovered during the interior and exterior structural review.
- Demolition work to tear down failing building structures or remove debris from failing building infrastructure or materials.
- Projects large and small are welcome, you should not hesitate to submit your application no matter what size it may be.

Approval Process

The qualifying property owner or business owner shall submit the following application and associated materials to the Wells County Chamber of Commerce or a Bluffton NOW! board member. Upon receiving the application and associated materials Bluffton NOW!’s CRP Committee will review and grade the applications. The Bluffton NOW! CRP Committee will make a recommendation for funding to the City of Bluffton’s Board of Works. They will make the final determination regarding the funding of projects. Upon the City of Bluffton’s Board of Works approval to fund a project Bluffton NOW! will contact you letting you know you can proceed with your project.

Reimbursement Process

Funds will be distributed by the City of Bluffton on a reimbursement basis, meaning that funds will only be provided after work has been completed by the participant. Phased reimbursement may be approved by the City of Bluffton. Proper documentation of work completed, paid invoices, and the completion of all state and local permits will be required for all projects before funds will be reimbursed.

Source of Funds

The City of Bluffton will provide a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement for the approved project up to \$25,000. The total amount of funds available for 2026 is set by the Bluffton Common Council on a year-by-year basis.

Reimbursement Full & Partial

A high-scoring project will be more likely to be eligible for full reimbursement. Full reimbursement looks like (i.e., \$10,000 private investment receives a \$5,000 reimbursement). Please note that projects over \$50,000 in private investment can only receive a maximum of \$25,000 in reimbursement. These projects do score higher and are more likely to receive full reimbursement based on their return-on-investment score. A lower-scoring project may be offered a grant approval for partial reimbursement (i.e., \$10,000 private investment receives a \$2,500 reimbursement). To help your project score higher you can choose to opt for partial reimbursement to improve your return-on-investment score. This is a competitive grant and we regularly receive more applications than we have money to fund. Project score is key to getting an approved project.

Other Requirements

- Major structural and mechanical defects that affect public safety must be corrected, including bringing building up to the City of Bluffton Building Codes.
- All work must be performed by an **Insured Contractor**.
- All planned improvements must comply with proper Zoning Ordinance Requirements.
- Applicants must provide **two (2)** separate detailed cost estimates for each improvement.
- Any properties not zoned **B-1** must receive an exemption from the Bluffton NOW! CRP Committee and City of Bluffton's Board of Works.

Project Timeline

Projects need to be completed by December 1, 2026, or have written approval from Bluffton NOW! and the City of Bluffton to extend into 2027.

Eligible Properties

Funds are available to all parties interested in improving properties within Bluffton NOW!'s boundary. Bluffton NOW!'s boundary is defined as the area shown on the attached map and is shown in red. Only properties found in the area will be eligible for reimbursement through the program at this time participants may be deeded owners, contractor holders, or tenants. All contract holders and tenants are required to provide written permission for the planned improvements.

Questions

Contact Nick Huffman (260-827-8255) or email Bluffton NOW! at blufftonnow@gmail.com to get your applications started. You can also download this application by visiting www.blufftonnow.org and clicking on the "CRP Grant Info" link at the top of the page.

Be a part of the downtown revitalization progress in our downtown! We hope to see your project application soon!

Nick Huffman
CRP Chairman

Community Re-Investment Program Boundary

Legend

- Bluffton NOW Boundary
- Downtown Core
- Area_Plan.DBO Streets



CRP Application Check List

- ☐ **Project has not started prior to submitting the application**
- ☐ Include Filled Out W-9
- ☐ Include Proof of Insurance for Building / Business
- ☐ Include 2 Bids for All Work
- ☐ Include a Minimum of 2 Photos Showing the Need for the Project
- ☐ Signed Application



Application for Community Re-Investment Program

Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Property Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Proof of Insurance Building Insurance:

Insurance Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Contact Agent: _____

A minimum of 2 high-quality digital photos must be sent showing the before condition of the project area. The photos must be sent prior to the application deadline. These must be emailed to blufftonnow@gmail.com

Description of Planned Improvement: (Be Detailed)

Project Cost Estimate

Contractor #1:

Contractor Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email (Optional): _____

Insurance Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Contact Agent: _____

Materials Cost:

(Please Itemize)

Description:

Estimated Cost:

Labor Cost:

(Please Itemize)

Total Costs:

Project Cost Estimate

Contractor #2:

Contractor Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email (Optional): _____

Insurance Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Contact Agent: _____

Materials Cost:	Description:	Estimated Cost:
(Please Itemize)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Labor Cost:		
(Please Itemize)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Total Costs: _____

Project Grading System

(Please Circle Yes or No and explain your Yes answers)

(Project grading is based on the number of Yes answers)



Yes or No Will the project be addressing an exterior structural concern?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Will the project be addressing an interior structural concern?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Will the project be addressing a significant utilities concern? (water, sewer, gas, electrical)

Explain: _____

Yes or No Will the project include patching of an existing roof or the replacement of a roof?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Will this project make a historically appropriate improvement to a building façade?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Will this project be completing maintenance of the brick exterior?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Will the project held transform an interior space in the building from being uninhabitable to being occupied?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Does this CRP application directly help a building that has not yet benefited from the CRP program?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Does this CRP application directly benefit a building that the building owner and business operator are the same people?

Explain: _____

Yes or No Does this CRP application directly benefit a building located in the core of downtown? (See attached Map)

Explain: _____

Yes or No Does this CRP application involve installing windows in boarded-up window spaces or replacing broken windows? Or Does this CRP application involve installing windows that fully occupy the original window openings where smaller windows were previously installed?

Explain: _____

Expected Project Completion Date: _____

Program Description Requirements

I have read and do hereby agree to all program requirements and rules laid out in the accompanying program overview attached to this application. I further agree and understand that if I receive approval through this program that it is a pre-approval only and is subject to approvals, permits, and/or inspections by the Community Re-Investment Committee, State of Indiana, City of Bluffton Building Department, and Wells County Area Plan Commission.

Print Name

Signature

Date

If the project is being submitted by a tenant or contract sale owner please have the deeded property owner sign below.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Please sign and return along with filled out W-9 via mail to Wells County Chamber of Commerce, 211 Water Street, Bluffton, IN 46714, or scan and return via email to blufftonnow@gmail.com

When the Project is Finished

A minimum of 2 high-quality digital photos must be sent showing the completed project, along with paid receipts, and a completed claim form. The images must be sent before reimbursement can be approved. These must be emailed to blufftonnow@gmail.com

Community Re-Investment Program

Expenditure Reimbursement Claim Form

Requestor Contact Information:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 E-mail Address _____
 Phone _____



Date	Location/Vendor	Invoice #	Purpose of expense and explanation of misc. expenditures	Original Approved Amount	Final Cost
Total All:				\$	\$

*Receipts much be attached
for all reimbursable expenses.

Total Amount Due (50% of Total Final Cost above) \$ _____

Original amount approved by CRP Approval Board
 (to be completed by Clerk Treasurer's Office from
 Proposal Approval form received from CRP
 Approval Board).

\$ _____

Signature (Property or Business Owner)

Date:

