



SIGN GRANT PROGRAM

Background

The Eagle River Main Street Program (Eagle River Revitalization Program) has developed a sign grant program for Eagle River businesses that will offer a grant for *50 percent* of the cost of the signs up to a *maximum of \$500*. Equally as significant, the program will assist and support the efforts to design and install signs that are appropriate and effective for the respective business, while at the same time adding to the character of the community as a whole.

Purpose

The buildings are characterized, not only by their individually unique facades, but also by the sign that initially identifies to the passer-by the businesses they contain. Thus, virtually every business is reliant on signs in some way, shape or form to draw attention to that business. Proper shape, form, placement and legibility become key factors to a sign's functional effectiveness.

There are many points to consider in the development of a sign. For example;

- The sign should complement the image of the business, the community, and the building it adorns.
- The sign should not overpower or detract from neighboring businesses, but rather, hang in harmony.

The purpose of the sign grant, therefore, is to encourage quality signage, compatible with the northwoods character of the community, through careful consideration of all that a sign represents. The ERRP will provide this input based on the design guidelines that have been established. Final approval for sign projects receiving grant money will be given by the ERRP Design Committee and the ERRP Board of Directors.

Characteristics of an Effective Sign

Excessive size, expense or illumination, do not necessarily constitute an effective sign. Rather, the following characteristics should be applied:

- Legibility – Signs should be readable with simple lettering style.
- Clarity – The message should be clear and simple so the reader can easily absorb it.
- Placement – The sign should be placed where it is easily seen and in direct relationship with the business it identifies.
- Attraction – Elements of the sign should catch the eye and hold it long enough to get the message across.
- Durability – Quality material and construction of a sign will ensure easy maintenance and convey a positive image.
- Northwoods Character – The sign should enhance, not detract from Eagle River's image as a northwoods destination to live, work, visit, dine, shop and stay.

Eligibility

All proposed signage projects need the approval of the ERRP Economic Vitality Committee to be eligible for a grant. The Economic Vitality Committee will use the guidelines published in this document. Any deviation from the approved design application will warrant disqualification.

Eligible expenditures for the sign grant program include:

- Exterior Signs
- Window Signs
- Freestanding signs
- Awning and Canopy Signage
- Labor (construction & installation)

Restrictions

- Sign must be the primary business sign.
- Sign can be new or it can replace an existing sign that is not currently in compliance with the established guidelines.
- Signs on or adjacent to buildings in disrepair do not qualify.
- Freestanding signs are limited to 16 sq. ft. in the downtown district and a maximum of 100 sq. ft in the highway commercial and industrial districts. **The maximum height of any qualifying freestanding sign shall not exceed 15 feet.**

Ineligible projects will include, but are not limited to:

- Interior Store Signs
- Roof Top Signs
- Off-Premise Signs (billboards)
- Backlit and internally lit signs
- Corporate dictated signs

Available funds will be limited to four (4) \$500.00 grants or a maximum of \$2,000.00 annually. Applications will be evaluated on a first come first serve basis. The ERRP Design Committee will not, for whatever reason, refuse a grant application based on age, race, sex, religion, or any other discriminatory act.

Sign Grants are restricted to one every five years unless there are new owners to the business.

Eagle River Main Street Program Signage Design Guidelines

Signs will have an easy to read and direct message.

Signs will be the appropriate size and scale to the building. Refer to restrictions noted on the Eligibility page.

Signs will be located in a logical place on the building.

Signs will reflect the services and merchandise found within the business.

Signs must conform to all requirements spelled out in the City of Eagle River Sign Ordinance and any other guidelines referenced within this text.

A flush, wall mounted signboard, will conform in dimensions to the City of Eagle River Sign Ordinance requirements. The sign should be mounted in the most fitting location between the top of the storefront display windows and the bottom of the second floor windowsills. Generally, lettering should occupy no more than 65% of the signboard.

Protruding signs may be used if deemed appropriate in relation to adjacent signage. Requirements for signs extending into and above the sidewalk will follow the City of Eagle River Sign Ordinance.

Window signs will not obscure the display area and will be limited to 25% of the total window area. The color of the lettering should contrast with the display background. Effective examples would be, light colored letters or gold leafed letters with dark borders. Generally, lettering should be no smaller than 3 inches.

Awnings or canopies that are utilized for signage may use contrasting letters painted or sewn onto the fascia only.

Generally, plastic back-lighted signage will not be accepted unless the applicant can show how its use would be appropriate in that particular situation.

Clear and simple lettering styles best suit the objective of an easily read sign.

Letters can be painted or mounted directly on a signboard, storefront or wall. Various letter styles and materials are available from sign manufacturers.

Contrast between sign elements enhances a sign's readability. The human eye most easily interprets a dark background with light lettering; however, the opposite can also be effective.

Subtle contrasts, although desirable in some cases, may be harder for the viewer to see.

Illuminated signs can be appropriate if their scale is proportional to the business and within the guidelines above. Painted signs can be directly illuminated with fluorescent and incandescent lights. Neon lettering may also be used as an effective style in the right proportions.

Signs must be designed to be compatible with the northwoods character of the Eagle River community. Signs should use natural colors and materials as appropriate to enhance the community's image as the heart of Wisconsin's northwoods.

Approval Procedure

Submission of a completed “Sign Grant Application Form” to the Main Street office in the Eagle River City Hall building at 525 East Maple Street initiates the procedure. The Executive Director will check for completeness of the application and will assist and monitor the procedure from that point on.

The grant proposal will be reviewed and forwarded by the Economic Vitality Committee to the full Board of Directors for approval.

The Economic Vitality Committee must give approval for any subsequent changes.

Approved changes will be documented and attached to the original application, which will be signed and dated by the Executive Director.

The applicant will be reimbursed the percentage due upon proof of payment in full to the contracted company and/or individual.

A final inspection will be made before the grant payment is made to the applicant.

Deviation from the approved plan may result in the disqualification of the applicant from the grant program.

For further information please contact:

Eagle River Main Street Executive Director

525 Maple

P.O.Box 2302

Eagle River WI 54521

(715) 477-0645

karen@eaglerivermainstreet.org

eaglerivermainstreet.org

**Eagle River Main Street Program
SIGN GRANT APPLICATION**

Date: _____

Name of applying business _____

Physical Address _____

Mailing Address _____ Email _____

Name of applicant _____ Phone _____

Will you be using the services of a graphic artist or professional sign company? Y / N

If you circled yes, who? _____

(Free design assistance is available through the Main Street office. For further information call (715) 477-0645)

Estimated cost of the project: _____

Proposed start date _____ Completion date: _____

What is the current use of the business for which the sign is intended?

Who owns the property on which the sign will be mounted?

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Please attach a copy of the proposed project design and cost estimates.

Affirmations:

I. The undersigned applicant(s) affirms that:

- a. The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge.
- b. I (we) have read and understand the conditions of the Eagle River Revitalization Program's Sign Grant Program and agree to abide by the conditions and guidelines.

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Signed: _____
Applicant of Agent thereof Executive Director

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Applicant of Agent thereof

Please deliver to:
Eagle River Main Street Program (Eagle River Revitalization)
525 Maple Street P. O. Box 2302 Eagle River, WI 54521 715-477-0645 karen@eaglerivermainstreet.org
eaglerivermainstreet.org