

City of Hemet

Kitchen Grant Program Guidelines



January 2026

<https://www.hemetca.gov/econdev>

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Hemet Kitchen Grant Program is a strategic initiative designed to revitalize the heart of Hemet by fostering a thriving culinary scene. Recognizing the profound impact of a vibrant food scene on a community's economic vitality, social fabric, and overall quality of life, this program aims to support the establishment and expansion of high-quality restaurants with preference for the Hemet district and other locations that present meaningful investment and the potential to foster job creation and improve the community's social fabric.

The program envisions a transformed culinary scene that attracts both residents and visitors alike. It seeks to create a dynamic and diverse food scene that not only enhances the dining experience but also contributes significantly to the economic and social well-being of the community. By attracting new businesses, supporting existing restaurants, and fostering a culture of innovation, the program aims to revitalize the district, create new jobs, and enhance the overall quality of life for all Hemet residents.

PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This program strives to achieve several key goals:

- **Revitalize Hemet:** Transform Hemet into a vibrant and attractive destination for residents and visitors. This involves increasing foot traffic, enhancing the overall ambiance, and creating a more inviting and engaging environment. A thriving restaurant scene will contribute to a more vibrant and active Hemet, attracting residents and visitors alike to dine, shop, and explore.
- **Stimulate Economic Growth:** Attract new businesses, create local jobs, and increase revenue streams for businesses within the district. The program aims to contribute to the overall economic vitality of Hemet by supporting the growth of the local hospitality industry. This includes creating new employment opportunities for residents, increasing tax revenue for the city, and stimulating economic activity throughout the area.
- **Enhance Quality of Life:** Improve the quality of life for residents by providing access to a diverse range of high-quality dining options. A vibrant culinary scene enhances the overall livability of a community, offering residents a greater variety of dining experiences, opportunities for social interaction, and a more engaging and enriching environment.
- **Support Local Entrepreneurship:** Provide a valuable platform for aspiring and established restaurateurs to launch and grow their businesses. The program aims to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation within the community by

supporting local businesses, encouraging creativity, and providing opportunities for growth and expansion.

- **Preserve Local Character:** Encourage the development of restaurants that reflect the unique character and cultural heritage of Hemet. This may include adaptive reuse of existing buildings, supporting the use of locally sourced ingredients, incorporating local flavors and traditions into menu offerings, and showcasing the unique character and history of the Hemet community.
- **Promote Sustainability:** Encourage sustainable practices within the restaurant industry. This includes supporting the use of locally sourced ingredients, minimizing food waste, implementing energy-efficient technologies, and promoting environmentally conscious practices.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Kitchen Grant

The Hemet Kitchen Grant offers financial assistance to aspiring restaurateurs. This program aims to stimulate economic growth and revitalize the community by supporting the creation of new culinary businesses. Specifically, the grant provides funding to offset costs associated with building a restaurant kitchen. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate a 20% financial commitment as a matching contribution to the project.

Project must be completed within eighteen (18) months of building permit issuance. This requirement ensures that recipients have a vested interest in the success of their ventures and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility.

The City of Hemet will provide periodic reimbursement of expenses after it deems the project is advancing, and upon the certificate of occupancy, submission of invoices, and proof of payment. If the project is anticipated to extend beyond the required completion date, prior written City Manager approval is required to extend the performance period.

Grant funding is to be used for labor and materials directly related to the Kitchen Grant construction only. Program funds are to be used for Kitchen development and revitalization rather than a simple routine maintenance or equipment (e.g. tools).

Fee Exemption

Applicants for the Kitchen Grant Program are exempt from Planning and Building permit fees. Note, fee exemption does not apply to any mandated fees by the State of California or fees required by other public agencies.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND PRIORITIES

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the Hemet Kitchen Grant Program, applicants must meet specific criteria.

- **Applicant Type:**
 - **New Restaurants:** Businesses planning to establish a new restaurant within Hemet are eligible to apply. This includes both new businesses and existing businesses that are expanding.
 - **Existing Restaurants:** Established restaurants are also eligible to apply for funding to expand their operations. This may include implementing major kitchen renovations, expanding their menu offerings, enhancing customer experience, improving operational efficiency, and implementing innovative technologies.
- **Location:** All applicants must be located within the City of Hemet.
- **Project Scope:** Grant funds can be utilized for a wide range of eligible expenses, including:
 - **Kitchen Equipment and Infrastructure:** Purchase and installation of essential commercial kitchen equipment, such as high-performance ovens, grills, refrigeration units, specialized food preparation equipment, and upgrades to plumbing, electrical, and ventilation systems.
 - **Commercial-grade range/oven:** Core piece of equipment for any restaurant kitchen.
 - **High-volume refrigerator:** Storing perishable ingredients and keeping them at safe temperatures.
 - **Commercial dishwasher:** Improves efficiency and sanitation in the kitchen.
 - **Hood system and ventilation:** For safety and compliance with health codes.
 - **Three-compartment sink:** Required for proper handwashing and food preparation.
 - **Walk-in freezer:** For storing frozen ingredients and minimizing food waste.
 - **Food processor:** Speeds up food preparation tasks like chopping, mixing, and pureeing.
 - **Ice machine:** Provides consistent ice supply for drinks and cooling.
 - **Grease trap installation:** Required for proper waste disposal and to prevent plumbing issues.
 - **Professional-grade knives and cutting boards:** Essential tools for any chef.

APPLICATION PROCESS & SELECTION CRITERIA

The application process for the Hemet Kitchen Grant Program will be rigorous and competitive.

1. **Application Submission:** Interested applicants must submit a comprehensive application package, including:
 - **A detailed business plan:** This plan should outline the restaurant's concept, menu offerings, target market, marketing strategy, and projected financial performance. The business plan should demonstrate a clear understanding of the market, a competitive advantage, and a solid plan for achieving success.
 - **Detailed budget and cost breakdown:** A comprehensive budget outlining all project costs and a detailed breakdown of how grant funds will be utilized. The budget should be realistic, well-documented, and clearly demonstrate how the funds will be used to achieve the project goals.
 - **Supporting documentation:** This may include a business license application, lease agreement, proof of business insurance, and any other relevant permits or approvals.
 - **Financial statements:**
 - For new restaurants: Include personal financial statements of the owners/partners.
 - For existing restaurants: Include recent financial statements (e.g., income statements, balance sheets) to demonstrate the financial health of the business.
2. **Review and Selection:** A highly qualified review panel, comprised of representatives from the City of Hemet will carefully evaluate each application. The selection criteria will include:
 - **Feasibility and Viability:** The panel will assess the feasibility and viability of the business plan, including its market potential, financial projections, and overall sustainability.
 - **Culinary Innovation:** Preference may be given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to culinary innovation, offering unique and distinctive dining experiences, such as innovative menu concepts, locally sourced ingredients, and unique dining atmospheres.
 - **Community Impact:** The panel will consider the potential impact of the project on the City, including its ability to attract new visitors, create jobs, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

- **Financial Responsibility:** The panel will evaluate the applicant's financial responsibility and their ability to effectively manage grant funds.
- **Sustainability:** The panel will assess the applicant's commitment to sustainability, including environmental practices, sourcing local ingredients, and minimizing waste.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Applicant Intake and Eligibility

- 1. Application and Required Documents.** Applications are available at Hemet City Hall or online at www.hemetca.gov/econdev Each application must be completed in its entirety, signed and submitted with all required documents as listed in the application, signed proof of ownership or lease agreement, and submit a Certificate of Good Business Standing (<https://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov>). Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they were received. The City will maintain a waiting list for all prospective participants. Incomplete applications will not be processed.
- 2. Review of application.** All complete applications will be date stamped when received and processed in that order. Application may be subject to additional review by the Planning Commission, when applicable.

Incomplete applications will not be processed until all requested information is submitted. A notification letter will be sent to applicants concerning the approval or denial of the Application. Eligible applicants will be contacted to enter into an agreement with the City and schedule a property inspection.

Property Inspection

- 1. Initial Inspection.** A site visit will be arranged between the Economic Development staff and the property owner and/or business owner to undertake an inspection of the building and to develop specifications for the Program.
- 2. Follow-Up Inspection.** If City Staff finds code violations during the initial inspection, the property owner and/or applicant will be required to correct those violations before continuing in the Program process. A follow-up inspection will be arranged between City Staff and the property owner and/or business owner to ensure the property is up to code.

Contractor Selection

1. **Procurement.** Applicants are free to select their contractor and submit at least one quote to the City of Hemet. The contract must comply with the City's requirements for contractors. The City reserves the right to require or obtain additional bids/estimates to determine the validity of the proposed project.
2. **Contractor Requirements.** The City shall maintain a file for each contractor performing work pursuant to the terms and conditions of this program. The file shall include the following information:
 - a. Copies of the contractor's current liability and worker's compensation insurance policies;
 - b. Copies of the contractor's current California Contractor's License;
 - c. Copy of contractor's City Business License; and City Business License
 - d. Provide a subcontractor list as applicable.

Any contractor with an expired General Liability and/or Workers Compensation insurance or a valid state contractor's license shall be removed from the job until he/she is able to provide proof of current insurance and/or license. All contractors shall be required to obtain a City Business License prior to the issuance of a building permit.

3. Ineligible Contractors

- a. The City and the applicant(s) shall agree not to award any contract for rehabilitation work, to be paid for in whole or in part with proceeds from the Program, to any contractor who does not have a valid State contractor's license, who cannot produce sufficient evidence of current Worker's Compensation and Liability Insurance coverage, or who is on the federal Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Debarred Contractor list.
- b. All owner/builders, or any member of the applicant's family or extended family, are considered ineligible, regardless of credentials or license. Any ineligible contractor found working at the job site will be removed immediately, without compensation.

Award of Grant

1. **Notification.** The City shall notify the selected contractor of the award of the grant award and shall establish date, time and place for the pre-construction conference. The pre-construction conference will include City Staff, property/business owner(s) and contractor.

2. **Private Arrangements.** The City cautions the property/business owner and the contractor not to enter “side deals” for additional work or deviations from the approved scope of work.
3. **Pre-Construction.** Prior to construction, the City will arrange a pre-construction meeting which shall be attended by the contractor, the property/business owner(s), and representative City staff. The purpose of this meeting is to explain all Program requirements and procedures, coordinate and schedule the work start date, and answer questions related to contract documents.
4. **Start of Construction.** No work shall commence until a “Notice to Proceed” has been issued to the contractor, signed by the property/business owner(s) and the City. In addition, no work shall commence until all required permits have been issued by the City’s Building Division.
 - a. The contractor shall contact the Community Development Department to obtain all requirements for plan submittal to obtain building permits. Plans will be reviewed by the City’s Building and Planning divisions.
 - b. Applicants for this program are exempt from City Planning and Building permit fees. This fee exemption does not apply to fees mandated by the State of California including, but not limited to, the California Green Building Standards fees.

Reimbursement Process

1. Upon approval, the City of Hemet will enter into agreement with the applicant and approved work may begin immediately after the agreement is fully executed.
2. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all necessary permits (including building permits) and authorities from the City.
3. Staff will inspect the project to ensure compliance with grant.
4. Work must be completed within eighteen (18) months of grant award.
5. All work must comply with approved plans.
6. Grant funds will only be disseminated to the contractor not the applicant, once the construction of the City approved improvements has been advanced (via progress payments) and upon certificate of occupancy upon project completion.

Applicant Responsibilities:

1. **Property Maintenance.** The property/business owner(s) is/are responsible for property maintenance during the rehabilitation work (contractor is responsible for keeping the property clean of all construction material). The property/business owner(s) is/are responsible for insuring that the rehabilitation work is not impeded because of their

actions or the actions of their tenant(s). The City shall encourage the contractor and his/her employees to provide adequate pedestrian and property protection at the construction site.

- 2. Property Tax Bills.** Current property tax bills for the subject property must be current. The property owner(s) is/are responsible for insuring that the property taxes are current. The City will verify that the property taxes for the property are current. If the property's tax statement indicates a delinquency, at the time of the Program application, the City shall not proceed with grant processing until it is supplied with a Certificate of Redemption or other appropriate documentation of proof of payment.
- 3. Notice of Completion.** The property/business owner(s) is/are responsible for scheduling a final job completed inspection with the City's Community Development Department. The City will verify that the project received a passing final inspection. After all requirements have been met, the City will issue a Notice of Completion to the property/business owner(s).

FUNDING

Funding for the Kitchen Grant Program is allocated by the City of Hemet City Council, and the amount of funds available each year is not guaranteed. The grant funds are distributed on a first-come, first served basis. If grant funds are depleted at the time of application submission, City Staff will keep your application on file. However, if additional funds become available, City Staff will contact the applicant in the order in which the applications were received.

The City of Hemet reserves the right to cancel or modify this Program at any time prior to grant approval, with notice to the applicant by the Economic Development Director. Continuation of the Program is subject to sufficient funding as appropriated by the Hemet City Council.

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

Please read the statements below and initial and sign certify that you understand:

___ I/we certify that the building owner is the owner of the property.

___ I/we certify that there are no current code enforcement actions pending against this property*.

___ I/we have attached a copy of all current leases.

___ I/we have reviewed the program overview and guidelines, have familiarity with responsibilities of each party and understand that:

___ All services to be performed by contractors shall be the subject of agreement between applicant and contractor(s).

___ The Agency shall not assume any liability for such agreements, except as specifically authorized by the program.

___ I/we have read and understand the City of Hemet program guidelines, accept the qualifications and conditions and through signature(s) below, certify that I/we are qualified and will abide by such conditions set forth in this application and all reasonable conditions which may be issued by the City of Hemet in the implementation of this program. I understand that this is a voluntary program, under which the City of Hemet has the right to approve or deny any project or proposal or portions thereof.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Property Owner Signature _____

Date: _____

(If Tenant is Applying)



Kitchen Grant Program Application



Please fill out the application completely and submit to bsandoval@hemetca.gov or send to:

City of Hemet
Attention: Economic Development Department
445 E. Florida Ave
Hemet, CA 92543
(951) 669 – 0265

*** SECTION 1 - APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

Name: _____

Circle All That Apply: Property Owner Business Owner/Tenant

Business Name: _____

Trade Nama (DBA): _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Entity Type: Sole Proprietor LLC. Corporation Partnership

Total Number of Businesses in Building: _____

Name(s) of Other Businesses:

EIN/Tax ID: _____ UEI Number: _____

*** SECTION 2 - PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (Complete even if the current tenant is the applicant):**



*** SECTION 5 – FUNDING REQUEST & BUDGET (Max \$300,000)**

Item/Expense Description	Vendor/Source	Amount
1.		\$
2.		\$
3.		\$
4.		\$
5.		\$
6.		\$
7.		\$
8.		\$
9.		\$
10.		\$
11.		\$
12.		\$
13.		\$
14.		\$
15.		\$
Total Requested		\$

*** SECTION 6 - ACKNOWLEDGMENT:**

We certify that the owner is the property owner of record and that there are no current zoning code enforcement actions pending against the property. I have read and understand the Program Guidelines and accept them. I certify that I am qualified and will abide by such conditions set forth in this application and all reasonable conditions which may be issued by the City of Hemet in the implementation of this project.

Property Owner(s) Signature: _____ Date: _____

Business Owner(s) Signature: _____ Date: _____