

BEAVER COUNTY DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Façade Improvement Program provides grant funds through the Community Development Program of Beaver County to downtown commercial building and/or business owners to renovate their storefronts. As part of the comprehensive approach to downtown revitalization in Beaver County, the Façade Improvement Program specifically addresses the importance of the storefront and its crucial role in attracting customers and enhancing the physical appearance of the downtown area.

When participating in the Façade Improvement Program, you will be required to follow a step-by-step process for completing a storefront renovation.

The Façade Improvement Program is a reimbursement program; therefore, the applicant is initially responsible for assuming all contract costs for the storefront renovation. Once the renovation is successfully completed, a reimbursement payment is made directly to the applicant based on the percentages or maximum dollar amount as specified in the grant guidelines section and contract with the applicant.

If an applicant plans to do substantial façade renovations, architectural services for the building may be available. This will be the first step in planning for your façade renovation. Following the pre-design phase, construction drawings and a zoning/code compliance review may be necessary, as required by the municipality.

The Community Development Program can offer assistance with selecting colors/materials/design for a smaller project, such as repainting, new signage and/or awnings.

On all projects, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the local zoning/code enforcement officer and obtain any necessary permits and submit to Community Development Program an executed Municipal Certification Form, provided by Community Development Program.

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Eligibility: Any downtown commercial building and/or business owners whose commercial building is located within the eligible project area as determined by the Downtown Local Revitalization Organization (LRO).

Eligible Activities/Costs:

Exterior: Façade Improvements:

Storefront renovations, cleaning of façade materials, painting, brick pointing, awnings, signage and other repairs or improvements *in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, the Community Development Program Design Guidelines and if available locally adopted design guidelines.*

Interior: Code Related:

Architect/Engineering costs related to the correction of code violations to meet local/state code requirements and required for occupancy. A report from the local/state code enforcement officer is required.

Ineligible Activities/Costs:

Improvements to rental residential units in a structure.

Interior renovations beyond those areas affected by the façade renovations.

Non-permanent equipment and merchandising fixtures.

Building permit fees and any other miscellaneous fees.

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Sidewalks and parking lots.

GRANT GUIDELINES

1. The County of Beaver via the Community Development Program will offer up to a \$20,000 grant rebate per commercial storefront occupied/available address as approved by the LRO. The grant rebate is based on 70% of the first \$20,000 of expenditures and 50% on the balance of expenditures up to \$32,000 for approved exterior building improvements. If total rebate amount for a project is less than \$20,000, the property owner may re-apply for additional funds after a five (5) year waiting period for the balance of up to \$20,000. After a ten (10) year period, the property owner may reapply for additional funding of up to \$10,000 for façade improvement. If property improvements have not been made through this program after fifteen (15) years of the first award, the property/business owner is eligible to apply as if a new applicant. No additional funding will be available to any property/business owner until their previous project building is occupied.
2. Upon establishment of eligibility, an informal title search will be conducted on the property for which improvements are to be made. This will be conducted to determine verification of ownership and that the property is free of excessive judgments and liens, that all taxes (borough, school, county) are paid up-to-date or that an agreement has been entered in to between the property owner and the taxing body to arrange payment.
3. The façade treatment *must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, the Community Development Program Design Guidelines and if available locally adopted design guidelines in addition to any state/local code requirements.* The local organization responsible for the façade program along with the Community Development Program will determine whether or not the individual applicant's building façade is in need of improvement.
4. Approved scope of work must be completed no later than ninety (90) days after final approval and award of a contract for a grant unless otherwise determined.
5. The building owner will agree to the filing of a mortgage for the full grant amount against the property. The mortgage is reduced at the rate of 20% per year and fully forgiven after five years. If the property is sold or transferred prior to the five-year period, a pro-rated repayment is required. If the total grant amount of a project is less than \$3,000.00, the property is not subject to the filing of a mortgage.
6. The applicant will agree that a vacant building will be occupied by a business **within sixty (60) days** after completion of construction unless otherwise determined.

PROGRAM STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS:

No matter how small or large your project is, you will be required to follow a step-by-step process developed by the Community Development Program to ensure adherence to all guidelines and federal regulations. The design phase to construction through completion of a project may take anywhere from six (6) months to one (1) year.

The following checklist summarizes what will take place during the process:

A. Preliminary Phase:

1. Completed Pre-Application, picture of building and relevant architectural drawings and/or specifications, if available, submitted to LRO for approval.
2. Pre-Application reviewed by LRO. Once design and pre-application are approved, the project is forwarded to the Community Development Program.
3. Pre-design meeting is held to discuss the scope of work, including color selection, etc. as appropriate and to determine if architectural services would be required. Applicant is encouraged to contact the local municipal

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officials for requirements for drawings and/or permits. If needed, submit completed construction documents to obtain necessary permits and approvals through the local Zoning or Code Enforcement officer.

- a. No drawings required - Smaller projects:
Scope of Work to be submitted to Community Development to move forward with bidding process.
 - b. Drawings required: Project can be referred to Main Street Program architect for review and cost estimate to complete drawings, etc.
Applicant provided marketing sheets and architect referral form.
Completed architect referral form submitted to CDP.
CDP submits architect referral form to architect for cost estimate and scope of work.
Applicant provided Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) obligating to proceed with project within six (6) months after completion of drawings or refund County for amount paid to architect. The County obligation will not exceed \$6,500.00.
Executed MOU sent to CDP.
Notice to proceed sent to architect.
Completed drawings, specs, etc. submitted to applicant, LRO and CDP for approval.
 - c. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) approval is submitted, if required.
 - d. Applicant submits detailed scope of work (SOW) and municipal certification form to proceed with bidding process.
4. Pre-Bid meeting is held with applicant and the following items discussed:
- a. Contents of bid packet and SOW and associated guidelines.
 - b. Two (2) bids required with accompanying original non-collusion affidavits and bid form.
 - c. Federal Labor Standards – Prevailing Wage Rate (Davis-Bacon Act).
5. Bidding process for projects less than \$18,500
- a. Applicant provided a bid packet containing; bid form with detailed SOW, drawings if applicable, Program Guidelines, Secretary of the Interior Standards, Davis Bacon wage determination, non-collusion affidavit and application.
 - b. Applicant refers contractors to the Community Development Program office for pick-up of bid packets and submission of sealed bids for a pre-determined public bid opening date. This date would be thirty (30) days after the pre-bid meeting.
 - c. If two (2) bids are not received, the bidding process will be repeated.
 - d. If two (2) bids are received, the sealed bids are opened, reviewed to verify accuracy and completeness. Lowest responsible bidder will be chosen as the contractor for the project.
6. Bidding process for projects equal to or greater than \$18,500
- a. Applicant provided a bid packet containing; bid form with detailed SOW, drawings if applicable, Program Guidelines, Secretary of the Interior Standards, Davis Bacon wage determination, non-collusion affidavit and application.
 - b. Invitation to bid published in Beaver County Times. Bid packets available at Community Development Program office.

- c. Applicant refers contractors to the Community Development Program office for pick-up of bid packets and submission of sealed bids to the Community Development Program office for a pre-determined public bid opening date. This date would be thirty (30) days after the pre-bid meeting.
- d. If two (2) bids are not received, the pre-bid process will be repeated.
- e. If two (2) bids are received, the sealed bids are opened, reviewed to verify accuracy and completeness. Lowest responsible bidder will be chosen as the contractor for the project.

7. Bidding process for projects equal to or less than \$2,000

- a. Procedures same as projects less than \$18,500 except Davis Bacon wage determination is not applicable. All other applicable guidelines set forth for the Façade Improvement Program will be adhered to.

8. Pre-Construction conference held with applicant and contractor. Contract reviewed and signed by applicant. Payroll reports and other reporting requirements reviewed with contractor.

9. Agreement executed and notice to proceed received.

B. Construction Phase:

1. Contractor submits notice of construction start to the Community Development Program.
2. Payroll sheets submitted by contractor and subcontractor if applicable on a weekly basis.
3. Project site inspections by Community Development Program representative.
4. On-going technical assistance and support by Community Development Program.

C. Post Construction Phase:

1. Certificate of work form signed by Applicant indicating satisfactory completion of work.
2. Contractor and subcontractor, if applicable, submits any outstanding payroll forms, required documents and/or EEO Compliance Letter. (It may be advisable not to pay your Contractor in full until all required documents have been submitted by the Contractor to the Community Development Program).
3. Applicant submits payment in full to contractor(s).
4. Once all required documentation is received by the Community Development Program, the rebate check is requisitioned (this could take 2-3 weeks to receive) to be issued to the applicant.
5. A mortgage is filed at the Beaver County Recorder of Deeds Office. The filing fee is deducted from the reimbursement. Upon expiration of the five-year period, the applicant will be notified.

Please note that nothing in these guidelines supersede the local municipal and Uniform Construction Code (UCC) regulations. Please contact the local municipal office for code regulations and permit requirements.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your LRO or the Community Development Program of Beaver County at (724) 770-2040.

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