



# **FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM**

**Downtown NOLA**

**August 2015**

**Sponsored By:**

**Downtown Development District**

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**  
**Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program**  
**Policies and Procedures**

Purpose

The Downtown Development District (DDD) has developed a Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program (“Program”). It is designed to stimulate new investment, enhance business and development opportunities and to attract new customers downtown. The program is designed to provide an economic incentive for improving the appearance of the facades of buildings in the District, and to encourage quality renovation that will enhance and be consistent with the historical design, materials, and architectural character reflected in the original design of the building. Façade improvements to properties under the purview of the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission (CBD HDLC) require its approval and are subject to its regulations and oversight. Building projects listed on either the local or national register of historic places or in a local or national district will be eligible for participation in the program. Projects which contribute to and are consistent with the historic fabric and the streetscape are eligible for consideration. In all cases, the DDD will be the final arbiter of eligibility and have final approval authority on any façade improvement application.

Funding for the program will be budgeted on an annual basis.

Matching Grant and Amounts

The Program will provide a matching grant of 50% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000). Applicants must be able to document total project costs that the matching grant amount will apply to, and the construction contract and related documents must clearly delineate the costs associated with the Façade Improvement project, separate and apart from any other construction or renovation costs. The DDD may request up to three bids for the planned work. Documentation of total façade costs must be provided before payment of the matching grant amount is paid. The matching grant will not be paid until the project is complete and final approval of the project is granted by the Historic Districts Landmarks Commission, if applicable, and any other relevant City permitting agencies.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for the program are building owners and/or business tenants currently owning or leasing property within the legal boundaries of the DDD as well as prospective owners/businesses planning to locate within the area. Business tenants must submit written consent from the building owner to participate in the program. A property owner or business tenant is eligible to apply for a Façade Improvement grant if the purpose of the grant is to make façade improvements to the outside building envelope. Improvements to the interior of the buildings or to exterior portions not visible from the street are not eligible for the grant. Buildings with first floor retail uses, which will result in new commercial occupancy, will receive funding priority. Façade improvements that are part of the creation or rehabilitation of upper story uses will also be considered a priority.

### Type of Businesses Eligible

Any business which can be permitted by the city to operate at the location will be considered for participation in the program.

However, all applicants must operate and be in compliance with all city codes and demonstrate current licensing and that they are not delinquent in City sales or property taxes.

### Eligible Project Improvements

The properties proposed for façade improvement must be structurally sound with the roof intact and meet basic public safety codes. In addition, the Central Business District's Historic District Landmarks Commission must approve all projects within its purview and will be consulted on all projects not under its jurisdiction. Awnings and signs are eligible for funding as long as they are part of a comprehensive façade restoration project. Only facades abutting public rights-of-way are eligible for assistance, except for highly visible rear facades. Applications must meet all City and State regulatory/code requirements that affect leases and servitudes, air rights and sidewalk, fire and building safety, and all ADA requirements. The business tenant must provide written proof of owner's approval of any proposed improvements.

### Eligible Improvement Projects include:

1. Removing aluminum or non-historic siding
2. Painting or cleaning of façade exterior
3. Sign repair/replacement
4. Repairs (cornices, cracked plaster, repainting, window repair)
5. Installation of galleries/balconies
6. Installation awnings/canopies
7. Restoring historically compatible materials or features
8. Window/door replacement
9. Exterior lighting

### Eligible Project Costs include:

1. Professional fees
2. Permits
3. Materials
4. Equipment
5. Contracted labor

### Ineligible Improvement Projects include:

1. Roof improvements
2. Electric improvements
3. HVAC improvements
4. Any interior work to the building
5. Property acquisition
6. Working capital
7. Equipment, Furniture and Fixtures used in the operation of the business

## Application Process

1. A prospective applicant receives an application package which consists of:
  - An introductory letter
  - DDD Program Application
2. Applicant submits completed DDD Program Application and meets with DDD staff regarding the Program and development of improvement plans.
3. Applicant meets with Historic District Landmarks Commission (HDLC) to determine development criteria and completes improvement plans, including necessary work with an architect or engineer. Applicant obtains approvals of plans with City and HDLC if applicable.
  - a) The DDD will directly review the plans for any projects which do not require the approval of the HDLC; and render a decision based on consultation with the HDLC
4. Applicant provides to the DDD satisfactory evidence of City and HDLC approvals (if HDLC approval is applicable).
5. If approved, DDD provides letter of Grant Commitment, subject to completion of the project according to city building permits, compliance with DDD program requirements, and all other required approvals. **This letter will act as a notice to proceed on the façade improvement program. The DDD will not accept as a part of the project costs any renovation expenditures made before the date of the grant commitment letter.**
6. Construction must commence within 45 days of DDD Commitment and be completed within 120 days after construction start date (subject to weather and other unavoidable events).
7. Once construction has been completed and all necessary final City and HDLC approvals are obtained and documentation (copies of cancelled checks) showing the applicant's share of cost has been provided, the DDD will process a check for payment of the approved grant amount payable to the applicant.



201 St. Charles Ave, Suite 3912, New Orleans, Louisiana 70170  
Phone (504) 561-8927 Fax (504) 581-1765

**Application For  
Facade Improvement Grant Program**

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax I.D. or SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Office address: \_\_\_\_\_

Office phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Office fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of project/property: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

**Status of applicant/property-ownership (check one):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sole Ownership
- \_\_\_\_\_ Corporation, Partnership or Trust (provide the names, addresses and phone numbers of all officers or trustees and include articles of incorporation, by-laws and/or partnership agreement)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tenant (provide written consent from the property-owner for the project)

Facade improvement grants will require the following information:

- A. A line drawing of the building that details existing conditions as well as the work to be done. Drawings must be to scale and list all proposed changes.

- B. Two 3x5 (or larger) photographs of the building, one from the front and one showing the building in context to area and around it. If the building is on a corner, please include a third photo of the side-street facade. Photos in digital format are acceptable.
- C. Written consent from the property-owner if applicant is a tenant.
- D. Construction contract and related documents clearly delineating the Façade improvement costs separate and apart from any other renovation costs

Please complete and sign:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that the information presented in this application and in all attachments is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I authorize the Downtown Development District or its agent to check with City and regulatory agencies to determine compliance with city codes and status of tax collections.

I understand that the proceeds from any grant funds may be used only for facade renovation projects. All façade projects must meet the design criteria established by **(or DDD’s consultation with)** the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission.

I understand that, in addition to this application, I must also seek and receive approval of my facade improvement project from the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission, **if applicable**, and all related approvals from the City of New Orleans.

I understand that, all approved applicants shall agree to have DDD signage on the property while the project is under construction. All signage is designed by the DDD and is required if the project is approved.

I understand that no construction activity may begin until the Downtown Development District provides authorization to proceed.

**I further understand and agree that the final decision on project cost or eligibility lies with the DDD in its sole discretion.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Revised August 25, 2015