



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NEW ORLEANS

Façade Improvement Micro Grant Program

Purpose

The Downtown Development District (DDD) offers a **Façade Improvement Micro Grant Program** designed to stimulate new investment, enhance business and development opportunities and to attract new customers to Downtown New Orleans. The program is designed to provide an economic incentive to **retailers, restaurants and other businesses for improving the appearance of window displays, signage and exterior lighting**. The program is designed to increase customer traffic, enhance pedestrian safety and improve the visual appeal of the street. Improvement projects aimed at improving the appearance of the business would be encouraged under the micro grant program. All renovations of exterior enhancements, signage and lighting must be approved by the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission and are subject to its regulation and oversight. **Window display designs, lighting and any exterior enhancements under this program must be approved by DDD, in writing, in advance.**

Matching Grant and Amounts

The Micro Grant Program will provide a grant of 60% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum \$10,000 in expenditures. A maximum \$6,000 is eligible for reimbursement to the applicant under the guidelines of this program. 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.

Exterior lighting that enhances pedestrian safety in the public realm, a \$3,000 grant will be offered without requiring a match from the applicant, provided that the applicant keep the lighting on from dusk until dawn.

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.

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 Improvement Projects

- Sign Repair/Replacement
- Awnings
- Improved Retail Window Displays
- Exterior and Interior lighting that can be seen from the street
- Street furniture - tables and chairs, topiaries, string lights, planters and stanchions

Application Process

Prospective applicant submits an application package which consists of an introductory letter providing an overview of the project and DDD Program Application. Once received, the DDD will schedule a meeting with the applicant to review the program and discuss the improvement plans. **The applicant is required, per program guidelines, to meet with the Historic Districts Landmarks Commission (HDLC) to review and/or approve the scope of the project, including necessary work with an architect or engineer.**

The DDD will provide a letter of Grant Commitment, subject to completion of the project according to city building permits, HDLC Certificate of appropriateness, compliance with DDD program requirements, and all other required approvals. The Grant Commitment letter serves as a notice to proceed on the façade improvement program.

The DDD does not accept as a part of the project costs any renovation expenditures made before the date of the grant commitment letter. 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). 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.

Contact

Please contact **Davon Barbour** (dbarbour@downtownnola.com) at 504-620-9294 for an application and for additional details.

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