

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

City of Richmond

Department of Planning & Development

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Attractive building facades support and encourage local businesses, and local business development. Richmond storefronts are some of the finest in the entire Commonwealth. However, many have suffered through years of insensitive changes, lack of maintenance, or outright neglect. Attractive storefronts and buildings can have a significant effect on the marketability and livability of the surrounding area. To encourage business and property owners to invest in their neighborhoods, the City of Richmond is offering grants to support façade improvements for commercial and mixed use buildings in select areas.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Façade Improvement Grant Program (Program) is designed to help property owners or tenants renovate or rehabilitate the entire façade of their building in projects that promote retail activity, create an attractive environment, encourage high-quality architectural design, use high-quality materials, and enhance neighborhood character. Projects meeting these objectives are eligible for a reimbursement grant for up to one-half of the costs of the eligible façade improvements. The Program is not intended for minor repairs or maintenance activities. Applications will be processed through the Department of Planning & Development Review. All work must adhere to existing regulations, including historic preservation and encroachment processes, where applicable.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must be located within the program's identified zones. Both property owners of commercial/mixed-use structures and building tenants operating a business with leases of more than one year in length are eligible for funding. Governmental entities, public, and quasi-public authorities are ineligible for funding. All property taxes must be current in order to participate in the program.

GRANT AMOUNT

Grants will be provided in an amount up to 50% of the total project cost, based on the table below. The applicant must use private, non-City funds to match the City's Grant.

MAXIMUM GRANT AWARDS BY BUILDING TYPE

<u>Building Location</u>	<u>1-2 Story</u>	<u>3-4 Story</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Interior of Block	\$10,000	Additional \$5,000 each for Flrs. 3-4	Maximum grant amount: \$20,000
Corner Building	\$20,000	Additional \$10,000 each for Flrs. 3-4	Maximum grant amount: \$40,000
Special Exceptions for Multiple Storefronts	\$10,000 per discrete storefront address	Additional \$5,000/Flr for Interior Building Additional \$10,000/Flr for Corner Building	Maximum grant amount: \$40,000

The applicant will pay for the completed work and submit paid receipts and lien waivers to the Department of Planning & Development Review for reimbursement. Proof of completion, copies of lien waivers, and compliance with all applicable code requirements will be required before reimbursement is made. The Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond (EDA) is acting as the fiscal agent for this Program on behalf of the City. All grants are subject to match final invoices showing total final costs associated with the work. The match amount is based upon the final and verifiable costs, not original estimates.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

The program will fund projects that significantly improve the visual appearance of the entire facade from the street. Suitable projects include uncovering and restoring historical facades, removing existing facade materials and replacing them with more appropriate and attractive designs and materials, architectural lighting of the facade, and other detailing which leads to a substantially enhanced appearance of the building.

Although not eligible for funding on their own, the following may be funded as part of a more comprehensive facade improvement; windows, doors, exterior cleaning, tuck pointing, painting, shutters, and gutters. Design and permit fees associated with the construction are also eligible project costs.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

The cost of new construction, repair or replacement of a roof, work to an alley facade, work that principally involves minor repairs or maintenance, billboards and signage, awnings, landscaping or paving are not eligible under the Grant.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Projects must be started within 30 days of approval and completed within 120 days. Extensions to the 120-day completion period may be granted for inclement weather, or the ordering of special building materials. The applicant must request any extension in writing. The City will notify the applicant in writing of its approval or denial.

The owner/tenant/contractor shall secure all required permits before construction begins. Building permits cannot be issued if property taxes are not current. In order to qualify, applicants cannot start on their project until after receiving all necessary approvals and permits. If work has begun before application or approval, the City cannot fund the project with Façade Improvements Funds.