

DOWNTOWN FAÇADE AND BUILDING STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Policies, Procedures and Conditions

A. Purpose

Building appearance plays an important role in creating the image of Downtown. Funding for building façade and/or building stabilization improvements (“Grant”) made to properties will encourage reuse of vacant or underutilized properties, improve appearance, and support the long-term viability of Downtown Orlando. Over time, the taxable valuation of the improved properties will increase, thus increasing the amount of funds available to revitalize Downtown Orlando.

B. Grant Structure and Criteria for Selection

The Community Redevelopment Agency (“CRA”) will oversee the Downtown Façade and Building Stabilization Program. A building façade improvement is defined as the renovation/restoration of any element of an exterior building face that is visible from the street. A building stabilization improvement is defined as structural alterations or adaptations to buildings, or building system repair or replacement, that are undertaken as part of the process of rehabilitating, preserving, or restoring existing structures for modern usage. Funding is based on budget availability and should be considered on a “first come, first served” basis. Filing of an application does not guarantee funding. Applications must be submitted prior to commencement of any improvement work, the cost of which is sought to be reimbursed by this Program. No grants will be awarded retroactively.

Applications will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with program criteria. Projects that do not comply with the program criteria and conditions will not be eligible for funding. An authorized corporate officer or partners of the applicant’s business must sign the application, in addition to the property owner(s), if the applicant is the tenant. Tenants who are applying for a Grant must supply proof of a lease for the subject property that identifies at least three (3) years remaining in the lease term.

Prior to consideration for Downtown Façade & Building Stabilization Program funding, the subject property must be free from any liens (except mortgage liens), judgments, or encumbrances (except easements) of any kind, current with all City obligations, and in compliance with all City Code requirements. The CRA reserves the right to contract for a title search and/or ownership and encumbrance report at the CRA’s discretion, the cost for which will be deducted from the Grant funds at the time of disbursement, if Program funding is approved.

All applicants for Façade and Building Stabilization Program funding must submit to a criminal background check, the cost for which will be deducted from the Grant funds at the time of disbursement, if Grant funding is approved. If the applicant is a corporate entity, then the president, director, or manager submitting the application shall submit to a criminal background check. If the entity is a partnership, then all partners must submit to a criminal background check. In order to be eligible for funding, applicants must **not** have any of the following: a felony conviction or nolo contendere within the past five (5) years; a felony conviction or nolo contendere for financial/economic crimes within the past ten (10) years; or a felony conviction or nolo contendere for violent or heinous crimes (i.e. murder, sexual battery, sexual assault, armed

robbery or burglary, carjacking, home-invasion, kidnapping, arson, crimes against children, etc.) in their complete history. If the background check reveals any of the above, the applicant will be rendered ineligible for the Grant. Otherwise, results of the background check will be included in the documentation provided to the Façade Grant Review Committee for consideration as part of the application.

The Façade Grant Review Committee is designated by the CRA to review Grant applications. The Façade Grant Review Committee is comprised of the Assistant Director of the DDB/CRA, a representative of the City's Planning Division designated by the City's Planning Official, and the City's Historic Preservation Officer.

Any Grant funding awarded will be based on the lowest of at least three (3) qualified bids obtained and submitted by the applicant. The owner and/or applicant may elect to choose a contractor other than the one with lowest qualified bid, but shall be responsible for all costs exceeding the lowest qualified bid. In all cases, the selected contractor must be licensed and insured. The CRA will not be responsible in any manner for the selection of a contractor. A property owner and/or tenant should pursue all activities necessary to determine contractor qualifications, quality of workmanship, and reputation. The property or business owner will bear full responsibility for reviewing the competence and abilities of prospective contractors and secure proof of their licensing and insurance coverage.

Program funds will be disbursed in the form of a grant with a limited repayment requirement. Should the façade improvements be removed or demolished or not be properly maintained for a minimum of three (3) years following completion of the project, unless said changes are approved in writing by the Façade Grant Review Committee, or if the terms of the Funding Agreement have been otherwise violated, the funds may be considered a zero interest rate loan, the outstanding balance of which will be due and payable within thirty (30) calendar days. The amount of the outstanding balance will be determined by amortizing the full grant amount in monthly installments over a three-year (36 month) period beginning on the date of execution of the Funding Agreement.

In order to ensure that funds are available, improvements to be made under a Grant must be initiated (secured all necessary permits) within 90 days and completed within one (1) year of the date of execution of the Funding Agreement. Extensions may be granted by the Executive Director of the DDB/CRA given just cause by the applicant (e.g. contractor delays, acts of God, etc.). All Grant funds shall be issued to the Grantee on a reimbursement basis only.

Applications for Grants shall meet the criteria outlined below:

1. Buildings must be located within the Downtown CRA (see program map). Downtown Façade and Building Stabilization Program Grants shall only be awarded for properties that contribute to the CRA through the payment of ad valorem taxes.
2. Single-Family and Duplex Residential Buildings: Buildings used for Single-family and duplex residential purposes and located within the *Uptown, Eola, and Central Business District* Planning Areas of the CRA shall be eligible for up to \$5,000 or 50%, whichever is less, of the cost of façade improvements. Single-family and duplex residential buildings located within the *Parramore Heritage* Planning Area of the CRA shall be eligible for up to \$10,000 or 50%, whichever is less, of the cost of building stabilization improvements, or a combination of building stabilization and façade improvements. Projects that propose only façade improvements shall be eligible for funding for up to \$5,000 or 50%,

whichever is less, of the cost of the improvements.

All Other Buildings: Buildings located within the *Uptown, Eola, and Central Business District* Planning Areas of the CRA shall be eligible for \$20,000 or 50%, whichever is less, of the cost of façade improvements. Buildings located within the *Parramore Heritage* Planning Area of the CRA shall be eligible for up to \$40,000 or 50%, whichever is less, of the cost of building stabilization improvements, or a combination of building stabilization and façade improvements. Projects that propose only façade improvements shall be eligible for funding for up to \$20,000 or 50%, whichever is less, of the cost of the improvements.

3. Only one (1) Grant per property owner or tenant per fiscal year, and only one (1) Grant per property per three-year program term. When an entity owns multiple properties that are adjacent, the Grant funding may be shared between these properties for a unified improvement plan. When an entity owns multiple properties that are not adjacent, only one (1) property may receive Program funding in that particular fiscal year.
4. All proposed improvements must meet the requirements of the Appearance Review Board (ARB) or, if a landmark property or located within an historic preservation district, the Historic Preservation Board (HPB), if applicable, as well as all other City Code requirements. Approvals or Certificates issued by the ARB or HPB do not guarantee approval of a Downtown Façade & Building Stabilization Grant.
5. The Façade Grant Review Committee shall evaluate applications based upon factors including:
 - a. Level of deterioration of building materials and finishes
 - b. Improvement to the appearance of the site
 - c. Consistency of proposed building design with the Downtown Design Guidelines
 - d. Contribution to cultural activities or opportunities
 - e. Contribution to historic rehabilitation or restoration
 - f. Will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment
 - g. Consistency with the context and character of the remainder of the block and/or surrounding properties
 - h. Incorporation of sustainable materials and/or methods
 - i. Business or resident tenure in Downtown Orlando
 - j. Assessment of the balance of building façade and stabilization elements in the application (*Parramore Heritage* Planning Area only)
 - k. Assessment of the proposed modifications for consistency with ARB or HPB standards (for Single-Family and Duplex properties not requiring formal ARB or HPB approval)
 - l. Amount of additional contribution to the project by Applicant

C. Eligible Improvements

Property owners and/or tenants may apply for Program Funding. Tenants applying for funding shall provide written permission from the property owner in addition to the signed Owner's Affidavit.

The entire building facade of a subject application must be included in the renovation/restoration plans. Eligible costs for Grant participation include, but are not limited to:

1. Façade Rehabilitation (All CRA Planning Areas)
 - a. Removal of non-contributing false facades
 - b. Building cleaning (non-sandblasting)
 - c. Stucco restoration
 - d. Tuck pointing masonry
 - e. Painting
 - f. Replacement or reconstructive woodwork
 - g. New doors and windows
 - h. Restoration of historically appropriate doors, windows, or building features
 - i. Signs, awnings, and canopies (must be associated with other façade improvements)
 - j. Exterior lighting*
2. Building Stabilization (*Parramore Heritage* Planning Area only)
 - a. Roof repair and/or replacement
 - b. Interior structural improvements (e.g. floor joists, ceiling repairs)
 - c. Building systems improvements (e.g. plumbing, electric, HVAC)
 - d. Fencing to secure the property
 - i. Must be associated with other improvements
 - ii. Must be consistent with City Code
 - iii. Must be consistent with CPTED Guidelines
 - e. Hardscape improvements
 - f. Other approved building stabilization improvements

*Projects that include up lighting are encouraged, but not required, to utilize the OUConvenient Lighting program. Contact OUC at (407) 423-9018, option 3 for details and information about the program.

It is strongly recommended that applicants retain the services of a registered architect, or similarly qualified design professional, to prepare plans, drawings, and construction specifications for their project. Fees for services provided by a registered architect or similar qualified design professional may be counted towards the applicant's portion of project funding.

D. Ineligible Items

The following items are ineligible for reimbursement:

1. Any City, County, or State permitting or impact fees
2. New building construction or new building additions
3. Structural improvements (excluding building stabilization improvements in the *Parramore Heritage* Planning Area)
4. Interior improvements (excluding building stabilization improvements in the *Parramore Heritage* Planning Area)
5. Refinancing existing debts
6. Non-fixed improvements, inventory, or equipment
7. Payroll (not including work to be done by owners as part of grant match) and associated overhead costs

8. Improvements or expenditures made prior to execution of the funding agreement
9. General periodic maintenance
10. Consultant fees
11. Costs associated with architectural design or preparation of construction documents

E. Procedures

The procedure for project review is as follows:

1. Pre-Application Meeting

The applicant is required to meet with the Façade Grants Coordinator who will review the applicant's plans per the program requirements to determine eligibility. The Coordinator will provide the applicant with general guidance as to whether the proposed project is likely to qualify for Program Funding and whether the applicant is sufficiently prepared to move forward to submit the application.

If the application appears ready to move forward, the Coordinator will instruct the applicant to either, (1) proceed with review by the Appearance Review Board (ARB) or, if a landmark property or located within an historic preservation overlay district, the Historic Preservation Board (HPB), as required, or (2) submit the application for consideration.

2. Grant Application Submission

Following approval by the ARB or HPB and issuance of the appropriate review Certificate, as required, the Grant application and all attachments may be submitted to the Façade Grants Coordinator for formal consideration of funding.

3. Review Grant Application

Once an eligible application and the supporting documents are received, the Façade Grants Coordinator will then conduct the mandatory criminal background check and assess the application with regard to all program requirements. All eligible applications will be forwarded to the Façade Grant Review Committee for review according to the Grant criteria in an interview format with the applicant. The Committee may recommend approval, deny, or table applications. If the Committee recommends approval of an application for a Grant, it shall establish the CRA's maximum grant participation (not to exceed dollar amount) based on the lowest of the three (3) qualified bids submitted by the applicant.

4. Final Agreement and Construction

Once the Committee recommends approval of an application, a Funding Agreement for such application will be presented to the CRA for approval if funding is for more than \$5,000. The Executive Director of the CRA, by virtue of these guidelines, has the authority to approve and sign Funding Agreements on behalf of the CRA for assistance totaling \$5,000 or less. The Executive Director, at his or her discretion, may present any and all Funding Agreements to the CRA for approval. If approved for funding, the applicant (and property owner, if the tenant is the applicant) shall sign the required Funding Agreement. After the Funding Agreement has been executed on behalf of the CRA, the applicant may secure permission from the City to construct by securing appropriate building permits. Substantial modifications to final plans or change orders to construction documents which produce visible differences in the previously approved façade design, will require review and approval of the Façade Grants Review Committee. Evidence of licensure and insurance of the selected contractor(s) shall be submitted to the Façade Grants Coordinator prior to commencement of any work

associated with the Grant.

The CRA reserves the right to deny a request for reimbursement if the completed improvements substantially deviate from the improvements originally contemplated in the Committee's approval and the Funding Agreement and the applicant failed to obtain approval of such deviations from the Committee.

5. Construction Approval

On completion of construction, grantees shall submit proof of 100% completion and arrange for an on-site inspection by the Façade Grants Coordinator to assure that the terms of the Funding Agreement have been honored. Discrepancies will be noted and a time frame for their correction will be established as necessary. Upon final approval by the Façade Grants Coordinator, the grantee will submit a request for reimbursement to the CRA, along with receipts for payment, lien releases by the contractor(s) and photographs of the completed work, based on the Funding Agreement. Reimbursements will be made according to City's accounting procedures. All work shall be permitted and inspected by the City, just as it would if not part of the Façade and Building Stabilization Program.

6. Disbursements

Funds will be disbursed by a check payable to the grantee (1) upon certification of completion, and (2) upon verification by the Façade Grants Coordinator that the work was completed as proposed in a satisfactory and professional manner. Funds will not be disbursed on projects that are not in accordance with the approved plans. The City's Permitting Division will make the final determination as to when the project is complete. Before funds will be disbursed, grantees must provide verification, satisfactory to the CRA, of all project costs, including contractor invoicing, lien releases, and evidence of payment of all expenses, including match. All Grant funds shall be issued to the grantee on a reimbursement basis only.

F. Available Funds

The CRA may from time to time at its discretion establish annual funding for the program.

G. Disclosures

The CRA expressly reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to request additional information from any and all applicants and grantees. The CRA retains the right to amend the program guidelines, agreements, and application procedures. The CRA also retains the right to display and advertise properties that receive matching funds under this Grant.