City of Wisconsin Dells
Economic Development
Façade Improvement Grant Program Manual

For more information contact:

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is established to encourage property owners and tenants to make exterior building façade improvements and install new or improved signage. Attractive building façades support and encourage local businesses and help promote effective economic development initiatives in downtown Wisconsin Dells. These improvements have a significant effect on the attractiveness and marketability of the surrounding area and contribute to the overall vitality of the downtown corridor. The goal of the FIP is to encourage business owners to reinvest in the downtown and connected neighborhood business areas. As such, the City of Wisconsin Dells is offering matching grants to assist with exterior renovations of these vital downtown properties. Grant funds will be offered by the City of Wisconsin Dells CDA. Successful grant recipients will receive a 50% match reimbursement of all eligible project costs to the amount approved by the Wisconsin Dells Community Development Authority Applications will be considered on a first-come first-served basis.

ELIGIBILITY

Property owners of service or commercial/mixed-use structures and building tenants that collect Premier Resort Tax, with current leases of greater than five years in length, located within the target area, are eligible for funding. Governmental entities and public and quasi-public authorities are ineligible for funding. The property's real estate taxes and all other payments due to the City must be current as of the date of the application, or the application shall be denied. A property (or contiguous properties held by the same owner) may only receive one (1) grant award within a sixty (60) month period. The applicant is also responsible for 100% of all non-eligible project costs. The intention is to award only one (1) grant per building. Leaseholders / tenants must provide a signed Building Owner Consent Form from the property owner. The building / property owner will be required to sign the Grant Agreement and sign off on the improvements to real property prior to receipt of FIP reimbursement dollars. The program is intended to assist projects that promote retail activities, create an attractive environment, encourage neighborhood character and architectural design, use quality materials, and incorporate good design concepts. In order to qualify, applicants cannot start on their project until after receiving the necessary approvals from the DRC and CDA.

TARGET AREA

- Properties located in the Downtown Business District along the Broadway corridor.
- Properties north of Washington Avenue and south of Wisconsin Avenue on the following blocks:

La Crosse Street	Capital Street
Eddy Street	Bowman Road
Superior Street / River Road	Vine Street
Oak Street	Race Street
Elm Street	Church Street
Cedar Street	

GRANT AMOUNTS AND COSTS

GRANT AMOUNT

The program will reimburse successful applicants and provide a "dollar for dollar" in matching funds on the project once the project is complete. **Three matching grants for up to $20,000 and one grant for up to $40,000 will be made available.** The minimum grant is $1,000.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Grants may be used for comprehensively restoring or substantially beautifying or enhancing the entire facade or elevation of a commercial building. Eligible activities include uncovering and restoring historical facades, removing existing facade materials and replacing them with more appropriate and attractive designs and materials and other detailing which leads to a substantially enhanced appearance.

The $40,000 grant is to make considerable structural improvements that meet the new design standards aimed at creating a more welcoming presence showcasing the cultural or historical heritage of the City of Wisconsin Dells. Applicants are encouraged to have plans for proposed improvements prepared by a design professional.

Although not eligible for funding on their own, the following may be funded by the applicant's matching portion as part of a more comprehensive facade improvement: windows, doors, exterior cleaning, tuck-pointing, painting (exterior surfaces only), exterior lighting, shutters, gutters and awnings. The program will fund projects that significantly improve the visual appearance of the property from the street. Design and permit fees associated with the construction are not eligible project costs. No grant dollars may be may be spent on signage, nor are these dollars to be considered part of the applicant's match requirement, though the CDA encourages applicants to address signage as part of their overall façade improvement strategy.

With all grant-funded projects, restoration is preferable to renovation. Restoration is the attempt to return the facade to its original appearance through the use of authentic materials and the faithful replication of the building to conditions shown in old photos or records. Renovation projects should be sensitive to the historic appearance of the building, but may include modern materials and design elements. Other facade features eligible to be restored, renovated or constructed with grant dollars include:

- Other Architectural features incl. decorative walkways and permanent planters
- Facade accents (fixed assets) such as fencing, molding and/or roof accents

The City of Wisconsin Dells Community Development Authority reserves the right to determine the eligibility of all items in a project's scope of work. This determination shall be conclusive and final. All grant-funded improvements must be permanent and fixed in type and / or nature. Improvements must meet all City code requirements including the Signage Ordinance, the Downtown Dells Design Guidelines, zoning, building and safety codes. The applicant must obtain and pay for all necessary permits.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

The cost of new construction, repair or replacement of a roof, work to an alley facade, work that principally involves minor repairs, painting or maintenance, billboards, landscaping or paving are not eligible under the grant program. Grant funds shall not be used for any of the following:

- Expenses incurred prior to application approval and grant award
- Site plan, sign or building permit fees
- Wages paid to applicant or applicant's dependents
- Signage, furnishings, trade fixtures or display cases / counters

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSING STEPS

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Improvements must be completed within six (6) months of the award of the grant or the City's obligation to reimburse shall terminate. All requests for reimbursement must be made within nine (9) months of the award of the grant, or applicant shall be deemed to have waived any right to reimbursement and no reimbursement shall be made. One six (6) month extension to the six (6) month completion period may be granted for inclement weather, extenuating circumstances (as determined by the CDA) or the ordering of special building materials, provided that the grant recipient requests an extension in writing prior to expiration of the completion period.

The owner/tenant shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Wisconsin Dells General Ordinances concerning equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs and practices in connection with the construction work being completed using grant funds. The owner / tenant shall assist and actively cooperate with the City in obtaining the compliance of contractors with such provisions of the Ordinances, and with the rules, regulations and relevant orders issued by the City pursuant to such provisions of the Ordinances. In order to qualify, applicants cannot start on their project until after receiving the necessary approvals. If work begins before application or approval, the City cannot fund the project through the FIP.

PROCESSING STEPS

- **STEP 1**- After receiving plan approval from the Design Review Committee, applications must be submitted along with a $100 non-refundable fee to:

  Wis Dells Façade Improvement Grant Program
  Attn: Nancy Holzem, City Clerk/Coordinator
  300 La Crosse Street
  Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

  Checks should be made payable to the Wisconsin Dells CDA RLF.

  Applications must include the following:

  A. Written approval from the property owner / landlord using the Building Owner Consent Form

  B. Photographs of the facades to be improved including a narrative identifying any known defects

  C. Renderings or drawings to scale including a display board of the actual samples of the products and / or materials to be used in the sign or façade and a written project narrative identifying the project components. *Note*: All projects will be evaluated by the CDA and take into consideration colors, materials composition, and façade improvement themes consistent with the Downtown Dells Design Standards (if applicable).

  D. Project Narrative including detailed cost breakdown and timeline of the proposed improvements

- **STEP 2** - A City staff member will visit the site to review and discuss the proposed improvements to perform a preliminary review to determine how well the project meets the program objectives and

requirements. If the proposal meets the requirements of the FIP, a Conditional Letter of Eligibility will be sent to the owner / tenant. This letter may require modifications or changes to the original proposal.

- **STEP 3** – The City will schedule a CDA Meeting to include a formal review of the application and proposed project in greater detail. During this review, the applicant may be asked to provide additional or clarifying information, and / or to make modifications to the proposal. The CDA will then approve or deny the project.

- **STEP 4** - Following approval by the CDA, City Staff and the City's Attorney will prepare and furnish the applicant with the Grant Agreement.

- **STEP 5** - The applicant must sign the grant agreement and return it to the City.
  Note: The Grant Agreement must also be signed by the landlord / building owner.

- **STEP 6** - The applicant must obtain all required permits for the required work. The applicant must display the sign provided by the City on the site indicating "Financing provided in part by the City of Wisconsin Dells Façade Improvement Grant Program."

- **STEP 7** - The applicant pays for the completed construction work and submits paid receipts and lien waivers from the contactors to the RLF Administrator.

- **STEP 8** - Following a final inspection, the RLF Administrator authorizes a check for the approved amount subject to both parties completing a Close-Out Form confirming project completion and full disbursement of funds. *Note*: The following conditions must be met prior to fund disbursement:

  - The grant recipient must submit a written signed statement that contains a list of all contractors and suppliers who worked on the approved project and confirmation that the work has been completed in accordance with the approved application.

  - The grant recipient must submit final unconditional lien waivers from all contractors and suppliers.

  - The grant recipient must supply proof that the improvements passed all final inspections and meets all City of Wisconsin Dells code requirements.

The City may also take those steps the City deems appropriate under the circumstances to verify the information provided and completion of the project as approved.

Note: The disbursement of RLF funds will only be to the maximum amount authorized in the original Grant Agreement or 50% of the Total Project Cost, whichever is less.

Attachments:

- Façade Improvement Program Application
- Building Owner Consent Form
- Program Target Map

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

Business Name: _____

Business Location: _____

Applicant/ Business Owner's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Building Owner (if different than applicant): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Total Anticipated Cost of Qualified Improvements:$ _____

Grant Requested (50% of qualified expenses not to exceed $20,000) $ _____

Grant Application Checklist:

- ☐ Photograph(s) of existing façade.
- ☐ Description of proposed façade improvements.
- ☐ Conceptual rendering(s) of proposed façade improvement.
- ☐ Itemized cost estimates for qualified improvements.
- ☐ DRC approval.
- ☐ Verification of Building Lease Agreement (if applicable)
- ☐ Signed Copy of Landlord Authorization Letter (if applicable)
- ☐ $100 Application Fee

Certification:
I hereby submit this application and all required attachments to the Wisconsin Dells CDA to be considered for their Façade Improvement Grant Program. I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the content of the application is true and correct.

Disclaimer:
Neither the City of Wisconsin Dells, the CDA or their affiliates shall be responsible for the planning, design or construction of improvements to property that is owned/leased by the applicant. The applicant is advised to consult with licensed architects, engineers or building contractors before proceeding with final plans or construction. In consideration of the grant awarded by the CDA, the owner and applicant agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City of Wisconsin Dells and the CDA against any claims resulting from anything occurring under the Façade Improvement Grant Program. I understand that monies granted from this program are on a reimbursement basis following completion of all façade improvement work presented and that improvements/changes not approved by the CDA will not be funded.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

BUILDING OWNER CONSENT FORM

I, _____ am the owner of _____
property owner name address

do hereby support the Façade Improvement Grant Application submitted by _____

for the above stated property that I own. By signing below, I hereby confirm and agree to the following:

1. The applicant is currently under a lease for a term 5 years or greater.

2. I have reviewed the City of Wisconsin Dells Economic Development Façade Improvement Program Manual and support my tenant's application to pursue matching grant dollars for physical improvements to the building that I own.

3. In consideration of the grant awarded by the CDA, the owner of the property and applicant, if not the same, agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City of Wisconsin Dells and the CDA against any claims resulting from anything occurring under the Façade Improvement Grant Program. It is understood that monies granted from this program are on a reimbursement basis following completion of all façade improvement work presented and that improvements/changes not approved by the CDA will not be funded.

_____ _____
Building Owner Signature Date

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – TARGET MAP