

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

From the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation

1. PROGRAMS

Subject to funding availability, three types of Facade Improvement Grants are available to assist in the rehabilitation of buildings within the city's historic district, as defined in the Mount Holly Historic Downtown District. The proposed design of the improvements is subject to review and approval of the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation's Façade Committee. An applicant may take advantage of each of the programs independently or combine them into one project. The maximum grant amount for an approved project is \$50,000.

a. Sign/Awning Grant:

New signs and awnings are eligible for grant funds under a 50 percent grant/50 percent owner financing program.

o. Maximum grant amount for signs is \$500 and maximum grant amount for awnings is \$50 per lineal foot of awning up to a maximum of \$1,500.

o. The design of signs and awnings must be reviewed and approved by the Façade Committee.

o. Signs which identify a business and are in place for less than 12 months will require repayment of grant funds.

o. All signs must in be in accordance with the Mount Holly Municipal Sign Ordinance.

o. Awnings will become permanent fixtures of buildings for a minimum of five years and may contain signage on a detachable valance only.

o. Awning frames and coverings damaged or discarded during the five-year period shall be promptly repaired/replaced at owner's cost.

o. All intrusive elements (nonconforming signs, false building fronts and coverings, unused utilities, etc.) shall be removed from a facade for which grant funds are used.

b. Intrusive Element Removal Grant:

Grant funds are available to cover 50 percent of cost for removal of intrusive elements (nonconforming signs, false building fronts and coverings, unused utilities, etc.). Maximum Grant amount is \$2,500. The intrusive element removal project must be part of an overall facade improvement project that must be completed within 12 months.

c. Comprehensive Façade Improvements Grant:

Participants in any of the Facade Improvement Programs must make all exterior building/safety improvements necessary to comply with applicable city building requirements and minimum maintenance requirements set forth by the Façade Committee and the Mount Holly Municipal Code, including removal of exterior non-functioning utility services.

a. Code Compliance--all items to meet current Building Code safety standards;

b. Windows--in place, glazed, trim completed and painted;

c. Doors--operable, matching store front;

d. Woodwork--sound, primed and painted, no missing pieces;

e. Masonry--sound, intact, joints tuck-pointed, stripped, sealed and/or painted with approved materials, broken or missing units replaced;

f. Missing items shall be replaced and all components shall be securely and appropriately affixed;

g. All surfaces shall be sealed to prevent moisture from entering into building materials.

2. Eligible Areas

Owners of property located within the area known as the Historic Downtown District are eligible to make application for assistance (see map). This area has been found to be in need of revitalization and strengthening to ensure that it will contribute to the economic and social well-being of the City.

3. Eligible Improvements

Costs eligible for a Façade Improvement Program will include all costs directly attributable to the improvement of the first or principal facade (other street or alley corner facades may be considered). The grant may also be used to cover labor, materials, architectural and engineering or architectural services. Examples of acceptable hard costs are: masonry cleaning, cornice restoration, removal of secondary siding, exterior painting, canopies and window awnings, repair of gutters and rain spouts, removal of fire escapes and old signs, removal and relocation of exterior utility services and installation of new signs which are compatible with the building and enhance pedestrian orientation to the area.

4. Design Guidelines

All proposed project designs must be reviewed by the Façade Committee following its established design guidelines. Projects for buildings designated as historic on any historic survey shall meet the NC Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Section 11) and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness.

5. Bids

The applicant must obtain at least two qualified bids, once a final scope of work has been approved by the Façade Committee, and if applicable, the City and the State Historic Preservation Commission Design Review Committee and any other applicable governing bodies. One of the bids may be from the applicant if the applicant is a licensed contractor.

6. Approval of Work

The Façade Committee shall have the final authority to determine the eligibility or ineligibility of all proposed work. The Committee will require that all applicable City, State and Federal codes and requirements be met including securing the appropriate permits for the project work.

7. Disbursement

Foundation grants will be disbursed after all private matching funds have been expended as shown by original receipts presented to the Foundation and only for work which has been satisfactorily completed as specified in the Grant.

8. Property Taxes, Special Assessments

No financial assistance will be provided from the Façade Improvement Program if property taxes or special assessments are in arrears.

10. Permanent Displacement

No financial assistance will be provided if the project involves the permanent and involuntary displacement of tenants unless the applicant agrees to provide financial assistance to the tenants at levels consistent with the Federal Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act, as amended, and furnishes proof that he is doing so. Such assistance granted will not, however, be counted in the private matching funds requirement. Costs for temporary relocation will be allowable as a project cost.

11. Other Project Requirements

a. **Lead-Based Paint Prohibition:** The use of lead-based paint in façade projects is prohibited.

b. **Historic Preservation Review:** Proposed work on any building over 45 years old that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), must undergo scrutiny by the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Preservation Office to determine if the proposed work would have an effect on the historic resource. At a minimum, all work on historic buildings, whether in the Historic Downtown District or elsewhere must meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This requires that the work must preserve those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values. In addition, exterior work on such structures will be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission before a building permit can be issued.

c. **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The grantee shall comply with all applicable provisions of federal statutes and regulations concerning equal employment opportunities for persons engaged in rehabilitation work undertaken in connection with program assistance.

d. **Permit Requirement**

The grantee will be responsible for securing all required construction permits from the City Building Department and must present all Certificate(s) of Appropriateness and an Occupancy Permit prior to full disbursement of program funds for work upon which a permit was required.

e. **Inspection**

The grantee shall permit inspection of the property by the City for compliance with all City Codes and ordinances and such other inspections deemed necessary in connection with the property, the rehabilitation work, and all contracts, materials, equipment, machinery, fixtures, payrolls and conditions of employment pertaining to work.

f. **Eligible Contractors**

The grantee shall award contracts for work only to contractors who are currently licensed in the construction profession and should be able to demonstrate their ability to complete the necessary work. Contractors must also show evidence of adequate liability and workman's compensation. Lien releases are to be signed by the contractor and filed with the City prior to final disbursement.

g. **Bonus, Commission or Fee**

The grantee shall not pay any bonus, commission or fee or other payment for the purpose of obtaining approval of the grant application or any other approval or concurrence required to complete the rehabilitation work.

h. **Civil Rights**

The grantee shall not discriminate upon the basis of race, color, sex, marital status, handicap, religion or national origin in the sale, lease, rental, use or occupancy of the property to be assisted.

i. **Records**

The grantee shall keep such records as may be required by the City in connection with the work to be assisted.

j. **Acceptance Requirement**

By accepting a grant, the organization agrees to allow information about the grant to be used in Foundation newsletters or other public venues. By accepting a grant, the organization agrees to maintain the work supported by the grant for a minimum of 5 years.

k. Disclaimer

The Mount Holly Community Development Foundation retains the right to accept or deny any application based on perceived merit as judged by the Façade Grant Committee.

12. APPLICATION PROCESS

When an application is submitted and includes all of the required information as determined by staff, the process for review and approval will be approximately four (4) weeks from the next Foundation board meeting. The Foundation Board will make a determination on approval or disapproval of each application. An appeal of a decision may be made to the Foundation within 30 days of receipt of the mailed decision.

a. For sign/awning grants, applicants only need to submit

1. proof of ownership or signed approval by the owner;
2. a signed statement that the applicants will repay full grant assistance if assisted awnings are removed prior to 60 months after installation;
3. a minimum of two bids from licensed contractors and evidence of a Foundation-approved sign permit application.

b. For all other façade programs, applicants must complete the application forms, in their entirety.

APPLICATION FOR A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT
FOR INTRUSIVE ELEMENT REMOVAL AND/OR FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

OWNER APPLICANT (s) _____

BUILDING PROJECT ADDRESS

Description of the Building and Proposed Improvements

Please attach a description of the improvements you plan to make to the facade of the building. Attach architect/engineering plans in sufficient detail to determine program compliance as well as pictures, sketches and other descriptive information. Try to convey the “before and after” scenario with particular interest of any historical photos.

Building Age _____ **Present Vacancy %** _____

Number of Stories _____

Total Sq Footage _____

Primary Façade Linear Frontage _____ **Secondary Façade Linear Frontage** _____

Building Space is roughly allocated by the following percentages:

Retail _____%	Commercial _____%	Office _____%
Residential _____%	Unusable _____%	Other _____%

Approximate Market Value of Building \$ _____ (attach recent appraisal, if available)

Estimate of Proposed Improvement Costs:

Storefront level \$ _____ Other \$ _____

Upper Level(s) \$ _____ Other \$ _____

Awnings/canopies \$ _____ Other \$ _____

Signs \$ _____ Architect Fees \$ _____

Contingency \$ _____ (10%)

TOTAL \$ _____

I / we hereby verify that I / we will abide by all provisions of the Foundation’s Façade Improvement Program and that all information we have provided is true and accurate.

OWNER/APPLICANT(s) _____

Please Print

Signature _____ Date _____

Social Security Number or Tax ID _____

Address _____

Telephone: work _____ cell: _____

OWNER/APPLICANT(s) _____

Please Print

Signature _____ Date _____

Social Security Number or Tax ID _____

Address _____

Telephone work _____ cell _____

OWNER/APPLICANT(s) _____

Please Print

Signature _____ Date _____

Social Security Number or Tax ID _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ work _____ cell _____

ATTACHMENTS PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

Architectural / Engineering Plans

At least two qualified construction bids

PLEASE SUBMIT 3 COPIES OF THE APPLICATION TO:

Mount Holly Community Development Foundation

106-B South Main Street, Mount Holly, NC 28120

For more information, contact: 704-827-5262