

GUIDELINES

Program Goals

The intent of the Façade Improvement Program is to strengthen the economic viability of Lansing's commercial corridors by providing targeted assistance for improving the appearance and structural conditions of buildings in highly visible and critical areas of the city.

Lansing is making progress towards recovering from the economic downturn of the 2000s continuing its strong economic growth. However, the current growth and investment can be strengthened in many of Lansing's commercial corridors and neighborhood business centers.

Due to the limited funds available for this program, projects will be assessed thoroughly and chosen primarily on need, impact, and their critical strategic location.

This Façade Improvement Program, along with other available incentives and programs, will begin to reinforce Lansing's commercial corridors in both appearance and structure and will set the stage for further development. However, the ultimate success of Lansing's commercial corridors is dependent upon the level of private sector commitment. It is up to the merchants, building owners, residents, professionals and investors to improve the mechanics of their businesses and the condition of their buildings.

Geographic Area

The program is directed at commercial, office, and multi-use buildings adjacent to main corridors and neighborhood nodes within the City of Lansing.

Eligibility and Evaluation Considerations

Property owners, tenants and others are eligible to apply for grant funds; however, the applicants must provide proof of ownership. Applicants may have no liabilities, or past/present obligations to the City of Lansing, including and especially any back taxes. If the applicant is not the owner, a notarized letter of permission from the property owner is acceptable along with proof of the owner's legitimate ownership interest in the property. The Façade Design Committee reserves the right to approve grant funds on a case-by-case-basis.

Important:

- If façade improvements begin prior to grant funding approval, the applicant will not be eligible for the grant.
- All grant funded improvements must be permanent and fixed in type or nature.
- Improvements must meet all City of Lansing code requirements including zoning, building and safety codes.

- Façade improvements must be consistent with the City of Lansing Façade Improvement Program Design Guidelines, herein after referred to as the “Design Guidelines,” available from the LEDC Office.
- If the final façade does not adhere to the guidelines referenced here, and the Grant and Design Agreement, as determined by the Design Committee, reimbursement will not take place.
- All façade projects will be evaluated considering these guidelines. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that careful review of the guidelines be conducted prior to making application.

Additional application evaluation considerations include:

- Ability to provide upfront cash match
- Critical strategic corridor location
- Emphasis on need
- Thoughtful and achievable design ideas
- Aesthetically pleasing

Grant Awards

The Façade Improvement Program offers three types of flexible grant awards. Applications are considered on a first come, first served basis. All applicants must submit the pre-application form, which is available at www.lansingmi.gov/1072/Facade-Improvement-Program.

Transformational Grant – Up to \$20,000

For façade projects totaling \$10,000 and above, grant funds will provide a “dollar for dollar” match (50% of the total project cost) up to a maximum \$20,000 award. This award is for façade projects involving substantial restoration, rehabilitation, or replacement. The grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis and offers no upfront money.

For example: If the total project cost is \$35,000, \$17,500 will be the grant match. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$17,500 reimbursement after project completion. Or, if the total project cost is \$50,000, a maximum of \$20,000 will be the grant match. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 reimbursement after project completion.

The Façade Design Committee reserves the right to approve or deny the proposed changes. Any work not approved as eligible by the committee will not be reimbursed. The committee reserves the right to propose changes or additions to the plans as they have been submitted. Award amounts are offered at the discretion of the Façade Committee and may change depending on the project and program demand.

Aesthetic & Maintenance Grant – up to \$10,000

For façade projects with a total cost under \$10,000, grant funds will provide a “dollar for dollar” match (50% of the total project cost) up to a maximum \$5,000 award. This award is for small façade projects or for projects that consist of limited improvements including signage, paint, window/door repair, lighting, entryways. The grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis and offers no upfront money.

For example: If the total project cost is \$10,000, a maximum of \$5,000 will be the grant match. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 reimbursement after project completion. Or, if the total project cost is \$6,000, \$3,000 will be the grant match. The grant recipient will be eligible to receive up to \$3,000 reimbursement after project completion.

The Façade Design Committee reserves the right to approve or deny the proposed changes. Any work not approved as eligible by the committee will not be reimbursed. The committee reserves the right to propose changes or additions to the plans as they have been submitted. Award amounts are offered at the discretion of the Facade Committee and may change depending on the project and program demand.

Design Program Award – Up to \$2,000

This award is for development of renderings/façade designs and material specifications to assist with potential upfront design costs to prepare for future façade improvements. Offers up to a \$2,000 award value per applicant (total of \$10,000 available in this category) in the form of design services by a firm selected and/or approved by the Facade Committee and LEDC. Further architectural/engineering costs related to the façade that are beyond the award value are the responsibility of the applicant but may be approved as match for a future grant award. Pre-application and commitment to façade improvement is required. Design Program awardees are not guaranteed additional funding for façade improvements through the Façade Improvement Program. Due to limited funds, consideration will be based on need on a case by case basis. Please note: Award amounts are offered at the discretion of the Facade Committee and may change depending on the project and program demand.

Awardees must be approved and entered into a Grant and Design Agreement prior to the start of any work. Previous façade improvements and unapproved work will not be funded.

Façade Design Committee

The committee shall be led by LEDC staff and made up of design experts including architects, representatives from the City of Lansing (Economic Development & Planning Department, and Neighborhoods & Citizen Engagement Department), and State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). The Façade Design Committee reserves the right to approve grant funds on a case-by-case-basis.

Application Process

The Façade Improvement Program Application shall be available from January 16th, 2024, through March 15th, 2024. The pre-application form can be obtained at <https://lansingedc.com/facade-improvement-prog> if the application is accepted, the candidate will be invited to submit a full application packet **due March 29, 2024**.

Requirements for Applying

1. The online pre-application form must be completed and submitted at <https://lansingedc.com/facade-improvement-prog>

Note: Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

2. If the application is selected, the candidate will be invited to submit a full application packet. The full application packet shall be submitted to LEDC by 5PM on March 29th, 2024.
3. If the candidate is applying for Full-Grant or Micro-Grant Award, the application must include the following:

- a. A completed full application for the Grant Award
- b. A detailed description of the proposed improvements, supporting materials such as drawings or other materials which accurately represent the scope and intent of the project improvements, a detailed line-item budget, and project schedule.

Note: Applicants who deviate from the approved application may be disqualified from the grant program.

- c. An affidavit signed by the applicant (and the property owner if the applicant is the tenant) which states that the applicant and property owner do not have pending litigation against or obligations (owner and tenant) to the City of Lansing. (Attachment provided with Application Packet)
 - d. Additionally, the applicant and property owner must provide the City Treasurer with a signed Lansing Treasury Information Request Form stating the applicant and property owner is not delinquent on any debts owed to the City of Lansing. (Attachment provided with application packet)
 - e. A notarized letter of permission from the property owner, if applicant is not the property owner (sample letter provided with application), along with proof of legitimate ownership i.e. Copy of Registered Deed.)
4. If the candidate is applying for the Design Grant Award, the application must include:
 - a. A completed full application for the Design Award
 - b. A description of the proposed improvements including components of the eligible works, estimated cost and anticipated timing for approval works including the estimated completion time.

Note: Applicants who deviate from the approved application may be disqualified from the grant program.

- c. Additionally, the applicant and property owner must provide the City Treasurer with a signed Lansing Treasury Information Request Form stating the applicant and property owner is not delinquent on any debts to the City of Lansing. (Attachment provided with application packet)
- d. A notarized letter of permission from the property owner, if applicant is not the property owner (sample letter provided with application), along with proof of legitimate ownership (i.e. Copy of Registered Deed.)

- e. A signed Grantee Agreement for Façade Improvement between the applicant (tenant and the property owner) and Lansing Economic Development Corporation, specifying the description of the proposed improvements and the terms. The agreement would also stipulate that if design works are not completed as outlined in the description by the proposed date, the applicant would not be eligible to apply for the matching grant (Full or Micro grant).
5. LEDC will review the application for completeness and eligibility. If necessary, the Design Committee will arrange applicants to meet with the Committee before final selection.
6. The Façade Design Committee will review the applications to verify that the proposed improvements meet the intent of the Design Guidelines.

Approval and Reimbursement Process

All improvements are to be approved by the Façade Design Committee. Applicants will be contacted in writing stating whether the application has been approved, denied or additional information is needed before a ruling can be made.

Post Selection Requirements

- Once approved, the applicant and design committee will meet to work out any additional design and implementation details. The applicant will be required to enter into a Grant and Design Agreement with Lansing Economic Development Corporation as soon as possible.
- Prior to any work commencing, an applicant must demonstrate that any contractor or subcontractor will maintain comprehensive general liability insurance with limits of \$100,000 for claims which may arise from the applicant's operation under the Agreement, naming the City of Lansing, Lansing Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), and the applicant, as additional insured parties. A copy of the liability insurance must be provided to the LEDC Office.
- Upon completion of the project, and prior to grant money disbursement, the applicant shall schedule an onsite inspection with the Façade Design Committee to verify the project has been completed in accordance with the Design Guidelines and as outlined in the Grant and Design Agreement.

Note: Any changes or alterations made without written approval by the Façade Design Committee will make the Grant Agreement null and void.

- Once project completion has been verified, the applicant must provide the following documents for reimbursement:
 - Provide proof that all contractors have been paid in full by the applicant for the portions of the project the applicant is seeking reimbursement for. This proof must be a final invoice marked "Paid in Full" and a copy of check(s) made payable to the contractor(s).
 - A waiver of lien signed by each contractor who has completed the work. (Attachment provided with Agreement)
 - A Statement of Satisfaction Form signed by the applicant. (Attachment provided with Agreement)

- Receive and provide all final Building Department approvals including a letter from the City of Lansing Building Safety Office stating that improvements have passed final inspection and meets all City of Lansing code requirements.
- As stated in the Grant and Design Agreement, the Grant Recipient agrees to allow the City to reserve the right to conduct a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony within 30 days of project completion.
- Reimbursement will be made to the applicant within 30 days receipt of all required and completed documentation.
- The targeted completion date for all project work and submissions is September 27th, 2024.

For more information, please contact:

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Lansing Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), under contract to the City of Lansing notwithstanding any other provision in these guidelines, reserves the right to:

- Reject all submitted applications for any reason and all determinations are final and not subject to appeal.
- Waive any errors or irregularities in the solicitation process or in any application submission.
- Re-solicit application submissions.