



CITY OF TRENTON  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
**Façade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines**

**PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The Trenton Downtown Development Authority (DDA) created the Façade Improvement Grant Program to encourage private investment in the City's downtown. The Program will significantly impact the area by encouraging redevelopment, revitalization, and rehabilitation of buildings in Downtown Trenton.

Each fiscal year, the DDA will consider an allocation of funds in its budget for the Program. The Program seeks to provide funding for projects that will enhance the aesthetics and historical character in the DDA District and assist commercial property owners in rehabilitating and upgrading their buildings' facades and limited interior features.

Funds will be available on a first-come, first-served, and rotating basis until fully awarded for that fiscal year.

**GRANT GUIDELINES**

1. Program funds are available for exterior and limited interior work on commercial buildings located within the DDA District.
2. The Program application must be completed and submitted by the building owner, not a tenant.
3. No program applications will be accepted for work that has already been started or completed or for work that is covered by insurance.
4. Program grants are for **existing commercial buildings only**. Buildings may have upper-floor residential components, but the first floor must have a commercial use. Participants must be current with the City of Trenton and Wayne County for all real or personal property taxes at time of application, at time of payment, and at all other times relevant to the Program.
5. Participants must be current with all obligations to the City building department. No Program funds shall be approved for or distributed to properties or owners with outstanding building code violations, permits, infractions, or other failures to comply with federal, state, or local legal obligations, unless such violations, permits, infractions, or other failures are to be included in the scope of work.
6. Paint and fabric colors for exterior improvements shall be consistent with the time period of the façade and building. Bright and neon colors are prohibited.

7. All projects shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Visit their website at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/standguide/index.htm>)
8. Grants are processed as reimbursement in a single payment once the work has been completed and verified by City and DDA staff as compliant with the plans proposed in the approved application. Any deviation from the approved grant project may result in the total or partial denial of a grant.
9. Reimbursements (up to \$50,000) are for labor and materials only. Permit fees and other expenses do not qualify for grant dollars.
10. Properties that have received funding through this program within the last five (5) years are not eligible.
11. A single owner of multiple properties may apply for grant funds for each property owned, but may not receive more than \$50,000 per property within a five (5) year period.
12. Applicants must sign a Building Exterior Easement Agreement, or similar document acceptable to the DDA and City.

## **PROGRAM DETAILS**

Program grants are available for the following types of projects:

1. Building Exterior Renovation
  - a. Removing slipcovers or non-historic/added facades, repointing brick or replacing mortar joints, replacing or restoring cornices, removing paint from brick, repairing/replacing windows, restoring transom windows, and painting.
  - b. Covering cost for ADA Compliance (Americans with Disabilities Act). This is for doors, approaches, and ramps.
  - c. Work, such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, electrical service to the building, and fire separation or suppression can be included along with building exterior rehabilitation work.
2. Lead and/or Asbestos Abatement  
Covering cost of removal of lead-based paint or other materials that contain lead and/or all materials that contain asbestos.
3. Roof  
Complete roof removal, disposal, and replacement.
4. Awnings and Signage  
Awning replacement or addition of a new awning, with no signage on the awning other than address graphic on the return; and/or projecting signs

5. Professional Design Services

Costs for architectural or other design, up to ten (10%) percent of total project cost

6. Projects are reviewed with the following criteria in mind:

- a. Project results in an increase in property valuation and generates sales tax revenue.
- b. Project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- c. Total investment dollars as provided in the grant application.
- d. Investment in structure construction or renovation (excluding purchase price).
- e. Complements existing buildings and improves aesthetic appearance.
- f. Increases consumer traffic and vitality in Downtown Trenton.
- g. Property owners that are property tax exempt will not qualify. However, other funds may be available. Please contact the DDA for further details.

7. Grant Limits:

Rehabilitation and building grants are limited to a 50% match of the eligible project costs, with a cap of \$50,000.

- a. The DDA Board must approve all proposed improvements before work begins.
- b. Reimbursement will occur after project completion, inspection, and submittal of final paid invoices and Full Unconditional Waiver of Lien from the general contractor and/or all interested parties.
- c. Should final payment be lower than approved bid, the DDA will reimburse based on the applicable percentage of the final paid invoice amount.
- d. Project approval does not replace City of Trenton Site Plan Review or other Building or Planning Department reviews and procedures, if required.

**GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 1. Applications can be found at the Trenton City Hall, online at [trentonmi.org](http://trentonmi.org), or requested via email from [dda@trenton-mi.com](mailto:dda@trenton-mi.com). You can also contact the Trenton DDA Director at 734-493-3807 or email [dda@trenton-mi.com](mailto:dda@trenton-mi.com) for questions about project eligibility.
- 2. Complete grant application form. Submit the completed application form with all original itemized work estimates, color samples, and drawings of the proposed work either via email at [dda@trenton-mi.com](mailto:dda@trenton-mi.com) or mail/in-person to the Trenton City Hall , ATTN; DDA Director, 2800 3<sup>RD</sup> Street, Trenton, MI 48183. Please make sure your application has the following included.

- a. Drawings of all proposed grant work to be done. Drawings may be prepared by the project architect or contractor.
  - b. Color samples of all final paint selections and/or final building material selections must be included with the application. Itemized work estimates on all project work from contractors or project architects must be included with the application.
  - c. Historic photos of the building
  - d. Pictures of the existing façade and proposed improvement areas
  - e. Two itemized cost estimates per project element. Each element must be listed separately with an estimated cost. (E.g.: 12 windows \$500.00, tuck pointing \$600.00). These must be provided by licensed contractors.
  - f. A site plan and/or building elevation(s), if required by the City of Trenton
3. The approval process typically takes between six (6) and eight (8) weeks, but may, in some circumstances, take longer. It will include without limitation the following:
- a. All projects must meet current State of Michigan building standards and codes, as well as building permit requirements.
  - b. All grant applications that will change, modify or alter the exterior appearance of the building must be reviewed and approved by the Historic District Commission prior to approval by the DDA.
  - c. Applications must be complete and contain all required information. Additional information requested by the DDA must be provided prior to approval of the grant.
  - d. All construction bids submitted by an applicant must be current and dated no earlier than ninety (90) days before the application submittal. Bids shall be submitted on the contractor's or project architect's letterhead and shall contain the contractor's name, address, and telephone number and shall itemize the bid in a manner that allows the DDA on to determine the bid components and authenticity of the bids.
  - e. An applicant whose application has been denied by the DDA for a deficient application shall be eligible to re-submit a grant application with corrections for that property within six (6) months from the date the DDA declined the prior application.
  - f. Applicants receiving approval shall commence construction described within the application within ninety (90) days from the date the grant is awarded. All applicants must complete the construction described in the application within one (1) year from the date the grant is approved. If the applicant is unable to commence construction within ninety (90) days from the date the grant is approved or complete construction within one (1) year from the date the grant is approved, the applicant may submit a written request for an extension for the

commencement date or completion date provided the extension request is made prior to the ninety (90) day or one (1) year time limit. The DDA shall not be obligated to allow extensions but may do so for good cause determined solely by the DDA Board, pursuant to a recommendation from the Grant Committee. If granted, the extensions shall be for the term and the conditions determined exclusively by the DDA. An extension denial cannot be appealed and shall be final.

- g. As a condition of this grant application, the applicant consents and shall allow the DDA and Economic Development staff to request City of Trenton inspections to determine that the grant, if awarded, will not be used for construction on any building that is not in compliance with the City of Trenton building codes and Ordinances that are applicable to the construction contemplated in the application.
  - h. No applicant has a proprietary right to receive grant funds. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the sole and absolute discretion of the DDA.
  - i. The applicant shall be required to furnish photographs of the building's exterior after the construction is completed, as a condition of final grant reimbursement.
  - j. The applicant is required to obtain all applicable City permits and City approvals required for the construction if a grant is awarded.
4. Applicants will be required to attend a predevelopment meeting with the Grant Committee to discuss the proposed project and develop mutual concurrence with the approach and to identify additional available resources. The applicant's architect is encouraged to attend the predevelopment meeting, which shall be held at the project location if building conditions are suitable.

5. Reimbursement:

When the Façade Improvement Grant project has been satisfactorily completed and reviewed, the applicant shall present the DDA office with copies of all paid invoices, including copies of cancelled checks and/or credit card receipts, and full Unconditional Waiver of Lien from the general contractor and/or all interested parties for a single payment reimbursement of the approved funding.

Building Exterior Easement Agreement or similar document is executed at the time of reimbursement.

For further questions about the guidelines and process of the Façade Improvement Grant Program, please contact the Trenton DDA Director either via email at [dda@trenton-mi.com](mailto:dda@trenton-mi.com) or call 734-493-3807.