



Town of Galena, Maryland

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FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Program Goal

The Galena Façade Improvement Grant Program is funded through the State of Maryland Department of Community and Housing Development's Neighborhood Revitalization Façade Improvement Program. The Maryland Façade Improvement Program is a state revitalization initiative designed to support local economic development and community revitalization by providing funding to improve the external appearance of commercial buildings in designated Sustainable Communities. Through grants distributed to local governments or community development organizations, the program helps businesses enhance storefronts and façades, strengthen neighborhood character, attract customers, stimulate private investment, and contribute to broader efforts to revitalize aging commercial corridors while aligning with local sustainable community action plans

Background

The Town of Galena established its Façade Improvement Grant Program to enhance the appearance and vitality of residential and commercial properties throughout the Town. Launched in 2022, the program has been well received and continues to be a popular tool for supporting property improvements and neighborhood revitalization. To sustain this initiative, the Town applies annually for funding through the State of Maryland.

The program serves properties located within the corporate limits of the Town of Galena and provides grant funding on an 80% reimbursement basis, with the remaining 20% of project costs being the responsibility of the property owner. Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to, exterior painting, window and door repair or replacement, signage, awnings, storefront restorations, and other façade-related enhancements as outlined in this document.

Program Guidelines and Eligibility

Grant funds are awarded on a competitive basis. Grants provide up to 80% reimbursement, with a required 20% match from the property owner toward the total cost of the improvement project. Permit fees, MDIA fees, and administrative costs are not eligible for reimbursement and are the sole expense of the applicant.

The property owner must be the grant applicant, and Commercial Façade Grants may only be awarded to the commercial property owner. All work must be performed by a licensed Maryland

contractor and must be approved and completed in accordance with Town of Galena requirements. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and approvals from the Town and County at their own expense.

All façade grant applications will be reviewed and approved by the Town of Galena Town Administrator and the appropriate review committee. A Review Committee, appointed by the Mayor & Council, will rank submitted applications based on the following criteria:

- Project impact & visibility
- Condition & need for improvement
- Property type & occupancy
- Owner investment & readiness
- Design quality & compatibility
- Compliance & good standing with the Town of Galena

Applicants must have no outstanding property taxes, fees, judgments, liens, or code violations with the Town of Galena at the time of application and award.

Eligible work is limited to exterior improvements only, including the sides and rear of the structure. Each applicant may receive one (1) grant per funding round; however, applicants may apply in subsequent rounds once all previous façade grant awards have been fully closed out.

Commercial Façade Grants are available only for commercial or mixed-use properties. Properties receiving façade grant funding must remain commercial or mixed-use for a minimum of three (3) years following project completion. Properties are eligible regardless of whether they are currently occupied or vacant.

Building projects should be designed by a qualified design professional, and all signs and awnings must be produced by a professional sign and/or awning manufacturer.

Application Fee

The application fee is Eight (8%) Percent of the total project cost will be due when submitting the Galena Façade Improvement Grant Program Application. **This is a non-refundable fee**; however, if your application is denied ONLY by DHCD or MHT, you can expect a refund of one-half (1/2) of your application fee.

Application Submittal Process

1. OPTIONAL: Schedule an appointment with the Town Administrator to review your proposed project and confirm eligibility for the Façade Improvement Grant Program. Town staff are available to assist and guide applicants through the application process.

2. Submit a completed Façade Improvement Application along with all required supporting materials, including proposals or quotes, sketches, contractor information, historical details (if applicable), application fee, zoning permit, inspection fee, and photographs. Applications should be submitted to the Town of Galena Review Committee, Attn: Marisa R. Pisapia, Town Administrator, 101 S. Main Street, Galena, MD 21635.
3. The Review Committee will evaluate, and rank all submitted applications. A single application may include multiple proposed façade improvement projects.
4. Recommended projects will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for approval and potential inclusion in the Town's Community Legacy application to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
5. Applicants will be notified whether their project has been approved or denied.

Program Process

1. Once a project is approved, the Town will issue a Notice to Proceed along with the required letters of commitment to the applicant. No work may begin until the applicant has received a formal Notice to Proceed from the Finance Clerk and all required building permits have been issued.
2. From the date of the Notice to Proceed, the applicant will have one (1) year to complete the approved façade improvement project. No work may begin prior to receipt of the Notice to Proceed and issuance of all required permits.
3. Upon completion of the project, the applicant must submit all required closeout documentation to the Town, including but not limited to:
 - a. Paid invoices
 - b. Copies of cleared checks and/or receipts
 - c. Before-and-after photographs
 - d. Any additional documentation required by the Town or the State of Maryland
4. Once the closeout documentation is reviewed and deemed complete, the reimbursement request for the finished project will be submitted to the Mayor & Council for approval at their next scheduled meeting (1st Monday of every month).
5. Following Mayor and Council approval, the applicant will be reimbursed by the Town for eligible expenses in accordance with the grant terms. Reimbursement is typically issued within four (4) to six (6) weeks of approval.

Permits & Regulatory Compliance

All projects funded through the Façade Improvement Program must comply with applicable local and state requirements. The applicant is solely responsible for obtaining and paying for all required permits, inspections, and associated fees.

1. Town of Galena Requirements: Projects must obtain all required zoning permits and MDIA inspections. Applications will also be reviewed by the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) where applicable.
2. State of Maryland Requirements: Applicants must comply with all applicable Maryland State regulations, including requirements related to environmental certification and lead paint indemnification, where applicable.
3. Historic Review (State of Maryland): Projects that impact historic structures must be reviewed and approved by the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT). Where required, MHT approval must include acceptance of the project's architectural plans and specifications.
4. Permit Responsibility: The applicant must obtain all necessary permits and approvals from the Town of Galena prior to commencing work and is responsible for all associated costs and fees.

Eligible Projects

Façade grant funds may be used for improvements to the exterior of existing buildings located within the Town of Galena's corporate limits, subject to Town review and approval. If a project is located within the Galena Historic District (Maryland Historic Trust Survey K-557), all proposed improvements are additionally subject to Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) review and approval. Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to, the following exterior work:

1. **Awnings and Canopies** – Repair or replacement of soft awnings and canopies that enhance storefront visibility and provide functional protection from sun and rain.
2. **Exterior Carpentry** – Repair or replacement of exterior wood elements.
3. **Building Entrances** – Enhancements to pedestrian entrances, including doors, hardware, distinctive features, colors, greenery, and planters.
4. **Exterior Lighting** – Lighting attached to the building only; streetlights are not eligible.
5. **Exterior Painting** – Partial or full exterior painting of the building.
6. **Building Façade Elements** – Repair or replacement of doors, fascia, porches, steps, siding, soffits, rain gutters, windows, and exterior hardware or lighting fixtures.
7. **Repointing and Masonry Repair** – Repair or renewal of mortar joints in masonry construction to prevent water intrusion and structural deterioration.
8. **Exterior Wall Treatment** – Cleaning, repair, and/or painting of visible exterior wall surfaces.
9. **Architectural Features** – Repair of deteriorated architectural details where feasible, or replacement when repair is not practical.
10. **Accessibility Improvements** – Installation of handicap-accessible features, including electronic doorways and push-button entries.
11. **HVAC Improvements** – Exterior components of HVAC systems when visible from the public right-of-way.
12. **Roof Repairs** – Repairs to existing roofs that contribute to the building's exterior condition and appearance.
13. **Removal of Obsolete Elements** – Removal of unused or extraneous exterior elements,

including electrical boxes, conduits, pipes, unused sign brackets, and similar items.

14. **Inappropriate Façade Removal** – Removal of incompatible façade materials and replacement with historically or architecturally appropriate designs, as approved by the Town.
15. **Accessory Structure Removal** – Removal of deteriorated exterior appurtenances or accessory structures that are no longer functional or economically repairable.
16. **Signage** – Removal, repair, or replacement of exterior signage to improve business visibility and streetscape character.
17. **Storefront Façade Improvements** – Improvements to storefronts, with priority given to corner stores and small neighborhood commercial nodes in low- and moderate-income areas, consistent with DHCD funding priorities.

Ineligible Projects

The following improvements and expenses are not eligible for funding under the Façade Improvement Program. This list is not exhaustive:

1. New construction.
2. Interior renovations or improvements.
3. Security systems, solar energy systems, or satellite dishes.
4. Purchase of property or equipment.
5. Fencing.
6. Project costs incurred or work commenced prior to receipt of a signed Notice to Proceed from the Town of Galena.
7. Projects associated with the following business types: pawn shops, gun shops, tanning salons, massage parlors, adult/video/book stores, check-cashing facilities, gambling establishments, tattoo parlors, and liquor stores.

Design Guidelines

All planned improvements to properties located within the Galena Historic District (Maryland Historic Trust Survey K-557) must comply with Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) requirements, where applicable. Proposed improvements must preserve the building's architectural integrity and, where feasible, adhere to the original façade design.

If a project is approved for funding and the property is located within the Galena Historic District, the applicant will be required to apply for review by the Maryland Historic Trust. Receipt of Façade Grant funding is contingent upon MHT approval.

The property is considered historic if it is dated 1970 or earlier and is listed on Survey K-557. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Grant Coordinator to confirm whether their property is designated as historic.

Only appropriate and non-destructive cleaning methods are eligible for funding. Sandblasting of historic buildings is prohibited due to its damaging impact on historic materials.

All signage improvements must comply with the Town's Sign Ordinance No. 2020-01.

Proposed improvements should enhance compatibility between the building and neighboring properties while maintaining the unique character of Galena. Applicants should consider building proportions, width, height, and setbacks in relation to adjacent structures, maintain alignment of façades along the sidewalk, and preserve the established rhythm of windows and storefronts.

Program Completion

All work approved for façade grant funding must commence within six (6) months of project approval in order to remain eligible for reimbursement. All reimbursement requests, including required closeout documentation, must be submitted to the Town of Galena within one (1) year of the date of the Notice to Proceed letter.

Depending on the scope or circumstances of a project, applicants may request an extension in writing. The Town of Galena reserves the right to grant extensions on a case-by-case basis.