



The City of Scranton

Façade Improvement Grant Program Application

For additional program information or questions, please contact:
Christopher Hughes, ARPA Communications and Information Manager
Phone: (570) 878.8490
Email: chughes@scrantonpa.gov





Intent to Participate in the City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant

Applicant's Name: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Are you the owner of the property that is subject to the grant application? Yes No

If you answered "No" above, please complete the next section of the application.

Property Owner's Name: _____

Property Owner's Address: _____

Property Owner's Phone: _____

Property Owner's Email: _____

Please attach to application current photos of the property. If digital, please e-mail photos to chughes@scrantonpa.gov.

City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program Overview

The purpose of the City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program is to provide an incentive for private investment in exterior property improvements to commercial properties. While the city seeks to preserve and restore historic architecture through appropriate rehabilitation of historic properties, the grants are intended to foster image-making improvements to all properties regardless of their historic significance. The city encourages the use of the grants to bring substandard building conditions into compliance with basic health, safety, and building codes. The objective of the program is for completed projects to achieve visible results that contribute to the project area's image, marketability, and economic vitality.

In order to achieve maximum visual impact in the community, priority will be given to properties located within the Qualified Census Tract (QCT) and Disproportionately Impacted (DI) areas within the City as defined by Treasury.

Only external improvements are eligible. The grant cannot be used to pay for work that is currently in progress or completed.

Projects will be evaluated in terms of quality, design compatibility, and level of visual impact.

All property owners must be current on all of their Federal, State, County, School District, and Local Municipal taxes in order to be eligible. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide adequate proof that due taxes are fully paid. If a property owner is delinquent on taxes, tenants located within the property are also ineligible to receive a grant. A property shall be defined as having its own unique county tax map identification number.

In instances where multiple eligible small business owners share the same façade, it is encouraged that small business owners submit a joint application for upgrades to the shared façade. Joint applications that involve upgrades to the same façade but different small business storefronts will be eligible for an award up to \$20,000, with the same 25% match required by the pooled group of applicants.

A storefront facade shall be defined as having its own unique entrance and interior space. The facade is the front part of the building facing the street and has its address on that street. However, for the purposes of this grant opportunity, the façade will include the entirety of the face of the building from the ground up and other portions of the building visible from the street.

Properties that are for sale or condemned are ineligible for the grant.

City of Scranton Revitalization Project Footprint

Please note that priority will be given to properties located within the Qualified Census Tract (QCT) and Disproportionately Impacted (DI) areas.

[Please click here to visit the City's interactive map](#) to see if your business is in an eligible area and which partner organization you will work with for your grant.

If you have additional questions about whether your business is located in the QCT, please contact Christopher Hughes by email at chughes@scrantonpa.gov.

Terms of Grant Award

Awards are available up to \$10,000 with a 25% match required by applicants. In instances where multiple eligible small business owners share the same façade, it is encouraged that small business owners submit a joint application for upgrades to the shared façade. Joint applications that involve upgrades to the same façade, but different small business storefronts will be eligible for an award up to 20,000, with the same 25% match required by the pooled group of applicants.

Grants are made on a cost reimbursement basis, following a process of application, design, review, approval, and construction. Receipt of grant awards is contingent upon submittal of construction cost invoices from contractors or tradesmen licensed by the City of Scranton. The applicant must submit documentation to the Design Committee that substantiates the total and final cost of the work and documentation that substantiates the work is complete in order to receive reimbursement.

All work must be completed within three (3) months from the Notice to Proceed; otherwise, the grant will be forfeited. Applicants may request an extension in writing through the Design Committee who will have the ultimate discretion to extend the time for project completion.

Approved applicants will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Subrecipient (NeighborWorks NEPA, Scranton Tomorrow, or United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA). The MOU will be based upon the scope of work submitted as part of the formal application. All project change orders must be requested in writing to the design committee. Approval by the design committee must be obtained prior to conducting activities that in any way modify the agreed scope or cost of said activities. Failure to obtain approval from the design committee before the commencement of work relieves the Subrecipient from any obligation to make any payments to the approved applicant.

Any expenditure made by the Applicant which is not in accordance with the terms of the MOU may be disapproved, and payment to the applicant adjusted accordingly.

Payment will be made by the Subrecipient based on recommended approval from the Design Committee once all required documentation has been submitted.

All rehabilitation work financed in connection with the **City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program** must conform to the applicable requirements of the City of Scranton codes and regulations. Questions about City of Scranton codes and regulations should be referred to the Department of Code Enforcement at 340 N Washington Ave., Scranton PA., 570-348-4193 or online at <https://scrantonpa.gov/your-government/department-of-community-development/code-enforcement/>

General Design Guidelines

Where applicable all work must conform to U.S. Department of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings." These guidelines are available upon request or at [The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings \(nps.gov\)](#)

Grant applicants are strongly encouraged to use the services of design professionals. The Design Committee will facilitate compliance with the required design standards by providing technical and design assistance to grant applicants. Allocations of design services will be determined by the Design Committee based on applicant's need to comply with the principles below.

The projects must enhance the architectural quality of the building. The Historical Architecture Review Board will not consider any projects that require the removal of original historical elements from the property.

Generally, the following principles should guide an applicant in determining how to approach the design of a project.

- **CHARACTER** – It is the goal of this design program to see that each building is presented in its most appealing form and the original character of the building is preserved and enhanced. A property should be used for its

characteristic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires reasonable changes to the defining properties of the exterior of the building and its site and environment.

- **PRESERVATION**- Any existing or historical character of a property should be retained and preserved to the extent that it is feasible. The removal of historical materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property should be avoided.
- **CHANGE** – It is recognized that many properties have changed over time. Those changes that contribute to the significance of the architectural character in their own right should be retained and preserved.
- **HISTORY** – Each property should be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create an inaccurate sense of history will not be favored.
- **DETAILS** – Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property should be treated with respect.
- **COLORS** – The use of historic colors that will enhance the property is encouraged.
- **REPAIRS** – Features that have made a property unique and recognizable should be repaired when they have deteriorated, rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, material. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- **ALTERATIONS** – New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction should not destroy any historic materials that characterize a property. The new work shall be compatible with the size, scale, and architectural features that protect the characteristic integrity of the property and its environment.
- **SIGNAGE** – Signs play an important role in how a business is initially perceived. Not only are they a marketing tool, but they also set the appearance from a roadway. Signage should project an atmosphere that is welcoming and inviting to members of the community and visitors. Consistent signage adds to the character of the area in which it is located and should be considered to be a unifying factor in a town. Lighting should be external, using spotlights directed onto the sign. Neon signs will not be considered.

Eligible and Ineligible Activities

Major maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of commercial facades and storefronts are eligible activities. These activities must enhance the front of the building and could include a sidewalk from the property line to the front door. All improvements must conform to local zoning ordinances.

Special circumstances regarding eligible activities can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of eligible activities are:

- Brick and Stone Masonry: Structural repairs, cleaning, re-pointing, and painting
- Architectural Metals: Repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, duplication, and restoration of exterior building components.
- Doors and Upper Story Windows: Maintenance, repairs, replacement and restoration of window sash, exterior doors, and installation of storm windows in conjunction with other significant façade improvements.
- Exterior Woodwork: Maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of sills, window, and door frames, bulk heads, storefront and roof cornices, window hoods, and decorative moldings.
- Repair of unsafe sidewalks
- Storefronts: Removal of inappropriate coverings and additions, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of display and transom windows and lighting.
- Signage: Maintenance, repair, removal, and replacement in connection with real property improvements.
- Exterior Painting: Surface preparation, painting, and cleaning.
- Awnings: Installation, repair, and maintenance of fabric awnings, in connection with real property improvements.
- Exterior Lighting: External lighting fixtures, both for signage and building lighting.
- Various exterior improvements deemed acceptable by the design committee.
- Ineligible activities are Landscaping, new fences, retaining walls, site improvements, paving, parking lots, roofs.

Examples of ineligible activities are:

- Contributions to rainy day funds, financial reserves, or similar funds.
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments.
- Inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization and/or those that promote or inhibit religious interest.
- Lobbying, support of candidates for public office, or other political activities.
- Funding for programs or organizations that do not serve City of Scranton residents.
- Expenses reimbursed or eligible for reimbursement through any other contract or agreement with the City, including but not limited to City Small Business Assistance previously administered or CARES Act funding

ATTACHMENT A

Income Guidelines for Grant Match

The City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grants are available up to \$10,000 with a 25% match required by applicants. In instances where multiple eligible small business owners share the same façade, it is encouraged that small business owners submit a joint application for upgrades to the shared façade. Joint applications that involve upgrades to the same façade, but different small business storefronts will be eligible for an award up to 20,000, with the same 25% match required by the pooled group of applicants.

ATTACHMENT B

City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Application Evaluation Criteria

The Design Committee will evaluate Formal Applications for Façade Grants according to the following criteria:

- **Occupancy Status:** Is the property occupied by an operating business? Yes No
- **Neighborhood Location:** Is business property located within the QCT or DI? Yes No
- **Historical/Architectural Significance (XX%):** Will façade improvement preserve or enhance the historical or architectural features of the property?
- **Impact on Project Area (XX%):** Will façade improvement contribute to the neighborhood’s image, marketability and/or economic vitality?
- **Commitment (X%):** Has property owner demonstrated commitment to Scranton by residing in or operating a business in the project area for more than five years?
- **Add scoring criteria for DBE/MBE/WBE or VOSB certifications. Get clarity from Anser and Eileen.**



City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program Application Procedures

The City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program is a “first-come, first-served,” meaning all applications will be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis. If all grant funds are not allocated after the review of the Formal Applications, the application process will be reopened to eligible property owners until all funds have been allocated. The Program can be broken down into four phases that are designed to guide the applicant through the process step by step.

I. PROGRAM OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The major steps include:

- Applicants will submit Intent to Participate Form and photos of the property.
- The Design Committee will review Intent to Participate Forms.
- The Design Committee will review the forms to verify eligibility, review what types of projects have been submitted, and determine who is in need of design assistance.
- After review of the Intent to Participate Forms the due date will be established for all formal applications. All applicants will be notified in writing of the due date.

II. PROJECT DESIGN AND FORMAL APPLICATION

If determined necessary by the Subrecipient, applicants will use the services of a design professional. The Subrecipient will arrange for design assistance for applicants who do not have access to a design consultant. Allocations of design assistance will be determined by the Subrecipient based on criteria that it establishes.

The major steps include:

- The applicant will obtain rendering/sketch of proposed improvements and scope of work for bidding purposes, or provide a written scope of work with sufficient detail to outline improvements to the property.
- The applicant will obtain at least three bids from licensed contractors if work will cost more than \$21,900.
- The applicant will submit Formal Application for City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program to the Subrecipient with scope of work, three bids from licensed contractor (if required), project narrative (summary of work to be done, impact on property and neighborhood, and additional comments speaking to the value of this project) and matching fund verification by advertised application date. (Date will be set after all Intent to Participate Forms have been submitted and reviewed and the length of time required to provide the necessary design assistance is determined. All applicants will be notified in writing.)
- The Subrecipient will review Formal Applications and notify applicants in writing of the Committee decision to approve or deny allocation of grant funds.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL

All City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program applications and completed projects are subject to review and approval by the Design Committee. This committee will review applications and determine eligibility using the City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program Policies and Procedures and the City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program Grant Evaluation Criteria. (See Attachment B for Evaluation Criteria).

IV. PROJECT COMPLETION

Applicants for approved projects are responsible for securing all necessary permits required for construction. When all required permits have been obtained, the applicant must enter into a simple but formal Reimbursement Agreement with the Subrecipient that states all work must be completed per the approved application. Copies of all obtained permits must be submitted to the Design Committee prior to the execution of the Reimbursement Agreement. **The Reimbursement Agreement must be signed within 60 days of receiving approval of Formal Application. If not signed within this time period, the applicant will forfeit the grant award.** Included in the Reimbursement Agreement is the grantee's commitment to provide the Subrecipient with notification of the date the approved contractor begins the façade project and the contractor's estimated date of project completion.

Upon execution of the Reimbursement Agreement, the applicant will receive final instructions and a written Notice to Proceed from the Design Committee. **Work performed prior to receiving a written Notice to Proceed will not be eligible for reimbursement. Any unapproved deviations from the approved application will make the project ineligible for reimbursement.**

The applicant will have three months from the date of receiving the written Notice to Proceed to complete the project. Applicants may request an extension through the Design Committee who will have the ultimate discretion to extend the time for project completion.

The major steps include:

- Applicant obtains all required permits and submits copies to the Design Committee.
- Applicant signs Reimbursement Agreement.
- Applicant receives final instructions and written Notice to Proceed.
- Applicant's contractor constructs project.

IV. PROJECT REIMBURSEMENT

In order to receive reimbursement after project completion the applicant must submit documentation to the Design Committee that substantiates the total and final cost of the work. The applicant must also provide documentation that substantiates the work is complete, including invoices from the contractor, a copy of the receipt to verify that payment has been paid in full, and a current photo of the property. In lieu of a receipt showing payment in full, the applicant can submit a signed statement from the contractor agreeing to wait for full payment until applicant receives reimbursement from the City. Upon receipt and review of the aforementioned documentation a member of the Design Committee will visit the property to certify that the work has been completed in accordance with the approved application. The Design Committee will then recommend that reimbursement be made. The Subrecipient will then release the funding in the form of a reimbursement check to the applicant. **The process from the time project completion documentation is submitted until the time applicant receives the reimbursement check could take up to 8 weeks.**

The major steps include:

- Applicant submits cost and completion documentation (including invoice, receipt or from contractor, and photo) to Design Committee.
- Design Committee reviews documentation.
- Member of Design Committee certifies satisfactory work completion.
- Design Committee submits recommendation for reimbursement to the City.
- The City approves reimbursement requests and the Subrecipient distributes rebate checks to applicants.

For questions regarding the City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant Program please contact:

Christopher Hughes

Phone: (570) 878.8490

Email: chughes@scrantonpa.gov



Formal Application for City of Scranton Façade Improvement Grant

Application must be submitted by **September 20, 2023**, to be considered for this funding.

Applicant Information

Applicant's Name: _____

Applicant's Address: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Are you the owner of the property that is subject to the grant application? Yes No

If you answered "No" above, please complete the next section of the application.

If you answered "Yes," please continue to the Project Description field.

Property Owner's Name: _____

Property Owner's Address: _____

Property Owner's Phone: _____

Property Owner's Email: _____

