

DOWNTOWN GADSDEN INC.

FACADE AND SIGN INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM

In order to meet eligibility requirements, applicants must receive approval from DGI before work commences.

Purpose:

This is a competitive grant program that provides an economic incentive to:

- ▶ Renovate store facades in Gadsden's TIF/Urban Renewal/Urban Redevelopment Districts.
- ▶ Encourage good design projects, which capitalize on rehabilitation of existing properties paired with the introduction of compatible new design.
- ▶ Preserve unique historic character.
- ▶ Provide guidance and incentive for tasteful façade/sign renovation and replacement.

Eligibility:

1. Any owner or tenant of a building located within the TIF/Urban Renewal/Urban Redevelopment Districts.
2. According to federal government guidelines, churches or faith-based organizations may apply for and receive funding for only buildings or structures that do not house religious activities such as worship, religious instruction.
3. Owners or tenants may request incentive grants; however, any tenant must have the owner's written permission attached to the application.

Guidelines:

1. Improvements to building facades, signage and any other exterior material changes in appearance must be approved with a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) that follows the Design Review Guidelines of the City developed for each commercial district.
2. Rehabilitation of structures and signs should be considered with respect to the architectural integrity of the entire building front, retaining those elements that enhance the building.
3. All rehabilitation design proposals will meet with the code requirements of the City of Gadsden.
4. Any exterior renovation proposal -- from entire facade rehabilitation to maintenance items such as repainting or replacing building parts -- is eligible for funding but top priority will be given to projects which make a highly visible contribution to the commercial district in which it is located.

Examples of approved façade/sign work include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Removing of false fronts
- ▶ Cleaning of brick/stone fronts (chemical stripping, water wash, scraping)
- ▶ Re-painting
- ▶ Repair/replacement of windows and doors
- ▶ Installation of canvas awnings
- ▶ Re-pointing of brick
- ▶ Structural repair
- ▶ Installation of appropriate signs
- ▶ Historic reconstruction and replacement of original architectural details

Examples of items that cannot be funded, either in whole or part by grant program includes:

- ▶ Sandblasting of exterior brick
- ▶ Demolition of historic features
- ▶ Interior improvements
- ▶ Roof repairs

Criteria:

A property owner will be given special consideration to improve the building façade in order to attract new tenants. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and be subject to the availability of façade (not sign) grant funds, as well as the location of the subject property.

Any property owner or tenant may apply for the following incentive grants:

1. Grants for facades are given on the basis of a 50/50 match with a maximum grant of \$2,250 per building/business (**Subject to availability of funds**).
2. Grants for signs are given on the basis of a 50/50 match with a maximum grant of \$750 for all signs on any one building/business. (**Subject to availability of funds**).
3. Should the ownership and/or occupancy of a building change and further renovation work or signage changes are requested, additional grants may be considered.
4. Additional grants may be considered for prior grant projects if the initial grant did not reach the maximum allowable grant amount.
5. New businesses that qualify for a façade/sign grant must be open for one month before the grant award is paid.

Source of Funds:

Community Development Block Grant Funds through the City of Gadsden

Process for Receiving Grant:

1. If the property falls within a *Design Review District*, a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) must be completed by the applicant and approved by the Planning Department prior to submission of a façade/sign grant application. Design plans or sketches, owner's permission if necessary, samples of actual paint color(s), awning fabric, brick, etc. must be provided with the COA application. If the COA application is not approved, the owner/applicant may modify the application and resubmit the application with suggested changes.
2. Downtown Gadsden Inc., (DGI) staff will provide the façade/sign grant application and assist with completion.
3. The DGI staff reports the status of all applicants and façade/sign grant funds to the Community Development Department (CDBG) and the DGI Board of Directors.
4. **Upon completion of the project, copies of paid invoices and cancelled checks, money orders or cashier's checks must be submitted to DGI to verify the cost of the project. An invoice marked "paid cash" is NOT an acceptable proof of payment.**
5. Once work is completed, the DGI staff inspects the work and reports the completion to the Community Development Department by providing before and after photos of the project. A request for payment through CDBG is submitted by DGI and upon approval; CDBG issues a check for the grant. Checks will not be mailed. Recipients must sign for issued checks.
6. The project must be completed within **six** months after the applicant has been notified of the grant approval; however, the applicant may apply for an extension of the completion date from DGI. If an extension is not requested or granted, then the applicant must resubmit the grant application.

**DOWNTOWN GADSDEN INC.
FACADE AND SIGN INCENTIVE GRANT APPLICATION**

Name of Applicant _____

Property Address _____

Phone _____

Relationship to Applicant to Property: Owner () Occupant ()

Current Use or Business Name _____

Applicant Address _____

Description of Project _____

Total Costs:	Building	\$ _____	Grant Request	\$ _____
	Sign	\$ _____	Grant Request	\$ _____
			Total Grant Request	\$ _____

I understand that the incentive grant must be used for the project described in this application and that the project must be completed within six months after the date below.

Upon completion of the project, copies of paid invoices and cancelled checks, money orders or cashier's checks must be submitted to DGI to verify the cost of the project. An invoice marked "paid cash" is NOT an acceptable proof of payment.

Signature: _____
Applicant

Date: _____

Signature: _____
DGI

Date: _____