

**CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK
SMALL BUSINESS FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
DESCRIPTION & APPLICATION**

Purpose

The City of Highland Park recognizes the importance of independent merchants to the City’s image and tax base. The goal of the Small Business Facade Improvement Program (SBFIP) is to provide both assistance and incentive to property owners and local businesses to improve the look and functionality of their property and place of business. The SBFIP is available for use by small business operators and commercial property owners citywide.

A small business is defined as having a net worth of less than two million dollars, and as showing less than an average of two hundred thousand dollars in profit per year for two years after taxes. Owners of property are eligible when the subject property is occupied by a business that is a small business as defined in this document or, where such property owner has executed a lease agreement for future occupancy with a small business as defined in this document.

Program Goals

The program seeks to enhance Highland Park’s image as a retail, dining, and entertainment destination as well as to provide assistance to the independent merchant who may feel pressure from national and regional competition. By making a financial investment in those businesses that avail themselves of the SBFIP, the City will strengthen the competitive advantage of conducting business in Highland Park and strengthen the City’s sales tax base. Additional benefits include:

- Maintain a Healthy Mix of Commercial Establishments
- Maintenance of Community Character

Grant Description

The City’s contribution is a grant in the form of a rebate. Payment shall only be made after the project is complete and cost receipts are submitted to the City Manager’s Office and disbursement is approved by the City Council. The project must be completed within one hundred and twenty (120) days of approval of the application. Applications submitted subsequent to initiation or completion of eligible improvement(s) will be accepted no later than thirty (30) days after completion of such improvement(s).

If a business is the recipient of the City grant and goes out of business or moves out of Highland Park, the following pay back schedule will apply:

Term of Grant Expired	Less than 1 Year	1 - 2 Years	More than 2 Years
\$ Repaid to City	66%	33%	0%

The pay back schedule above applies to property owners if there is a change of use that results in the premises being occupied by a business that does not fit the definition of a small business.

Eligibility

The following prerequisites define eligibility:

- A small business located and operating within a commercial building in the City with a net worth of less than two million dollars, and showing less than an average of two hundred thousand dollars in profit per year for two years after taxes.
- Owners of property where the subject property is occupied by a business that is a small business as defined in this document or, where such property owner has executed a lease agreement for future occupancy with a small business as defined in this document.

Ineligibility

The following stipulations, without limitation, delineate under what circumstances a property owner or business owner would not qualify for the program:

- If the business in question moves to another location within the City of Highland Park they would not have to pay back the money but would not be eligible for the program for a period of five years.
- Recipients of the SBFIP would not be eligible to reapply to the program for a period of five years.

Financing Structure

Eligible owners of commercial/retail buildings and small business owners operating within a commercial/retail building may apply for a City grant that may reimburse up to 50% of the cost of approved improvement(s) to a maximum of \$5,000 per project.

Eligible Improvements

- Improvements must be located on, and visible from, the frontage of a building or right-of-way, and enhance the appearance of the building
- Removing excess facade materials
- Repairing damage from facade installation
- Repairing building deterioration and restoring original building materials
- Building cleaning (acid or pressure wash, or steam cleaning and tuck pointing)
- Installing new awnings / signage
- Making exterior accessibility improvements
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring exterior doors
- Repairing or upgrading exterior lighting
- Painting exterior
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring graphics (permanent)
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring gutters
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring that portion of a roof, directly above a building frontage
- Installing new, replacing, repainting, or restoring of permanent signs
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring of trash enclosures, but only if undertaken as part of a comprehensive facade improvement project

- Replacing or repainting of windows
- Eligible Improvements shall also include Architect's and Contractor's Fees related specifically and exclusively to an Eligible Improvement.

Ineligible Improvements

- New construction, which is defined as any alteration or enlargement of a building that requires removal of more than 40% of the total linear feet of the existing exterior walls of the building measured around the exterior perimeter of the building
- Interior construction, renovation, and improvements of any kind including, without limitation, interior accessibility improvements

Application Review and Approval Process

- Applicant must submit to the Office of Business Development a completed application on a form developed by the Business and Economic Development Commission, which is available through City staff along with:
 - 2 itemized cost estimates or quotes from qualified, licensed contractors for all eligible improvement(s)
 - Electronic version of a picture of the existing façade
 - Electronic version of a picture of the proposed project area
 - Electronic version of a professional rendering of the improvement(s) within the context of the subject area
 - Once the project is completed, an electronic version of one picture of the improvement(s) and one picture of the improvement(s) within the context of the subject area
- Applications submitted subsequent to initiating improvement(s) will be accepted within 30 days after completion
- Applications will be reviewed by staff within 15 days of submission to determine eligibility
- Priority will be given to those projects that exhibit a clear and substantial public benefit
- If eligible, staff will notify applicant of time, date, and place of the public meeting at which the application will be considered
- Staff will present the application to the Committee of the Whole for consideration and approval
- Staff will prepare and schedule presentation of the application to the Committee of the Whole for consideration and approval
- The Committee of the Whole meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month
- Applicant or it's designee must be present at all public meetings at which the proposed façade projects will be discussed
- The City Council has final authority to approve the disbursement of the rebate
- If an application is approved, the applicant is responsible for future maintenance of the eligible improvement(s) installed pursuant to the program
- Applicant agrees to repair any damage to any public right-of-way that may be caused by or in connection with the installation of the eligible improvement(s)

- Applicant agrees not to apply for another grant for the same building within five years of the City's approval of the grant
- Applicant may not alter or tear down the eligible improvement(s) installed pursuant to this program
- Construction must be completed within 120 days from the effective date
- An extension may be granted, provided the applicant has applied for the proper City permits within 30 days of the approval letter, if there is difficulty obtaining the issuance of these items in a timely fashion, the applicant may formally request an extension in writing, and provide copies of all permit applications to the Office of Business Development along with an explanation of the basis for why such an extension should be granted.
- Failure to complete such work within the 120 day deadline without applying for and being granted an extension shall, constitute a material breach of the program requirements resulting in the withdrawal of funding for the applicant's project without further notice of any kind.
- Upon completion of the project, applicant must contact the Building Division to schedule an inspection of the improvement(s), and notify the Office of Business Development staff of the inspection date.
 - Office of Business Development staff will contact the Building Division to confirm that the project was satisfactorily completed and in compliance with the program's guidelines, and the pre-approved plans.
 - Once compliance with the program's guidelines is confirmed, the applicant will be notified and, from that date, has 60 days in which to submit paid invoices and cancelled checks from the selected contractor that shows all work has been paid in full. Failure to do so will result in the applicant forfeiting the award.
 - Payment will be made to the grantee after the project is completed as agreed and approved per the final inspection, and all cost receipts and applicable lien waivers are submitted by the property owner or business owner to the Office of Business Development and reviewed and approved by City staff, and disbursement is approved by the City Council.

**CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK
SMALL BUSINESS FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

**City of Highland Park
Office of Business Development
1707 St. Johns Avenue
Highland Park, Illinois 60035
(847) 926-1027**

Project Location: _____

Type of Business Activity: _____

Applicant Name: _____

Address, City, State, Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

If Other Than Applicant, Property Owner's Name: _____

Address, City, State, Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

Describe Proposed Improvement(s) to Building:

Amount of Grant Requested:

Describe how the Proposed Improvement(s) will Advance the Goals of this Program:

All application materials must be submitted to the Office of Business Development along with the application. Partial applications will not be accepted.

Please provide the following materials with your completed application at the time of your submission:

- The property owner’s written consent on the application form to implement the improvement(s) and participate in the program
- A professional rendering of improvement(s) within the context of the subject area
- An electronic picture of the existing façade, landscape, or area to be improved
- An electronic picture of the proposed project area
- Once the improvement(s) is/are completed, one electronic picture of the improvement(s), and one electronic picture of the improvement(s) within the subject area
- Two written itemized competitive cost estimates from qualified, licensed contractors must be obtained for all eligible expenditures proposed under this program

The Applicant _____ asserts that the preceding information is true, correct, and will comply with all City regulations applicable to this program. The applicant fully understands that the City Manager’s Office can make no variances to the guidelines, or requirements, except as authorized in writing. The applicant fully understands that if his/her project at any time fails to meet federal regulations or municipal ordinances; he/she will be ineligible for a rebate and agrees to forfeit all rights pursuant to the acquisition or recovery of any claims or damages regarding those funds. The applicant also agrees to comply with the program guidelines in the Small Business Façade Improvement Program Ordinance and Program Description. The applicant agrees that in the event of their breach of any condition or provision, as described in the Small Business Facade Improvement Program Ordinance and Description, the City of Highland Park has the right to terminate this agreement, on thirty (30) days notice and to cancel this agreement, without prejudice to any other rights or remedies of the City. The applicant understands that he/she must submit detailed cost documentation, including canceled checks, bills, copies of building permits, and professional rendering. If the applicant is other than the property owner, written consent by the property owner must be provided below.

Applicant	Applicant’s Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

If the Applicant is other than the owner of the building, the following line must be completed:

I certify that I, the trustee and or owner of the property at _____ give the above signed applicant authority to implement improvement(s) at the above property, as may be required under the Small Business Facade Improvement Program Improvement Program.

Property Owner’s Name	Property Owner’s Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____