



Facade Improvement Program

A. Introduction

The **Small Business Program** is designed to stimulate the establishment of new Covington businesses and help existing Covington businesses expand. Our competitive program awards funding to projects that support small business growth, create jobs, leverage private investment, and will be catalytic for our community.

The façade improvement program offers property owners a 50% matching forgivable loan (up to \$6,000) in order to update their commercial building’s façade. It’s the perfect way to update lighting, windows, painting, signage and other exterior building improvements visible from the street.

Applications are reviewed quarterly. You are required to schedule a meeting with our Historic Preservation Specialist to discuss your project BEFORE applying. This applies to ALL applicants, even if the building is not historic or located in an Historic Preservation Overlay zone. All proposals are due by the final submission deadline and must have the required attachments in order to be considered.

	Deadline to Meet with Preservation Specialist	Final Submission Deadline
Round 1	July 17, 2020	July 31, 2020
Round 2	October 16, 2020	October 30, 2020
Round 3	January 15, 2021	January 29, 2021
Round 4	April 16, 2021	April 30, 2021

Please send a complete application to the Program Administrator. The City staff review all applications and recommends funding awards based on the criteria in the program guidelines and rating sheet. City staff will evaluate the strength of an application based on the Rating Sheets attached as Exhibit A. Depending upon funding availability and the strength of individual applicants utilizing the evaluation criteria, City staff can choose to recommend applicants to City Commission for final approval. If City Staff recommends funding for your project, the Program Administrator will then present your project to Commission for final approval. Funding agreements will be executed following Commission approval. **CONSTRUCTION STARTED PRIOR TO A SIGNED FAÇADE LOAN AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT.** After an agreement is signed, façade projects must complete construction within 6 months to be eligible for reimbursement. **Submission of an application is not a guarantee of funding.**

Submit applications to:
Ross Patten, Program Administrator
Phone: 859.292.2144
Email: rpatten@covingtonky.gov
Mail: 20 West Pike Street
Covington, KY 41011

B. Eligibility

Applicants must meet all of the following requirements in order to be considered eligible to receive a façade incentive under the Small Business Program:

- a) Applicant must own a commercial property located within the City of Covington to apply for the Façade Improvement Program.
- b) The property owner must be properly licensed to operate within the City of Covington, KY, Kenton County and Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the property must meet all City of Covington zoning requirements, and meet all local and state building and health code requirements where applicable.
- c) The property owner must at all times be in compliance with City of Covington Good Standing Ordinance. Pursuant to Commissioners' Ordinance O-11-06, applicants and affiliated persons and/or entities for this program must not have made or filed pending adverse claims against the City in the form of settlement demands and/or lawsuits; nor shall they be delinquent on their obligations to pay loans, fines, liens, or other obligations owed to the City.

C. Eligible Costs

Expenses incurred prior to execution of an agreement with the City **are not eligible** for reimbursement and all invoices/expenses must be constructed, billed, and submitted for reimbursement within the contract's term.

- a) The maximum forgivable loan is \$6,000 and can be used in two different ways:
 - **Exterior Only**: This 50/50 match option maximizes exterior improvements. The forgivable loan will reimburse the investment made by the building owner on a \$1 to \$1 basis up to \$12,000 in total project cost. The maximum total incentive per property is \$6,000.00.
 - **Interior & Exterior**: If a commercial building is vacant and needs to be whiteboxed* in order to attract a commercial tenant, this 50/50 option allows the private match to go into the interior to prepare a space for rent, rather than just on the building's exterior. The forgivable loan will reimburse the investment made by the building owner on a \$1 to \$1 basis up to \$12,000 in total project cost. The maximum total incentive per business is \$6,000.00.
 - **City funds will be spent exclusively on exterior improvements (up to \$6,000), but the property owner can document up to \$6,000 worth of interior improvements to be eligible for a full forgiveness of the loan.**
 - 'White Box' is a term used for a type of finish in commercial real estate with an unfinished interior and does not include: interior walls (other than code required restrooms), wall coverings, paint, flooring, plumbing fixtures (other than code required restrooms and drinking fountains), upgraded electrical fixtures, and upgraded code required

restroom fixtures. A white box is ready for tenant improvements (TI's), which are to be completed once the lease agreement has been negotiated and executed.

- The Interior & Exterior option will only be available if agreed upon by City prior to entering into the Façade Loan Agreement. All approved interior expenses shall be listed in the Agreement. No prior interior improvements are eligible to be counted toward the private match before the contract's execution.
- b) Eligible façade improvements include material and labor expenses related to the painting of the façade, restoring storefronts, improving exterior lighting, windows, signage or awning, tuck-pointing and cornice repairs, etc. Roofs are an ineligible expense. This program is designed to encourage improvements to the overall appearance and condition of commercial and mixed use structures, and although new or enhanced signage may be included, projects which are exclusively focused on signage or awnings are not eligible. Public funds should not be spent on easily removeable fixtures (such as flower boxes), although the owner's private match may be used for such fixtures.
- c) After approval and contract execution, approved participants will oversee the entire construction process. Applicants must complete construction, pay all contractors, and submit for reimbursement within 6 months after the contract's execution in order to be eligible for reimbursement.
- d) Applicants will submit one pay application requesting reimbursement for eligible expenses, which will include:
- A signed "Project Completion Certification" form certifying that the expenses were incurred and were in accordance with the agreement
 - All contractor invoices submitted for reimbursement, which should be dated and itemized so staff can review all expenses (materials vs labor) at the property.
 - Cancelled checks for all payments made to contractors.

D. General Program Requirements

- ❖ Source of Funds: All sources of funds for the project must be identified when the application is submitted to the City and in place at the time of the award agreement.
- ❖ Vacant Properties: Applications involving vacant properties should demonstrate that the improvements will help attract a commercial tenant within the next 12 months and the future user will diversify the business district's commercial offerings and create jobs in the neighborhood. The owner must agree to actively market all vacant spaces, including creating a free listing on the City's CoStar commercial database, installing a "for lease" sign in each vacant commercial space, signing up for the City's real estate leads email blast, and make reasonable accommodations to show the property to all qualified commercial prospects.
- ❖ Construction: Applicants will oversee the entire construction process. Applicant must utilize professional contractors, and work cannot be done "in house" using applicant's own employees. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, applicants shall ensure that

construction is completed, all contractors were paid, and submit a final pay application to the City for reimbursement within 6 months after the contract's execution.

- ❖ **Site Visits:** City staff will conduct a site visit before and after construction. Staff may also conduct unannounced site visits periodically in order to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement.
- ❖ **Repayment terms:** The monitoring period is 3 years. Full repayment is required should the property owner sell the property within 3 years.
- ❖ **Façade Contractors:** Part of the City's rating sheet criteria is preference for using local Covington contractors. The City does not recommend specific companies, however a list of local contractors who have asked to be on a reference list is available upon request. NOTE: This is an excellent way to increase the score of your application, if available. Also, please be aware that substitution for non-local Covington Contractor's after an application has been approved may result in a 50% reduction of the eligible reimbursement amount.

E. The Application Process

- 1) **Presubmittal Meeting:** All applicants MUST meet with the Historic Preservation Specialist to review their project before submitting an application. Applicants should bring current photos of the façade(s) and drawings of the proposed alterations and signage to the meeting. To schedule a meeting, please call Christopher Myers, Historic Preservation Specialist at (859) 292 – 2171 or email at cmyers@covingtonky.gov by the required deadline. **Please, no drop-ins.**
- 2) **Schedule:** After submitting an application, applicants will hear back from the Project Administrator within three weeks about whether they have been recommended for funding or not. If an applicant has been recommended for funding, it will be forwarded to City Commission for final approval. Altogether, it takes about a month and a half after submitting before construction can begin.
- 3) **Application:** Due to the competitive nature of this program, the City will not accept incomplete applications. The required checklist is below:
 - Completed and signed application
 - All contractor quotes, bids, and drawings of proposed improvements
 - Attach evidence of financing/equity equal to the total project cost (bank letter or checking account statement).
 - Design Recommendations from Historic Preservation Specialist
 - Evidence of women, minority, or veteran-ownership, if applicable.
 - Completed W-9
- 4) **Application Evaluation Criteria:** This is a competitive incentive program. Applicants

should review the rating sheet and demonstrate why their project should receive city funding. This is your opportunity to stand out from the crowd. Submission of an application is not a guarantee of funding. The City's Incentive Review Group will evaluate the strength of an application based on the Rating Sheets attached as Exhibit A. Depending upon funding availability and the strength of individual applicants, The City's Incentive Review Group can choose to recommend applicants to City Commission for final approval.

- 5) **Appeals:** If an applicant is not recommended for funding, applicants may appeal their request directly to the City Manager, who has the final determination.

- 6) **Conflict of Interest:** Applicants shall ensure a conflict of interest does not exist. A conflict of interest exists if an applicant is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, elected or appointed official to the City of Covington, and if the applicant: exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to funds for this program, or participates in the decision-making process related to funds for this program, or is in a position to gain inside information with regard to program activities. If a conflict of interest exists, the applicant may not obtain assistance under this program. If there is any doubt of the conflict of interest, a written waiver may be obtained from the City of Covington. Additionally, the prohibition against conflicts of interest, gratuities and kickbacks in KRS 45A.455 are specifically incorporated herein. By submitting an application, the Applicant warrants that no conflict of interest exists.

F. Program Agreement

An executed agreement between the applicant and the City is required in order for the applicant to receive fund disbursements.

The City of Covington, Kentucky is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and encourages the participation of minority and female business enterprises (M/WBE) and Section 3 entities.

Exhibit A

Small Business Program Facade Improvement Rating Sheet

Applicant: _____ **FOR REFERENCE ONLY – DO NOT FILL OUT** _____

Address of Structure (Location of Façade Improvement): _____

Business District / Neighborhood: _____

Project Rating Categories	Score =	TOTAL
1. Project is “Ready To Go” (4 points are possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available funds/bank letter (1 point)• All quotes and selected contractors identified (3 points)	=	_____
2. Amount of matching facade investment (4 points are possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <2:1 = 1 point• 2:1 = 2 points• 3:1 = 3 points• >3:1 = 4 points	=	_____
3. Shop Local (4 points are possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Hires Covington contractors/businesses (0-4 points)	=	_____
4. Design (2 points are possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If inside of a HPO zone or Chapter 99, does the project have a COA or staff recommendation for a COA? (2 points)• If outside of a HPO or Chapter 99 zone, has the project incorporated staff design recommendations? (2 points)	=	_____
5. Impact on unused or underutilized property (4 points are possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Filling a vacancy after <3 months (1 point)• Filling a vacancy after 3-6 months (2 points)• Filling a vacancy after 6-12 months (3 points)• Filling a vacancy after > 1 year <u>or supports an existing business</u> (4 points)	=	_____
6. Project’s Neighborhood Impact (6 points are possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood need for reinvestment (up to 4 points)• Highly visible location, ex. corner store (2 points)	=	_____
7. Women, Minority, or Veteran-owned (2 bonus points) <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Evidence of women, minority, or veteran-ownership attached.	=	_____

(26 points are possible) TOTAL SCORE: _____



Façade Improvement Program

2020-2021 Application

Legal Owner of Property: _____ Application Date: _____

Project Address: _____

Applicant Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Applicant's Occupational License Number: _____ IRS Tax EIN: _____

Women, minority, or veteran-ownership?: _____

Business Tenant Name (if applicable): _____

Will the business be adding any additional jobs? _____

Description of Project (attach separate page if necessary): _____

Description of how improvements will benefit the tenant and business district (attach separate page if necessary): _____

Scope of Work & Budget

Itemized Costing of Exterior Improvements:

Windows	\$ _____
Painting	\$ _____
Lighting	\$ _____
Signage	\$ _____
Rebuild Storefront	\$ _____
Cornices	\$ _____
Flower Boxes	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Sources of Funding

Private Funds: \$ _____ City's Contribution: \$ _____

Exterior Private to Public Leverage Match: _____ : 1

Are you also privately making interior improvements? If so, how much? \$ _____

****SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF FUNDING****



Façade Improvement Program

2020-2021 Application

Is the Project Ready to Go?

Project Construction Start Date: _____ Est. Completion Date: _____

Shop Local:

Are you utilizing a Covington contractor? If so, list? _____

Design & Visibility:

Does the project comply with the city's historic design guidelines? _____

Vacancy: Has the property been previously vacant? If so, estimate how long? _____

Are you receiving grant assistance from any other governmental agencies? Yes | No

If yes, list any additional grant sources and amounts: _____

CERTIFICATION AND WAIVER OF PRIVACY

I, the undersigned, applicant(s) certify that all information presented in this application, and all of the information furnished in support of the application, is given for the purpose of obtaining a grant or forgivable loan under the City of Covington Small Business Program, and it is true and complete to the best of the applicant(s) knowledge and belief. The applicant(s) further certifies that he/she is aware of the fact that he/she can be penalized by fine and/or imprisonment for making false statements or presenting false information.

I understand that this application is not a guarantee of grant assistance. Should my application be approved, I understand that the City of Covington may at its sole discretion discontinue subsidy payments or reimbursement at any time for cause.

I hereby give my consent to the City of Covington, its agents and contractors to examine any confidential information given herein. I further grant permission, and authorize any bank, employer or other public or private entity or agency to disclose information deemed necessary to complete this application.

I understand that this grant agreement is subject to conditions in the attached Small Business Guidelines and dependent on an executed contract with the City of Covington.

I understand that if this application and the information furnished in support of the application are found to be incomplete, it will not be processed.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

****SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF FUNDING****



Façade Improvement Program

2020-2021 Application

Supporting Documentation Checklist

Your application packet must include the following documentation:

- Scheduled and met with Historic Preservation Specialist by the deadline
- Completed and signed application
- Attach all contractor quotes, bids, and drawings of proposed improvements.
- Attach proof of financing/equity equal to the total project cost
- Attach evidence of women, minority, or veteran-ownership, if applicable.
- Attach completed W-9 for the property owner

****SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF FUNDING****