

**PROGRAM GUIDE FOR CITY OF PORT COLBORNE
DOWNTOWN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT COMMUNITY
IMPROVEMENT PLAN FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

This guide may be used by persons wishing to apply for Community Improvement Plan funding for the incentive programs offered under the Downtown Central Business District Community Improvement Plan by the City of Port Colborne.

Further Information:

For more information regarding the Facade Improvement Grant Program please contact:

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Program Description

The purpose of the Facade Improvement Grant Program is to provide a financial incentive in the form of a grant to promote the rehabilitation, restoration and improvement of the front, rear and side facades of commercial, institutional and mixed use (which includes commercial/residential, commercial/institutional and other mixed uses which contain a commercial use) buildings, including retail storefront display areas and signage.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. *Who can apply?*

Only owners of properties (and tenants with written authorization from owners) within the Port Colborne Downtown Central Business District (CBD) Community Improvement Plan Project Area that meet the program eligibility requirements may apply. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application.

The City retains the right and absolute discretion to reject an application received from a person or corporation which in the opinion of the City or its professional advisers, does not possess the experience, financial, technical, personnel or other resources that may be required to carry out the obligations that the applicant proposes to assume under the terms of its application and grant agreement.

2. *How does the program work?*

The program is structured as a matching grant where the City will provide a grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible facade and storefront improvement and restoration works, up to a maximum grant per property/project of \$10,000.00.

At the discretion of Council, the grant can be increased by up to \$5,000.00 per property/project to a maximum grant of \$15,000.00 per property/project for properties/projects that are designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

At the discretion of Council, a separate grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible side and/or rear facade improvement and restoration works to commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings up to a maximum grant per property/project of \$5,000.00 may be provided where said rear and/or side facades are highly visible.

3. *What types of works are eligible for funding?*

The following types of facade rehabilitation, restoration and improvement works on commercial, institutional and mixed use (commercial/residential, commercial/institutional and other mixed uses containing commercial uses) buildings are considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- a) Repair or replacement of storefront including, repair or replacement of storefront doors and windows;
- b) Repair and reappointing of facade masonry and brickwork;

- c) Repair or replacement of cornices, parapets, eaves and other architectural details;
- d) Repair or replacement of awnings or canopies;
- e) Facade painting and cleaning/treatments;
- f) Addition of new lighting/upgrading or existing fixtures on exterior facade and in entrance and storefront display areas;
- g) Installation/improvement of signage (as permitted by the Sign By-law);
- h) Landscaping, including plant materials (to a maximum of 15% of the approved grant amount);
- i) Architectural/design fees required for eligible works (to a maximum of 10% of the grant amount);
- j) Other similar repairs/improvements may be approved; and
- k) **items a) through j) above** as they apply to side facades and rear facades that are highly visible.

In addition to the eligible costs specified above, the following types of building facade improvement works on commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are also considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- a) Works that conserve or enhance elements specified in the “Regions for Designation” accompanying and designating by-law under the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
- b) Original siding and roofing materials including repair and reappointing of masonry buildings, stucco repair, repair or replacement of original roofing materials (slate, wood shingles, tile, etc);
- c) Removal of modern materials and replacement with documented original materials;
- d) Reconstruction or construction of former and significant architectural features for which the appearance can be clearly determined from documentary sources (photographs, drawings etc.);
- e) Cleaning of masonry buildings if it is necessary for the building’s preservation;
- f) All final finishes such as paint and masonry are eligible for funding subject to approval; and
- g) Works required to maintain or preserve significant architectural features.



4. *What conditions must be met to be eligible for a grant?*

In addition to the General Program Requirements, the following specific requirements must also be met:

- a) Eligible works must conform to the City's Downtown Central Business District Facade Design Guidelines, as amended from time to time, and appropriate reference material as determined by Staff;
- b) For buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, the facade restoration and improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed;
- c) The applicant will be required to submit at least two cost estimates from bona fide licensed contractors, including a breakdown of costs; and
- d) Construction of all proposed improvements is to be completed within one (1) year of the date of the approval of the grant. If the work is not completed within one (1) year, the grant approval will cease and the grant will not be paid.

5. *Is there a fee to apply?*

No.

6. *When will the grant funds be advanced?*

The grant will be advanced in full only when:

- a) A Grant Agreement has been signed and executed;
- b) Construction is complete;
- c) The building has been inspected by Staff; and
- d) The applicant provides proof that all contractors have been paid.

7. *What are the default provisions?*

The default provisions are contained in the Grant Agreement. Payment of the grant may be cancelled if:

- a) Property taxes are more than three (3) months in arrears;
- b) The building is demolished or any of the heritage features are altered in any way that would compromise the “Reason for Designation”;
- c) The applicant declares bankruptcy;
- d) The applicant uses the grant for works that are not eligible for this program;
- e) The applicant fails to maintain the improvements as required in the Grant Agreement; and
- f) The applicant is in default of any of the provisions of the Grant Agreement.

8. *How do I apply for a grant?*

In order to apply for a grant, an applicant must arrange for a pre-application meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope or work, project timing etc.

Once authorized to apply for a grant, the applicant must complete and submit an application form, ensuring that all required signatures have been provided and that the application is accompanied by all required documentation as shown on the required documents list.

9. *What happens next?*

The following is a basic outline of what occurs, once the application is submitted:

- a) Application and supporting documentation are reviewed by staff to ensure that they meet all of the eligibility requirements. If your application does not meet the eligibility requirements, you will be notified of this in writing.

*Staff may request clarification or additional supporting documentation.

- b) Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the property (as required).
- c) A recommendation on the grant application is made by Staff and forwarded to the appropriate approval authority.
- d) If your application is approved, the Grant Agreement is then executed by the City. A copy of the executed agreement(s) is then returned to you for your records.
- e) Construction of the approved works may now commence, subject to the issuance of any building permits (as required).



- f) Upon completion of the works Staff will conduct a final site visit(s) and inspection(s), as required to ensure compliance with the Grant Agreement and any permits pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- g) Submit to the City, copies of paid invoices and “after” pictures of the completed works.
- h) Upon review and approval of all submitted documentation, the City will issue a grant cheque to the applicant for the full amount of the approved funding.

For further information on this program please visit our website at
www.portcolborne.ca/page/Downtown_CBD_CIP

Or contact Amy Dayboll at 905-835-2901 x 204 or via email at
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