



CITY OF MADISON
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
Building and beautifying Madison, one storefront at a time



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Economic Development Division

215 Martin Luther King Jr., Boulevard

Craig Wilson, 266-6557

cwilson@cityofmadison.com

website address: www.cityofmadison.com/facadegrant

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Attractive building facades support and encourage local businesses. They can have a significant effect on the attractiveness and marketability of the surrounding area. To encourage business owners to reinvest in the downtown and smaller, neighborhood business areas, the City of Madison is offering grants to assist in the exterior renovations of these otherwise sound and vital properties.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Property owners of service or commercial/mixed-use structures and building tenants, with leases of more than one year in length, located within the target area, are eligible for funding. Governmental entities and public and quasi-public authorities are ineligible for funding.

Property Eligibility Requirements

Properties that are used in whole or part for service or commercial activities are eligible for funding. The program is intended to assist projects that promote retail activities, create an attractive environment, encourage neighborhood character and architectural design, use quality materials, and incorporate good design concepts. Projects meeting these objectives are eligible for a grant for up to one half the cost of facade improvements.

In order to qualify, applicants cannot start on their project until after receiving the necessary approvals. If work begins before application or approval, the City cannot fund the project with Facade Improvement Grants.

Target Area

- Properties located in the Central Business Improvement District
- King Street
- 300, 400, and 500 blocks of East Wilson Street
- Williamson Street
- Atwood Avenue
- South Park Street
- East Johnson Street
- Regent Street
- All of Monroe Street
- Winnebago Street
- Lakeside Street
- Old University Avenue from Chestnut Street to Farley Avenue
- Sherman Avenue
- All commercially zoned City designated historic landmarks in the City of Madison

Please see the attached maps for more detail on the exact areas.

Grant Amount

Grants will be provided in an amount up to 50% of the total project cost, to a maximum of \$10,000 per street facing facade. Maximum amounts would range to \$10,000 for a single facade, \$20,000 for a building with two facades, and \$25,000 for “flatiron” buildings. The owner/tenant must use private, non-City funds to match the City’s Grant.

Eligible Costs

Grants may be used for comprehensively restoring or substantially beautifying, or enhancing the entire facade or elevation of a commercial building. Eligible items include uncovering and restoring historical facades, removing existing facade materials and replacing them with more appropriate and attractive designs and materials, and other detailing which leads to a substantially enhance appearance.

Although not eligible for funding on their own, the following may be funded as part of a more comprehensive facade improvement: windows, doors, exterior cleaning, tuckpointing, painting, exterior lighting, shutters, gutters, awnings, and historical architectural elements. The program will fund projects that significantly improve the visual appearance of the property from the street. Design and permit fees associated with the construction are also eligible project costs.

Ineligible Costs

The cost of new construction, repair or replacement of a roof, work to an alley facade, work that principally involves minor repairs, painting or maintenance, billboards, landscaping or paving are not eligible under the grant program.

Grant Requirements

Projects must be started within 30 days of approval and completed within 120 days. Extensions to the 120-day completion period may be granted for inclement weather, or the ordering of special building materials. The applicant must request an extension in writing. The City will notify the applicant in writing of its approval or denial.

The owner/tenant shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Madison General Ordinances concerning equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs and practices in connection with the construction work being completed using loan funds. The owner/tenant shall assist and actively cooperate with the City in obtaining the compliance of contractors with such provisions of the Ordinances, and with the rules, regulations and relevant orders issued by the City pursuant to such provisions of the Ordinances.

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Processing Steps

Step 1 Applications must be submitted to the Economic Development Division, 215 Martin Luther King Jr., Boulevard, Room 312, P.O Box 2983, Madison 53701-2983 along with a \$100 application fee. Checks should be made payable to the City of Madison. An application from a tenant must include a copy of the lease and written approval from the owner. Applications must include photographs of the facades to be improved.

- Step 2** A City staff team will visit the site to discuss the proposed improvements. If the proposal meets the requirements of the Facade program, a Conditional Letter of Approval will be sent to the owner/tenant. This letter may require modifications or changes to the original proposal.
- Step 3** The applicant must submit plans and drawings to the Urban Design Commission (UDC) and, if necessary, to the City agencies including the Landmarks Commission, Plan Commission, Traffic Engineering and Zoning Board of Appeals. City staff will let the applicant know of any requirements beyond that of the UDC.
- Step 4** The applicant will then submit approved drawings and cost estimates to the Economic Development Division for review.
- Step 5** The Economic Development Division will prepare the appropriate resolutions for Board of Estimates and Common Council action.
- Step 6** Following approval by the Board of Estimates and Common Council, the Economic Development Division will prepare and furnish the applicant with the grant agreement.
- Step 7** The applicant must sign the grant agreement and return to the City.
- Step 8** The applicant must obtain permits for the required work. The applicant must display the sign provided by the City on the site indicating “Financing provided in part by the City of Madison Facade Improvement Grant Program.”
- Step 9** The applicant pays for the completed construction work and submits paid receipts and lien waivers from the contractors to the Economic Development Division.
- Step 10** Following a final inspection, the Economic Development Division authorizes a check for the approved amount.