



CITY OF PORTLAND  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
**FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Completed applications on forms provided with all required attachments, must be submitted 45 – 90 days prior to the anticipated project start date.

**IMPORTANT: If façade improvements begin prior to funding approval, an applicant will not be eligible for reimbursement.** Please note that all incentive-funded improvements must be permanent and fixed in type and/or nature. Improvements must meet all City of Portland code requirements including zoning, building, and safety codes

**PURPOSE** It is a fundamental goal of the Portland City Council and the Portland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to promote economic growth and vitality in the downtown. The Portland Downtown Façade Improvement Program has been ongoing since 2003 to encourage business and property owners to improve and maintain building facades in Portland’s historic downtown area to facilitate economic activity and promote a positive image of the central business district.

Portland’s Façade Improvement Program seeks to offer assistance to alter and improve the overall appearance of a buildings façade and maintain / restore historic characteristics. Although it is not the intent or purpose of the program to subsidize routine building maintenance projects, there are some projects requiring attention with a need for financial assistance. Therefore, a separate reimbursement incentive is being offered to building owners to offset the cost of repainting / repairing outlined elements of building facades. Buildings which started in good condition and have been neglected over time by the same owner(s) may not be eligible.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING** The program is sponsored by the City of Portland (hereinafter "City") and the Downtown Development Authority (hereinafter "DDA"). The source of funding for the program is tax increment financing revenue (hereinafter “TIF”) made available under Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975 as amended. Annual funding allocations for the program are recommended by the DDA for approval by the City Council. The programs described herein are contingent upon availability of budgeted funds and will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Funding will be awarded based on improvement selection criteria. The DDA Design Team and the DDA Director have the responsibility for administering the program.

**DESIGN CRITERIA** *Please reference Portland Façade Improvement Guidelines (online link) as well as this document outline. Façade projects shall reflect the renderings presented to and approved by the Portland Design Team. Architectural renderings may be completed by Architect / Builder / Designer secured by applicant.*

**Rehabilitation** is the most frequently approved approach to façade improvement and acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property’s historic character. It is encouraged by Portland DDA whenever possible to follow the [Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation](#).

Other approaches or treatments include:

**Restoration:** depicting a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

**Reconstruction:** re-creating vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

**Preservation:** focusing on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

**IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENTS AVAILABLE:** Financial assistance is available in the form of a reimbursement to the property owner/applicant after work is completed. A single distribution of funds will occur per applicant once work is complete, photos of completed project and proof of payment in full to contractors are provided to the DDA. Two reimbursement programs are available:

**Rehabilitation, Restoration, Reconstruction.** Maximum reimbursement incentive funding, based on the degree the project meets historic standards, is a match of up to \$10,000 for a defined primary façade (attached directly to sidewalk or boardwalk), up to \$5,000 for a second public façade on same property, and up to \$3,000 if there is a third public façade on the property. Additional Primary façade, second and third public facades are considered on a case by case basis and can be applied for within the same application, or within 10 years of the original application. Any previous facade incentive projects awarded to the applicant for this or another property must show proper maintenance and care before additional façade incentive applications will be considered. Façade incentives are provided on a 50%/50% ratio. The applicant must invest at least one half (50% match) of the total project cost to receive reimbursement for the other half from the DDA. The minimum funding allowable for any project is \$1,000.

**Preservation – (single or combination of paint, caulk & other) of Building Facades.** The property owner or tenant may be reimbursed for the cost of preservation a building facade on a 75%/25% ratio up to a maximum reimbursement of \$2,500—providing the estimated cost of paint, caulk & other does not exceed 50% of the overall project cost. Purchase of paint from a business located within the City of Portland corporate limits qualifies the applicant to receive an additional 5% participation from the program, resulting in 30% reimbursement of costs up to a maximum reimbursement of \$2,750. The minimum funding allowable for any preservation project is \$500.

### **ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PROJECTS & REQUIREMENTS**

1. A property must be located within the boundaries of the Historic District as identified by the *City of Portland, Michigan DDA as of June 2017*.
2. The building must meet a basic condition test, which indicates that the property appears to be structurally sound, the roof intact and meets the basic public safety and property maintenance codes. Proposed facade improvements must also comply with all applicable building and zoning codes.
3. Only buildings with retail, commercial, or professional uses consistent with downtown land uses as defined by City of Portland/DDA and current City Zoning Ordinance are eligible. Buildings with second-story residential units may be considered if the primary use of the building (on the ground floor) is a permitted use for the downtown Business District. Only facades fronting public rights-of-way are eligible for assistance. Highly visible rear and side locations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. Building owners or tenants are eligible. If a tenant applies for assistance, they must provide written proof that the building owner has authorized the proposed improvements and evidence of an executed lease for a term equal to the Facade Easement Agreement (5 years).
5. Property tax and City utility payments must be current. The applicant shall not be in any other default to the City nor involved in any other litigation with the DDA or City.
6. Work must be performed by licensed and insured contractors\*  
 \*If the applicant is a licensed contractor, **a second bid is required**. The licensed and insured contractor may complete the work with his staff, but will not be reimbursed for his/her own work on the project.

**ELIGIBLE USES OF PROGRAM FUNDS**

Eligible expenses for projects include the following:

- Repainting: as part of a larger façade project, or as a Preservation application.
- Professional façade cleaning. as part of a larger façade project, or as a Preservation application
- Masonry repairs, repointing: as part of a larger façade project, or as a Preservation application
- Restoration of exterior finishes and materials
- Exterior Lighting
- Awnings (awnings and canopies may be used as a design element if those features are compatible with the original building design and complement the building’s architectural features).
- Doors/Entryways
- Second-floor entryways/exits and exterior stairs for residents
- Window repair / replacement
- Storefront rehabilitation
- Carpentry
- Handicap accessibility
- Non-historic facade removal

**INELIGIBLE USES OF PROGRAM FUNDS**

Program funds cannot be utilized for the following:

- Refinancing existing debt
- Property acquisition
- Interior improvements
- Interior furnishings
- Site plan, building or sign permit fees
- Property appraisal costs, legal fees, or loan origination fees
- Permit and inspection fees
- Roof repairs
- Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant
- Expenses incurred prior to approval of application
- New building construction
- Purchase of personal property (equipment or machinery)
- Mechanical and HV AC systems
- Security Systems
- Payment of taxes, special assessment, or utility bills
- Routine maintenance that is not part of an eligible facade improvement project

## **PROJECT REVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS**

1. The Design Team and DDA Director will work closely with property owners and tenants to provide information about the incentive reimbursement program and determine initial eligibility under program guidelines.
2. Once the initial scope of work has been determined, the applicant will meet with the Design Team to present the project and review the completed application package.
3. The Design Team will meet as needed with applicants to provide assistance and suggestions in ensuring the application and scope of work project accurately reflect the intent of the funding process and the planned outcome of the project.
4. Once project design is approved by the Design Team, the DDA Board will be notified of the approved project.
5. Upon Design Team approval and board notification, a Portland Facade Program Improvement Agreement and a Façade Easement Agreement will both be executed.

## **RIGHTS RESERVED**

The Design Team reserves the right to reject any and all applications. The specific program guidelines detailed herein are subject to revision or amendment by the Design Team. The DDA and City may discontinue this program at any time, subject to the availability of program funding. The DDA and the City reserve the right to revise or end these programs at any time and in no way guarantee availability of funding for any specific project at any given time.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Projects that meet the design guidelines (online link) and zoning requirements are reviewed for funding on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications must be complete to be considered for the program, including an accurate sketch or drawing of the proposed improvements, as well as written construction estimates from qualified contractors and vendors. Funds are limited and must be spent within nine (9) months after application approval. Special considerations may be approved by the Design Team. Once funds are exhausted, any remaining applications are kept for consideration when further funding is available.

The following information must be submitted by program applicants on forms provided, 45 – 90 days prior to the anticipated project start date.

1. Description of proposed use of building after completion of the project
2. Project design plans
3. Timeframe for completion of project, not to exceed 6 months. Special considerations may be approved
4. Proof of property and liability insurance
5. Written consent for program participation by property owner, if applicant is a tenant
6. If applicant is a tenant, an executed lease extending 5 years.
7. Copies of property deed and leases, if applicable
8. Photographs of buildings before initiation of project; original photographs if available
9. Tax Property Identification Number (PIN)
10. Estimated cost of project to include itemized bids from eligible contractors.

## APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS:

1. Complete a Façade Improvement application, along with required supporting documentation.
2. The application will receive a preliminary review by DDA Director for completeness and adherence to the program objectives and requirements. If appropriate, the applicant will be notified that the project has been accepted for consideration.
3. The Design Team will meet and study the proposal. The applicant may be asked to present the project to the Team. The applicant may be asked to provide additional or clarifying information. The Team may send the application back to the applicant with requests for modifications.
4. Upon Design Team approval, an execution of a Portland Façade Program Incentive Agreement and a Façade Easement Agreement will be entered into with the applicant.
5. The Design Team will make a presentation to the DDA regarding applications awarded and provide ongoing information regarding project progress for each project.

## DISBURSEMENT OF PROGRAM FUNDS

If the project is awarded, the DDA will **reimburse** applicants for eligible improvements as follows:

- . The recipient must provide a reimbursement summary page of all invoices, expenses and receipts.
- . The recipient must submit final invoices from contractors or suppliers marked "Paid in Full" along with copies of the check/online payments made payable to the contractor or supplier.
- . If asked, the recipient must provide copies of Waivers of Lien from all contractors.
- . The recipient must supply proof that the improvements meet all City of Portland zoning and code requirements.
- . All improvements must be completed within six months of the start of construction or the approval may be revoked. Special considerations may be approved by the Design Team.

Any changes in the scope of work must meet approval in advance by the Design Team to be eligible for reimbursement.

For further information, please contact the Portland DDA Director, via email at [ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org](mailto:ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org) or by phone at 517-647-5027



