



Portland Downtown Sign Improvement Application

Sign Incentive Program:

The City of Portland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has developed a Sign Incentive Program to improve the quality and appearance of signs throughout the Portland DDA & Main Street Districts. Please review SIGN INCENTIVE GUIDELINES carefully

Objectives:

This program seeks to bridge the gap in cost between unattractive signage and highly functional, attractive signs that complement and create more attractive DDA & Main Street business districts. It is important to note that sign ordinances differ in Portland's historic Main Street District in order to preserve historic character. Please review sign ordinances carefully prior to applying. The intent of the program is to support creative, three-dimensional signage. Replacement signs of similar construction and quality, or duplications of existing signs with minimal changes, may not qualify for the incentive.

The Sign Incentive Program will provide matching funds of up to 50% of the total cost of an approved sign, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per applicant. Sign incentive awards must be approved by the Design Team **prior to** sign purchase or installation.

Any business located within the Portland DDA / Main Street districts may apply for this incentive. Any business that receives a sign award from the Portland DDA is not eligible for another sign award for a period of five (5) years.

Sign incentives are awarded at the discretion of the Design Committee. In order to receive a sign incentive award, the applicant must submit a sign design that meets the City's Sign Ordinance, as well as the program's objectives. The Design Committee and the City Manager will review all sign incentive applications. The Design Committee of the DDA may reject any or all applications and reserve the right to award incentives for signs which are deemed to be in the best interests of the DDA.

Any property that has a non-conforming sign must bring that sign into conformance with the current sign ordinance before a sign incentive application will be considered, unless the application is for a sign which will replace the non-conforming sign.

Because awnings were historically important design elements in traditional storefronts, awning signs will be considered for a sign incentive. To be considered for an award, awning signs must meet the Design Guidelines for downtown.

The Sign Incentive Award Process:

The Sign Incentive Award will be offered by the DDA based on availability of funding. Program information is available on the Portland Downtown website, www.miportland.org.

1. Applicants may pick up and review the following items available from the Portland DDA/ Main Street office located on the First Floor of City Hall or on the Portland Downtown website, www.miportland.org:
 - a. DDA Sign Incentive Application
 - b. [City of Portland Sign Ordinance](#)
 - c. [City of Portland Sign Permit Application](#)
 - d. DDA Sign Incentive Program Guidelines

2. Applicants should submit both applications to the Portland DDA/ Main Street office located inside Portland City Hall 45-90 days before work on the sign and installation has begun.
3. The Design Committee will review the sign application and proposed design. Applications will be reviewed on the appropriateness and compatibility of the sign size, sign color, sign placement on the building/site, relationship to adjacent properties and program objectives as noted above.
4. If the sign design is deemed inappropriate or incompatible with the program objectives, or City of Portland Sign Ordinance, the Design Committee may provide a letter to the applicant suggesting changes to the design. If the applicant submits a new sign design based upon Design committee recommendations, the application may be reviewed a second time.
5. The Design Committee will approve applications that it deems most compatible with objectives of this program.
6. The approved applicant(s) must obtain a Sign Permit from the City of Portland before sign installation. Permit fees are not eligible for reimbursement. Any deviations from an approved application must be approved by the Design Committee of the DDA prior to the purchase or installation of the sign. Installed signs that do not conform to the approved application may not be eligible for the sign incentive reimbursement.
7. An approved applicant must submit a copy of their paid invoice from their sign company indicating the total cost of the sign before an incentive check may be issued to reimburse them. It may take up to 30 days for the incentive check to be issued.

Incentive Program Requirements:

1. Applicants leasing their space must provide a letter providing permission from the building owner to apply for the incentive. The letter must indicate an awareness of the rules and requirements of the program.
2. Applicants receiving incentives must have a sign design that conforms to the DDA design guidelines. A high value will be placed on creative signage.
3. Signs incentives will not be given to standard corporate franchise signs.
4. **Sign Incentive Applications must be completed entirely, prior to submittal, for consideration by the Design Committee. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Submitted 45-90 days prior to beginning any work.**
5. Applications will be considered on a competitive basis from time-to-time during open program rounds.
6. The Design Committee may deny a sign incentive to any applicant that does not make recommended changes to their sign design after a first review. Every effort will be made to work with applicants so that an incentive can be awarded.
7. Non-conforming signs will be considered for a sign incentive, provided that the applicant agrees to bring the sign into compliance with the City's Sign Ordinance.
8. The Design Committee will examine total cost of any proposed sign to ensure that the sign incentive is being used appropriately.
9. All incentive checks will be written to and mailed to applicants. An invoice from the sign company is required to confirm the total cost of the sign.

