



Façade Improvement
Program Guidelines
2022

City of Farmington Façade Improvement Program

Program Objectives

In coordination with the EDA Workplan and city adopted plans such as the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Redevelopment Plan and Highway 3 Corridor Plan, the EDA is offering a Façade Improvement Program to encourage businesses to improve the curb appeal of their business. This program targets properties along MN Highway 3 and downtown Farmington and aims to help stimulate revitalization in these business areas.

Eligible Properties

Please refer to the eligibility map online to see if your property is eligible. The primary use of the property and building(s) must be for business (commercial and/or industrial). If you are unsure if your property is eligible or if you qualify for this program, please contact city staff who will assist you.

Eligible Improvements

Façade improvement grants can help finance a variety of exterior façade improvements (cosmetic and/or structural) for properties. These improvements must be visible from public streets and sidewalks and include, but are not limited to:

- Accessibility improvements
- Art or murals
- Awnings, canopies or marquees
- Building entrance improvements
- Decorative fencing
- Dumpster enclosures
- Exterior lighting
- Exterior paint and re-siding
- Masonry repairs and tuckpointing
- Permanent landscape improvements
- Permanent patios
- Repair and restoration of windows and doors
- Restoration of exterior finishes and materials
- Signage
- Utility screening
- Other improvements similar in nature to the above – contact city staff with questions on eligibility.

Past Façade Grant Project Example



Funding

The EDA utilizes \$30,000 of its annual operating budget to fund the Façade Improvement Program and will contribute up to a maximum of 50% of eligible project costs. Grants typically will not exceed \$5,000. Only one grant approval is allowed per year per property.

All grants require a minimum 1:1 funding match from the applicant.

This is a reimbursement program. You must complete and pay for the façade project in full before you will be issued a reimbursement check. All program requirements must be met and the applicant must provide a receipt of evidence of paid invoice(s) before a reimbursement check is issued.

Ineligible Activities and Improvements

The following activities are not eligible for Façade Improvement grant financing:

- Improvements in progress or completed prior to program acceptance and grant agreement execution.
- Improvements to the interior of a building or exterior improvement not visible from public streets and/or sidewalks.
- Improvements to non-business buildings and properties.
- Roofing, HVAC, etc. – please see our Redevelopment and Property Reinvestment Program if interested in these types of projects.
- Billboards, banners or roof signs.
- Any project which does not comply with City Code.
- Any project which is deemed ineligible by city staff or the EDA.

Historic Properties

The City of Farmington is a Certified Local Government under the Historic Preservation Act. Each project submitted for review that is determined eligible for designation or is a heritage landmark property will be reviewed as outlined in city code to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. This requires additional Planning Commission review for the façade project.

Grant Terms & Requirements

If approved, a grant agreement will be executed between the applicant and the City of Farmington outlining all requirements which must be met by the applicant before funding is released. Once the grant agreement is executed, the applicant has 90 days to begin the project. The project must be completed by December 31, 2022. If construction work does not begin within 90 days of the grant agreement execution, the grant agreement is null and void. The applicant may apply for one extension if necessary which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Data Privacy

All information provided by applicants under the Façade Improvement Program shall be maintained in accordance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

Permits

All improvements must obtain any required approvals and/or permits. All construction management is your responsibility.

Grant Approval Process

Step One: Be sure you meet program requirements

- Check to see if your property is located in the eligible program district. The property must be used for business purposes.
- The property is up-to-date on all property taxes and is in good standing with the city.
- This is a reimbursement program. You must complete and pay for the façade project in full before the EDA will issue a reimbursement check. All program requirements must be met before reimbursement is issued.

Step Two: Contact Community Development city staff with any questions you have before applying for the program. Possible project discussion can occur over the phone, email, virtually, or in-person. Community Development staff can be reached at 651-280-6800.

- Properties which are a designated historic property may require Planning Commission review and approval for a façade project before a grant can be approved.

Step Three: Submit a completed Façade Improvement Program Application.

A completed application includes:

- Filled-out application
- Photo(s) of current façade/areas to be improved
- Rendering and/or plan drawings showing proposed improvement
- Contractor bids (minimum two)
- Proof of insurance on the building to be improved

Step Four: Application review and grant selection.

Completed applications will be accepted from January 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022. All applications must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 31. The EDA will award grants at their April 2022 Regular Meeting.

Applications competing for funding will be graded and selected based on the scores received. Please reference scoring criteria to review how façade projects will be graded if applications exceed available funding. The EDA reserves the right to approve or reject projects on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration established policies, project criteria and façade program demand. Meeting program criteria does not guarantee the award of business assistance to the project. Approval or denial of any project does not set a precedent for approval or denial of another project.

Office Use Only – Please leave blank

Scoring System	1	2	3	4	5	Rationale
Age of Building	<30 Years (Built Since 1992)	31-60 Years (Built 1991-1962)	61-90 Years (Built 1961 - 1932)	91-120 Years (Built 1931-1902)	121+ Years (Built Before 1902)	Older buildings will have older façades. This criteria aims to support business in older buildings in the community as well as business retention efforts.
Business Size	51+ Employees	26-50 Employees	11-25 Employees	6-10 Employees	5 or Fewer Employees	Statisically, smaller businesses have less cash buffer than larger businesses. This criteria aims to stablize the ability for all businesses to complete façade projects.
Total Cost of the Project	<\$5,000	\$5,001-\$10,000	\$10,001-\$15,000	\$15,001-\$20,000	\$20,001+	The higher the ratio of private investment vs. public grant dollar investment, the higher the scoring will be.
Current Conditions of the Building	<u>Unsatisfactory:</u> Requires major restoration or demolition due to unsafe and/or structurally unsound conditions.	<u>Poor:</u> Requires significant updating or restoration. Conditions adversely impacts building operations.	<u>Fair:</u> Requires updating and restoration. Conditions may have an impact on building operations.	<u>Satisfactory:</u> Requires some restoration to represent “good” condition.	<u>Good:</u> Suitable for continued use with normal maintenance.	Buildings which need larger repairs and projects beyond façade should be completed first prior to façade improvements. This program is not intended to be an aesthetic band-aid to a building with poor conditions.
Minority, Women, Veteran and/or Immigrant Ownership	No M/W/V/I Ownership	-	-	-	Ownership is M/W/V/I	Statisically, M/W/V/I businesses have less cash buffer than other businesses. This criteria aims to stabilize the ability for all businesses to complete façade projects.
Is the Business Public Facing? (e.g. Retail, Food, Medical, etc.)	No	-	-	-	Yes	Businesses with higher foot traffic from the public benefit from an attractive, aesthetically appealing storefront.
Have You Received an EDA Façade Grant Previously?	Yes	-	-	-	No	EDA grant programs intend to be accessible to all businesses in the eligible program areas. Preference will be given to those businesses who have not previously received façade funding which will be reflected within the scoring rubric.

_____/35 Points