



## City of Westbrook Downtown Façade Improvement Program

### Overview

#### 1. Program Summary

The City of Westbrook, in partnership with Discover Downtown Westbrook, administers the Downtown Façade Improvement Program to provide financial assistance to downtown businesses and property owners who wish to make physical improvements to the exterior of their buildings. The program is designed to create visual improvements in the downtown (see Downtown District Heart on attached map for eligible area).

Eligible projects will have a positive visual impact in the Downtown District Heart, and shall meet the criteria listed below. Applications which are complete and project-ready shall receive funding priority. Applications may be submitted online (preferred) at [LINK](#) mailed or delivered to the Economic Development Office at City Hall (address in application).

The Downtown Façade Improvement Program funds cover any amount up to \$15,000 per-project award with a dollar for dollar match ratio. These funds can be used for a variety of façade improvement activities listed in the “Eligible Projects” section below.

#### 2. Administration

The Westbrook Economic Development Office & Discover Downtown Westbrook will review grant applications; the Village Review Committee/Department of Planning and Code Enforcement may review façade improvement project to meet ordinance threshold criteria. The work performed under approved projects shall conform to all federal, state and local codes, and applicants are responsible for acquiring all necessary permits.

#### 3. Program Guidelines and Eligibility

- a. Façade Improvement Program funds are available on an on-going basis until existing funds are exhausted.
- b. Maximum award is \$15,000.
- c. Grants are available for up to 50% of the total cost (as defined in the application) of the improvement project and shall be matched at a ratio of 1 to 1. No other City funding will count toward match.
- d. The grant applicant may be the property owner or tenant. A tenant must have the property owner’s signed approval of the proposed building improvements. No more than one matching grant per building will be awarded within a 60-day period.
- e. Building owner shall provide proof of ownership.

- f. All City real and personal property taxes due have been paid current.
- g. A Downtown Façade Improvement Program grant may only be made to any property in the downtown as delineated on the Downtown Façade Improvement map and has at least one commercial use within it.
- h. Grant funds will be paid directly to each contractor performing improvements only upon completion and inspection of their portion of the project.
- i. Grant funds cannot be used towards City permit fees.
- j. All projects must be completed within one (1) year of award. A request for an extension may be granted, if delay is due to a legitimate cause. Request for extension must occur before the one-year deadline has elapsed.
- k. The applicant must receive three bids for their proposal. Further details may be found in Required Documentation on Application Page 2.
- l. Contractor(s) and subcontractors shall be insured and are required to sign a lien waiver.

#### **4. Eligible Projects**

All proposed improvements must comply with code and design review requirements. Please review the City of Westbrook Land Use Ordinance Section 403 Village Review Overlay Zone for architectural standards (specifically, Section 403.7 Downtown District Regulations, depending the subject properties location within the Zone).

- a. Signage
- b. Awnings
- c. Storefront improvements
- d. Restoration of original/historic windows, doors, and trim where applicable
- e. Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and trim
- f. Cleaning and/or painting of surfaces
- g. Cleaning and/or repointing of surface brick or stone
- h. Removing paint from brick or stone
- i. Exterior lighting
- j. Removal of “modernization” efforts and/or inappropriate non-historic alterations/additions
- k. Cleaning and repair or installation of approved siding
- l. Roofing visible from nearby street-level
- m. Landscapes
- n. Increased accessibility for ADA compliance (on street frontage)
- o. Interior leasehold improvements may be eligible for applicant match if the improvements are part of larger project that includes exterior façade improvements. In such a project, no less than 50% of applicant’s funds shall be spent on exterior improvements. For example, if \$1,000 of applicant’s funds were matched by \$1,000 of City funds, a minimum of \$500 of applicant’s funds shall be spent only on exterior work.
- p. Other, please explain how the proposed project fits in the spirit of the program

## 5. Ineligible Projects

The following may in no way be City-funded as part of the Façade Improvement Program:

- a. Purchase of commercial property/equipment
- b. New building construction
- c. Routine maintenance
- d. Interior improvement (unless they meet the criteria of 4o.)

## 6. Application Process

- a. To apply for a Downtown Façade Improvement Program grant, complete the application online (preferred) at [LINK](#) OR mail or deliver to the Economic Development Office at City Hall (address in application). Include available drawings and descriptive information on the design of the project and products to be used.
- b. Provide both material and labor cost estimates from at least three bidders for each item (see Application form for more details).
- c. The City of Westbrook Economic Development Department and Discover Downtown Westbrook team will review each application for approval. Decisions will be announced within two weeks of receipt of application. c. The City reserves the right to reject incomplete applications or those projects which do not meet the criteria of the program.
- d. One building may receive multiple façade improvement grants, provided each is dedicated to separate business storefronts. However, no more than one matching grant per building will be awarded within a 60-day period.
- e. Successful applicants may begin improvements after receiving official grant award notification. No improvements begun prior to award notification will be eligible for reimbursement. Additionally, projects that require City permits (Building, Electrical, Village Review, Signs, etc.) must be applied for and granted prior to any work commencing. If work proceeds without the required City permits, City will withdraw the Façade Improvement grant funds. Please set up an appointment with the Codes Office to review your project and determine the necessary permits for your project.
- f. Contract(s) for construction services is between the business/property owner and the contractor(s). The grant is a reimbursement to the contractor and in no way binds the City to the work performed. Upon completion of the project, the business/property owner shall submit invoices from the contractor(s) for work completed. Property owner, and business owner if applicable, must sign a statement that all work has been completed to their satisfaction.
- g. The City of Westbrook Economic Development Department and Discover Downtown Westbrook review team will complete an inspection to determine that the work was completed in accordance with the original grant application and cost estimates. Cost

overruns above estimated cost (stated grant amount) are solely the responsibility of the business/property owner.

- h. Payment is made directly to the contractor(s) within 30 days after final inspection and signed statement (see f, above).