

# Town of Boonsboro

## Commercial/Mixed-Use Façade Improvement Grant Program

### Requirements

- ✓ Applicant must be property owner
- ✓ Property must be located within Sustainable Community Designated area
- ✓ Property must be used for commercial or mixed-use purposes
- ✓ Applicant must be in good standing with Town, County, State, and Federal governments
- ✓ Project must remain for minimum of 2 years or be subject to returning grant funds
- ✓ Project will only cover street-facing portions of the building
- ✓ Project must be for the exterior of the building

### *Preference may be given to the following situations:*

- Buildings that will keep or restore the historical integrity of a building
- Renovation projects are prioritized over new construction
- New Property Owners that have not previously received/been awarded a prior Façade Grant
- New properties that have not previously received/been awarded a prior Façade Grant
- Legacy and minority-owned businesses

### Eligible Project Examples:

- Signage (new, repairing, replacing, and removing) — no animated, bare-bulb, or flashing signs
- Exterior painting
- Storefront reconstruction or restoration
- Siding repair or replacement
- Exterior lighting improvements
- Window and door upgrades
- Public-facing masonry or cornices
- Murals
- Removal of unattractive exterior finishes
- Awnings: new, repairs, or replacement of existing
- Roofs (street-facing portions)

### Ineligible Improvements:

- Expenses incurred prior to award letter approval
- Improvements other than those outlined in the award letter
- Work completed on the interior of the property
- Work done on non-street-facing sides of the building
- Improvements not visible from the property's adjoining corridors
- Electric charging stations or solar panels
- Animated, bare-bulb, or flashing signage
- New construction or substantial additions to an existing building
- Changes to improvements that received facade grant funding within the last 12 months
- Predevelopment and operating expenses (permitting, architectural services, design services)
- Work completed with non-historic materials not approved in the scope of work
- Elements that are considered temporary, such as landscaping

### Not Preferred (may not be competitive for funding):

- Banners or vinyl signs
- Fencing
- Landscaping
- Outdoor seating
- Trash containers
- Parking lots and other hardscaping (unless open to public AND complementary to facade improvements)
- Projects where majority of improvements are to grounds rather than the building

### **Ineligible Properties and Business Types:**

Per Maryland DHCD State Revitalization Programs guidelines, the following property and business types are NOT eligible for facade improvement funding:

- Pawn shops
- Gun shops
- Tanning salons
- Massage parlors
- Adult video/book shops
- Adult entertainment facilities
- Check cashing facilities
- Gambling facilities
- Tattoo parlors
- Liquor stores
- Properties located outside of the designated Sustainable Communities area
- Properties that are 100% residential
- Applicants not in good standing with Town, County, State, or Federal governments
- Properties otherwise prohibited from receiving State Revitalization Programs funding

**Houses of Worship/Religious Organizations:** May only be eligible for secular, nonsectarian improvements. Funds cannot be used for projects or activities that are part of a particular religious practice. Eligibility is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Vacant Property Requirements:**

For properties that are currently vacant at the time of application:

- The owner must demonstrate intent to secure a tenant or owner-occupant within 12 months of project completion.
- If the property remains unoccupied for more than 12 months following completion of façade improvements, the property owner agrees to repay the full grant award to the Town of Boonsboro.
- A one-time 6-month extension may be granted upon written request demonstrating good-faith marketing efforts (active listing, broker agreement, etc.). Extensions are at the sole discretion of the Town.
- Vacant property applicants must submit an occupancy plan with their application describing their strategy for securing a tenant or occupant.

**Definition of "Occupied":** (a) A valid Certificate of Occupancy has been issued and the business is operating, OR (b) an executed lease agreement is in place with tenant occupancy occurring within 60 days of lease execution.

### **Award Information**

Façade Improvement Matching grants are awarded on a 50/50 matching basis, with the Town matching the property owner's investment dollar-for-dollar up to a maximum award of \$20,000. This enables total project investments of up to \$40,000.

**Grant Minimum:** \$1,000 (requires \$1,000 owner match = \$2,000 total project)

**Grant Maximum:** \$20,000 (requires \$20,000 owner match = \$40,000 total project)

Funding is dependent upon the availability of awarded funds to the Town of Boonsboro through the Maryland Façade Improvement Program (MFIP) Grant issued by the Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development. More information about the program can be found at:

[dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Pages/programs](http://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Pages/programs)

**Applicants must demonstrate proof of matching funds at the time of application.** Acceptable documentation includes bank statement showing available funds, confirmed loan letter, or other evidence of secured financing.

Reimbursements will be issued only after the project has been completed and paid for by the applicant. Only completed applications will be considered.

## Grant Application Process

A completed application packet must be submitted via email to the Town Grant Writer.

### Application packet must include:

- Completed Grant Application
- Photos of the building/site that clearly show the area(s) to be improved, taken from the street and close-up
- Project budget with two cost estimates for proposed improvements
- Description of work to be completed, including materials that will be used
- Proof of matching funds (bank statement, loan commitment letter, etc.)
- Evidence of site control (copy of deed or lease agreement)
- Written consent from landlord and lessee (as applicable)
- Screenshot from Maryland SDAT website showing business is in good standing
- For vacant properties: Occupancy plan describing strategy for securing tenant/occupant

**Applications open in April and are processed on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted.** Incomplete applications will be returned with explanation; resubmitted applications are placed in queue based on the new submission date.

**Review Process:** Applications are reviewed by Planning/Zoning for compliance with local regulations and permit requirements, then forwarded to DHCD and MHT for final approval. **The full review process may take up to 60 days. No work may begin until written approval is received.**

**Award Notification:** Applicants will be contacted via email regarding the project decision. Only the scope of work listed in the approval letter will be covered; any changes must be resubmitted for approval.

**Project Timeline:** Projects must be started within three months of approval and completed within six months. A one-time six-month extension may be granted upon request. Failure to communicate delays may result in funding being rescinded.

**Denied Applications:** Applications that are denied may be revised to address the reason for denial and resubmitted for consideration.

**Repeat Applicants:** Property owners who have previously received a Façade Grant may apply again, though preference may be given to first-time applicants.

## Reimbursement Process

**This grant is a reimbursement grant.** Once the project has been completed, a financial report showing proof of expenses and photos of the completed project will be submitted to the Town Grant Writer via email. Documentation will be submitted to DHCD for reimbursement, and once approved, the funds will be sent to the Town of Boonsboro for payment to be issued to the property owner.

**The reimbursement process may take up to 90 days (about 3 months) from the date of submission.**

Property owners should plan accordingly and understand they are responsible for expenses during the project and will be reimbursed once the project is completed. If a project goes over budget, there will not be an increase in the award amount. Property owners will be responsible for any late fees from contractors while awaiting reimbursement. The reimbursement amount cannot exceed the awarded amount; it may be reduced if the project comes in under budget.

**Examples for the financial report:** receipts, canceled checks, credit card receipts, paid invoices, contractor's sworn statements, subcontractor's waivers of lien, etc. Reimbursements will be based on actual project expenses and cannot include "in-kind" labor or donated materials.

*Any questions regarding the Façade Matching Grant Program should be directed to the Town Grant Writer:*

*Kathryn Gratton, [Kgratton@Redlipsmentor.com](mailto:Kgratton@Redlipsmentor.com)*

**Town of Boonsboro**  
**Commercial/Mixed-Use Façade Improvement Grant Application**

**General Conditions**

1. I, the applicant, have received and understand the Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program for the Town of Boonsboro and understand the criteria for approval of my application.
2. I further understand and agree that this is a "GRANT PROGRAM" and that this is not a guarantee of acceptance for funding. I further understand that the process for acceptance is in three (3) stages.
3. I further understand and agree that this is a "GRANT PROGRAM" and that if rejection occurs, it does not become a debatable issue.
4. It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant shall be solely responsible for all safety conditions and compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, Historic Preservation Commission requirements, ordinances, and other applicable regulations.
5. It is expressly understood and agreed that work completed prior to receiving the award letter's approval may be ineligible for funding.
6. It is expressly understood and agreed that the applicant will not seek to hold the Town of Boonsboro, its agents, employees, officers and/or directors liable for any property damage, personal injury, or other loss related in any way to the Façade Improvement Program.
7. The applicant shall be responsible for maintaining sufficient insurance coverage for property damage and personal injury liability relating to the Façade Improvement Program.
8. The applicant agrees to maintain the property and improvements, including but not limited to promptly removing graffiti, sweeping, and shoveling in front of the property. There shall be no material changes to or add to the façade, front, or awning of such building without approval of the Planning/Zoning Committee and the Town of Boonsboro for a period of 2 years following the completion of the project.
9. The applicant agrees to return a pro-rated amount of the grant money received if the improvement is removed within two (2) years.
10. For vacant properties: The applicant agrees to repay the full grant award if the property remains unoccupied for more than 12 months following project completion, unless a written extension has been granted by the Town.
11. The applicant shall satisfy any requirements detailed in policy documents associated with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's State Revitalization Programs.
12. The applicant authorizes the Town of Boonsboro to promote an approved project including but not limited to displaying a sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in future materials and press releases.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address of Property

**General and Background Information**

**Name of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Business Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone (Primary):** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Work):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Website (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Project:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Use of Building:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Property Owner Name and Address (if different from applicant):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the property currently vacant?**  Yes  No *If yes, attach an occupancy plan describing strategy for securing tenants.*

**Description of Proposed Improvements:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Estimated Project Cost:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested Grant Amount (50% of project, up to \$20,000):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Match Amount (50% of project):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Estimated date to start work:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Estimated completion date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Required Attachments Checklist:**

- Photos of the building/site that clearly show the area(s) to be improved, taken from the street & close-up
- Project budget with two cost estimates itemizing scope of work
- Proof of matching funds (bank statement, loan commitment, etc.)
- Evidence of site control (copy of deed or lease agreement)
- Screenshot from MD SDAT showing business in good standing
- Written consent from landlord/lessee (if applicable)
- For signage: Sign dimensions, proposed design/layout, materials, method of attachment
- For vacant properties: Occupancy plan

By signing below, I certify that the information above is true and correct. I agree to comply with the program requirements and eligibility as described in the Town of Boonsboro Commercial/Mixed-Use Façade Improvement Grant Program guidelines. I understand that all local and state building codes and laws will apply. I understand that if my application is approved, failure to comply with program requirements will result in termination of the award commitment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

*If the applicant is not the property owner, the property owner must sign below: As the owner of the property at the above address, I have reviewed this application and authorized the applicant to perform the improvements described.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Application Complete:  Yes  No

Planning/Zoning Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved:  Yes  No

DHCD/MHT Submission Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved:  Yes  No

Award Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Award Letter Sent: \_\_\_\_\_