



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT  
GRANT PROGRAM

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Crest Hill Façade Improvement Grant Program was designed to stimulate high-quality, exterior building improvements to existing commercial buildings—improvements that are sufficient in scope to produce visible changes to the building façades.

The ultimate goal of the Façade Improvement Grant Program is to improve the look of the City's business districts. Other program goals include:

- Enhancing the attractiveness of the City of Crest Hill's main commercial corridors
- Ensure a high level of maintenance for a sustainable commercial area
- Promote commercial vitality and increase economic activity
- Maintain or improve existing property values in the target area and adjacent areas

The target areas for the Façade Improvement Grant Program are the City's main commercial corridors including, but not limited to:

- Broadway Street/Route 53
- Plainfield Road/Route 30
- Larkin Avenue
- Weber Road

## ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a Façade Improvement Program Grant, a building must be used in whole or in part for commercial purposes and preference will be given to those located within the target area. Retail uses are preferred. Tenants must have written permission from the property owner in order to engage in the program, and the City of Crest Hill must grant all appropriate permits and approvals before work can be done.

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Repair and/or replacement of the original building's materials and decorative details that are deteriorated or missing
- Repair on non-original materials that cannot be removed due to deterioration of the underlying original building material
- Tuck pointing and masonry repair
- Painting
- Repair, replacement or addition of entrances, doors, display windows, transoms or second-story windows
- Removal, repair and/or replacement of existing signs and awnings
- New signs and awnings
- Landscaping improvements and planters
- Permanent exterior lighting
- Design fees on completed projects
- Permit fees for completed projects

A façade is defined as any building or structural elevation fronting a public roadway or viewable from a right-of-way (including alley and courtyard façades). Non-eligible activities include:

- Work on a façade not visible from a public street (unless the improvement is part of contiguous work on a façade facing a public street)
- Work on a roof
- Purchase of property
- Construction of a new building
- Fixtures and equipment
- Inventory
- Work done before approval of an application agreement for the Façade Improvement Program
- Project cost **must exceed \$2,000** to be considered for a façade grant
- **Façade grant funds cannot be used to correct outstanding code violations, for property damaged by collision, acts of nature or occurrences covered by insurance**

## CITY OF CREST HILL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Additionally, the following types of properties are not eligible for the Façade Improvement Program:

- TIF assisted or city incentivized property
- Tax delinquent property
- Property whose owner has any other tax delinquent property
- Property in litigation
- Property in condemnation or receivership
- Property owned by religious groups
- Property owned on which taxes are not being paid
- Properties on which taxes are being paid, but have nonprofit use, such as schools, charities, clubs, organizations, etc.
- Exclusively residential buildings
- Properties purchased from the City are viewed on a case by case basis
- Government subsidized daycare centers
- National Franchises or Retail Chain Stores

## FUNDING GUIDELINES

Grants are available to make certain improvements to a building's façade. The grant reimburses up to 50% of the total project's construction cost, not to exceed \$10,000 per project. However, the reimbursement amount is subject to City Council discretion as well as budget availability. Rebates and other forms of economic incentives may be utilized as part of the grant reimbursement at the City's discretion. Funding amount can be influenced by the scope of the project, façade orientation, building use, and other factors.

While architectural services by a licensed architect are encouraged, they are not required to participate in the program. The City reserves the right to require the services of an architect for projects with a significant scope of work, historic significance, or otherwise. If the City approves the project, the architect may provide bidding and construction plans and documents, as well as construction supervision. Only architectural services directly related to the approved façade improvements will be reimbursed. The façade grant program will provide reimbursement of 50% of City approved architectural services not to exceed 10 percent of the eligible construction costs, in which the amount is included toward the \$10,000 funding cap for reimbursement of construction costs.

## APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Interested parties must schedule a pre-application meeting with City staff prior to preparing any materials for submittal. Following this meeting, the applicant may complete and submit a grant application form, available on the City's website or in the Building Department at City Hall. Submittal requirements are set forth on the application form. Two bids should be submitted for each item in the scope of work. The City may enlist the services of an architect or construction manager to provide an independent review of the bids and also to give an opinion as to whether the proposed costs are fair and reasonable. These expenses would be incurred by the City. In addition, City staff may request material samples to gain a better understanding of the proposed colors. Information provided by the applicant will be used as the basis for preparation of the staff report to the City Council.

The City of Crest Hill retains the right to approve an entire request, to approve portions of a request, suggest and/or ask for changes/additions to a request before approving, or to deny any request or portion thereof. Staff will prepare a report offering a brief introduction to the project, a review of the various aspects of the proposal, and a suggested recommendation based on an evaluation of the proposed work against the City's signage ordinance.

City staff will determine if the application package that is submitted is sufficiently complete to review, and will draft a recommendation to the City Council. The application package is expected two weeks before a Council meeting. The application package will be reviewed by the City Council to determine whether the project should receive a grant and determine the amount of the award. In making the determination, the City Council will consider the following factors and may give priority to projects that meet the following criteria:

- Is the project in a historic district or is it in an individually eligible historic building?
- Will the project positively contribute to the City's redevelopment effort?
- Will the project substantially leverage more investments than the required matching amount of the grant?
- Will the grant result in an improvement that would not be made otherwise?
- Does the project comply with the City's ordinance?

Application packages must include enough documentation to illustrate the visual impact of the project and its costs. **Failure to provide required information will delay the review process.**

The items submitted should include:

- A completed application form
- Written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct façade improvements
- Color photographs of existing conditions
- Samples of materials and colors to be used

## CITY OF CREST HILL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

- Any other documentation necessary to illustrate the visual impact of the proposed project completion schedule
- Two competitive proposals from licensed and bonded contractors. These proposals should give detailed information about the work to be done, the costs, and the project completion schedule. Any contractor that has submitted a competitive detailed estimate may be used. **Contractors cannot be changed unless new proposals have been submitted and approved by City staff.**
- Owners or merchants who are in the contracting business and intend to perform work on their own properties or businesses, must furnish at least one proposal other than their own to be done.
- Owners and merchants may also perform work on their own buildings; however, they will not be reimbursed for time while acting as contractor and/or installing material.

Upon receipt of a complete application, with all the required attachments, a petition will be scheduled for the next available City Council meeting. The City Council meets the first and third Mondays of the month. Upon City approval, the applicant and City enter into a formal agreement, called a Façade Improvement Agreement, establishing the scope of work and approved reimbursement amount. The Agreement is signed by the City and the applicant, after the City Council has approved the project. Grant project work may commence after the Façade Improvement Agreement is signed and necessary permits are obtained.



## GRANT REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement shall be limited to no more than 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements, **not to exceed \$10,000 per project**. However, the reimbursement amount is subject to City Council discretion. If the costs exceed the original estimates, the property owner or tenant will be responsible for the full amount of the excess. The City cannot reimburse more than the total amount specified in the Agreement.

Any work commenced prior to City Council approval and signing of the Façade Improvement Agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement funding, unless after-the-fact approval is granted by the City Council. No assurance is given that after-the-fact approval will be granted. The applicant has one year to complete the work from the date of the approval. Owners or lessees may request a six-month extension provided there is a demonstrated hardship.

The City of Crest Hill reserves the right to refuse reimbursements in whole or in part for work that:

- Does not conform to the program design guidelines
- Does not conform to the proposals submitted with the application and authorized by the City Council
- Are not commensurate with the workmanship and cost customary to industry
- Are not completed within one year from the date of approval (unless a six-month extension is granted)

Staff will inspect work to ensure that it complies with the approved plans. **Any changes to the approved plan will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the City Council in order to retain the façade grant.**

Grant reimbursement will occur upon completion of the improvements and after proof of payment has been received. If the applicant is doing his/her own labor, funding will be reimbursed only for materials used. The City may enlist the services of an architect or construction manager to provide an independent review of the construction costs to provide an opinion as to whether the costs are commensurate with prevailing construction costs and consistent with the contractor bids. These expenses would be incurred by the City.

Once completed, the applicant must maintain, and may not alter or change the improvements for a period of five years unless a request for modification is presented to the City Council and approved prior to commencing such work. The City will not reimburse for repair, replacement, or other alteration work completed through the Façade Improvement Grant Program for a period of seven (7) years.



## CITY OF CREST HILL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

In the event the improvements are not maintained, the City could require re-payment of the grant or an amount necessary to restore the improvements. Alternatively, the City could place a lien on the property for said amount.

Reimbursement can be expected approximately six (6) weeks after all the following documentation has been submitted:

- Copies of all paid invoices, canceled checks (bank statements) and lien waiver for all of the façade work covered by grant. These must equal at least the required matching amount. All project expenditures must be paid by check, money order or credit card. The invoices must be marked paid, signed, and dated by the contractors. Cash payments are not accepted.
- Lien waivers cannot be substituted for canceled checks or bank statements.
- Color photographs of the completed project.
- Projects that have received a Façade grant prior to having secured tenants for rental space must have half occupancy before a partial reimbursement will be processed. Owner has one year to retain full occupancy in order to receive full reimbursement.
- Properties that receive grants in excess of \$10,000 will have a lien placed on the property. This lien will remain in effect for three years. If the property is sold or transferred within that time period a portion of the award will be deducted from the proceeds of the sale. A property sold or transferred within one year will require repayment of the full amount, within two years 66%, and within three years 33%.

Reimbursement grants are subject to Federal and State taxes, and are reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099. Property owners and tenants should consult their tax advisor for tax liability information.



**FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT  
APPLICATION**

<b>ARCHITECT/DESIGNER INFORMATION:</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>CITY, STATE, ZIP</b>
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>OTHER (CELL, ETC.)</b>
<b>BUSINESS LOCATION</b>		

<b>APPLICATION INFORMATION:</b>		<b>DATE OF APPLICATION:</b>
<b>PRIMARY CONTACT</b>	<b>MAILING ADDRESS</b>	<b>CITY, STATE, ZIP</b>
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>OTHER (CELL, ETC.)</b>
<b>BUSINESS LOCATION</b>		

Have these improvements already been completed? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Please check planned improvements:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Canopy/Awning    \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance    \_\_\_\_\_ Painting    \_\_\_\_\_ Tuck Pointing

\_\_\_\_\_ Windows    \_\_\_\_\_ Lighting    \_\_\_\_\_ Landscaping    \_\_\_\_\_ Signage

\_\_\_\_\_ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Business

Description of proposed project:

**REQUIRED FOR GRANT CONSIDERATION**

- Projected Budget for scope of work to be performed, including two competitive proposals from licensed and bonded contractors
- Elevations and or plans, if applicable
- Photos of building exterior/facade
- Samples of proposed materials
- Written consent from property owner to conduct improvements
- Verification the property/business is in good financial standing with the City

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & SIGNATURE**

Execution of this application constitutes a grant agreement and creates specific obligations on the part of the Applicants, and I hereby affirm that I have reviewed and understand the Administrative Rules governing the Grant Program. I hereby affirm that I have full legal capacity to authorize the filing of this application and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information stated in this application and in all supporting documentation is true and accurate. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil or administrative penalties. I hereby agree that I personally guarantee any refund required pursuant to failure to strictly adhere to the Administrative Rules and the Grant Program parameters. I permit City representatives to make all reasonable inspections and investigations of the property during the process period of this application. As the business owner of this business, I hereby certify that this application and the use of any provided Grant proceeds shall be in accordance with all applicable ordinances, codes, and the Grant Program Administrative Rules.

---

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

DATE