



P.O. Box 158
Third & Main Streets
Aurora, IN 47001
812-926-1777
Fax 812-926-0838
www.aurora.in.us

City of Aurora Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program

Purpose of the Façade Improvement Grant funds:

The viability of downtown Aurora is vital to the commercial viability of Aurora as a whole. In 2016, the City of Aurora created the Downtown Strategic Revitalization Project to stimulate efforts to improve the street appearance of the historic downtown Aurora's central business facades and in doing so help stimulate the business environment of downtown Aurora. Central to downtown revitalization is the Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program for owner occupied residential and commercial properties located within the core business district. Grants are limited to exterior preservation, restoration or rehabilitation of real properties identified on the approved map attached for eligible sites.

The Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program is managed by the City of Aurora and offers an opportunity to receive grant monies. All grants awarded require a matching dollar- for- dollar expenditure by the owner or commercial tenant. Façade Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, and applications must be submitted in their entirety, with all the necessary supporting documents attached before they will be considered for review. Grants are limited to two applications per address during any 12-month period. The 12-month period time frame to begin on the date of the first application.

General Criteria:

Grant awards may not exceed a total of \$5,000 during this 12-month period for actual construction costs. A minimum Façade Improvement project application is \$2,500. Note: Due to limited availability of grant funds, requests may not be fully funded.

- **Façade Improvement:** Up to a 50% maximum reimbursement of actual costs for eligible activities.
- **Awnings:** Up to a 50% maximum reimbursement of actual costs associated with addition, improvement or replacement of awnings.
- **Exterior Signage/Lighting:** Up to a 50% maximum reimbursement of actual costs associated with addition, improvement or replacement of exterior signs. Signs placed inside window displays are ineligible.
- **Zoning & Permitting Requirements:** Applicant must comply with all zoning, subdivision control and code ordinances for the City of Aurora. Applicant must receive approved Certificate of Appropriateness, Improvement and Building Permit criteria for the City of Aurora within the Historic District. All permit applications must be approved prior to the start of any project work.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. The owner occupied or commercial property must be located within the Aurora Historic Business District and zoned B1 or B2.
2. Applicant or co-applicant must be the building owner or contract buyer. Commercial tenants may qualify upon written consent of the building owner or contract buyer, if they have a minimum of two years remaining on their lease at the time of application. Documentation must be provided with application.
3. Financial documentation to verify available matching funds per project application request.

Eligible Activities:

1. Façade Renovation – Must involve the general upgrading of a building’s external appearance.
2. Lighting.
3. The addition of design elements which may have appeared on the original building or are in keeping with the building’s character.
4. Repair to building exterior facades (front, rear, and side facades are eligible).
5. Masonry and Major structural repairs.
6. Exterior painting.
7. Signage and/or Awnings.
8. Repairing or replacing cornices, entrances, doors, windows, and decorative detail. Window replacements must fit the window opening and not be made smaller than the window enframingent.
9. Roof repair or replacement within street level site range, Gutters, and Downspouts.
10. Other repairs that may improve the aesthetic quality of the building.

Ineligible Activities:

1. Interior improvements (including window display areas).
2. Sidewalks, Ramps, Decks, Railing, Approaches to Buildings, Driveways, Parking Lots and/or Steps.
3. Purchase of furnishings, equipment, or other personal property not part of the real estate.
4. Improvements completed or in progress prior to notification of approval.
5. Repair or creation of features not compatible with original architecture, except as required by government regulations.
6. Improvements to non-owner occupied residential structures located in the B1 Neighborhood Business and B2 Community Business zoning district of the Aurora Historic District.

7. Additions to existing structures and all accessory structures, whether attached or detached to the principal building.
8. Funds used to pay off existing mortgage, lease or rental fees, association fees, executive or administrative salaries, or employee payroll.

Façade Grant Program process:

I. Application:

The following items shall be required:

- a. Three quotes for each proposed improvement within the total project scope by qualified contractors. EG: Roof, Windows etc.
- b. Photo of the building, written description of proposed improvements, including all materials and colors, plans and specification of proposed work.
- c. Completed Application and Supporting Data. (Blank application attached).
- d. Application processing fee of \$25.00. Checks made payable to City of Aurora.
- e. Proof of current financial ability to match grant funds request.
- f. Applicants must appear in person to present the request or designate an Authorized Representative.
- g. Applicants must be on the Agenda to have their application considered.

II. Final Approval:

The Review Design Committee will review application, determine if the project qualifies for assistance, determine the amount of grant and recommend final action to the Aurora City Council. Awards may not exceed 50% of the lowest and most responsive quote. Applicant may select a contractor with a higher quote, and pay the difference. (*Review Design Committee consists of Mayor, City Manager, Main Street Director, HPC Member and IN Landmarks consultant). Review Design Committee will meet monthly.

No work for which a grant is sought should begin until authorized the Aurora City Council. At such time a Grant Award will be issued by the City Manager for the City of Aurora.

Grantee is responsible for obtaining any permits required to do the project. Permit fees are not included as part of the grant funding. Individual will work with Indiana Landmarks consultant to determine if a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is needed depending on the project scope. All location improvements, signage permits and COA's must meet City of Aurora Ordinance and Zoning requirements. After 45 days if a Certificate of Appropriateness or all applicable permits are not provided, then the funds awarded will be released from the project agreement.

If Grantee holds any interest in real property on which a residential dwelling was built prior to 1978, Grantee is advised that such property may present exposure to lead from lead-based paint that may place young children at risk of developing lead poisoning. Lead poisoning in young children may produce permanent neurological damage, including learning disabilities, reduced intelligence quotient, behavioral problems, and impaired memory. Lead poisoning also poses a particular risk to pregnant women. Grantee should exercise due diligence to identify lead-based paint hazards from risk assessments or inspections and employ Lead-Safe Certified Contractors, if necessary. A current copy of Contractors Lead Based Paint Abatement Training Certification may be requested by the City of Aurora as a condition of grant funds.

It is the Grantees responsibility to determine whether lead-based paint hazards are present on his/her property. Grantees and/or privately-hired contractors performing work on property where lead-based paint is present shall hold the City of Aurora harmless for any failure to identify said hazard and any failure to appropriately address the removal of said hazard.

Once approval is granted, any changes must be resubmitted in writing with an amended application and reviewed by the City Manager and City Council. Deadline to review any grant modification must be received by the City Manager on the 1st day of the month to be reviewed on a case by case basis. All grant criteria and application documentation submittals shall apply. Note Grant modifications are not guaranteed.

IV. Grant Payments:

Disbursement for grant payments will be made as follows:

- Once a project has reached the 50% completion mark, the grant awardee must submit proof to the City Manager that funds were expended to match the Façade Improvement grant award.

- 100% of total grant award payable upon final inspection and verification that the work has been completed according to the application and final approval. Verification of work completion will be made by the City Manager and Review Design Committee designee.
- Grant administration by the City Manager and Clerk Treasurer.

V. Grant Expiration Date:

Façade Improvement Matching Grant funds must be used by December 1st of the year grant funds were awarded. All receipts and requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the City Manager no later than December 1st following grant award. All awarded Façade Improvement Matching Grant funds not used by December 1st will be forfeited and reallocated for next year's Façade Improvement budget. No Exceptions.

VI. Repayment

Grant recipients must repay all of the funds awarded if any of the following circumstances occur within one year of project completion:

- Building not maintained in accordance with City of Aurora Code.
- Property use changes from commercial to residential on first floor level.
- Property sold or conveyed to another owner.

For more information about our Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program or to submit a complete application, please contact: City of Aurora City Manager, PO Box 158, Aurora, IN 47001 Email: gemery@aurora.in.us

The City of Aurora is the winner of the 2017 AIM Municipal Innovation Award for the Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program. More information may be found on the City of Aurora website at <http://aurora.in.us>



