

Revitalize "Façade" Grant Guidelines

Program Goals

The goals of the Revitalization Grant Program shall be as follows:

1. To improve the physical appearance and promote the positive image of downtown Grass Lake.
 - a. To encourage historic preservation for historically significant structures through restoration of the building facade to return the appearance of the structure to that of an earlier time period in its history.
 - b. To facilitate the renovation of structures to respect the original character of buildings through the financing of improvements which are sensitive to historic details and materials.
 - c. To provide incentive for the beautification of private lots or structures in order to accomplish a continuity of landscape design for the downtown district.
2. To provide an incentive to fill vacant buildings, especially with quality retail operations in street-level space and residential and office use of upper-floor space.
3. To support and expand the tax base in the Central Business District. The program is intended to strengthen the economic viability of downtown Grass Lake by providing financial incentives for improvement of the exterior appearance of buildings through the recognition that the design of buildings reflects their period of construction, and that this design reflects the Grass Lake Community's individuality, identity, character and heritage.

Program Funding

The program is sponsored by the Village of Grass Lake Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The source of funding for the program is tax increment financing revenue made available under Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975 and Village Ordinance #17, as adopted by the Village Council in February 1990. Annual funding allocations for the program are recommended by the DDA Board of Directors as funds are available each year.

Funding for approved projects is earmarked from the DDA yearly program budget, and construction must commence within 12 months of approval by the DDA Board of Directors. The target completion date for the project should be within one (1) year once it is initiated.

Applicants must pay a minimum of 50% of the cost of the Eligible Improvements prior to the Revitalization Grant funding disbursement. Upon completion of the approved project the distributions will be paid as outlined in the payment procedure.

Program Eligibility

A property must be located within the legal boundaries of the DDA District to be eligible for assistance. Both owners and tenants (with owner permission) are eligible. All property taxes on a property must be paid in full at the time of application.

Public properties are eligible for assistance under the program, but tax paying properties shall receive priority consideration for participation in the program. Priority will also be given to applicants that intend to use businesses and/or contractors located within Grass Lake.

Limits On Assistance and Matching Requirement

There shall be a limit of \$10,000 maximum grant awarded in a given year and a total of \$20,000 in program funds per property during a five-year period for improvements through the Revitalization Grant program. There shall be a minimum matching financing requirement of 100 percent per project with a \$10,000 maximum grant awarded in a given year. In other words, matching funds must equal at least the amount of the funds provided by the program.

An owner of multiple, eligible properties may apply for assistance for more than one project for separate properties during a five-year period. In cases where properties having the same owner adjoin each other or share a common contiguous facade, the DDA reserves the right to accept or reject multiple applications for program assistance.

Eligible Uses of Program Funds

Front, rear and side facade projects are eligible for program assistance, but front and highly-visible rear facades will be considered highest priority. The following expenses are eligible when included within the scope of an overall facade improvement project:

- A. Exterior painting
- B. Non-Historic facade removal
- C. Signage in compliance with local sign ordinance (new, repair, or replacement)
- D. Exterior lighting, other than parking lot
- E. Awnings
- F. Doors/Entryways
- G. Window repair/replacement
- H. Storefront repair or rehabilitation
- I. ADA compliant additions or repairs for handicap accessibility
- J. Exterior siding and surfaces, soffits
- K. Sidewalks and walkways (maximum \$5,000)
- L. Site improvement such as landscape and hardscape

Ineligible Uses of Program Funds

The following expenses are *explicitly ineligible* for program assistance:

- A. Expenses incurred prior to application or payment of previous debt
- B. Mortgage or land contract refinancing
- C. Loan fees
- D. Site plan, building and sign permit fees
- E. New building construction
- F. Appraiser and attorney fees
- G. Wages paid to applicant or relatives of applicant
- H. Site improvements
- I. Payment of taxes
- J. Any roof work
- K. Funds for payment of contractors in merchandise or services by applicant
- L. Routine facade maintenance
- M. Repairs covered under insurance
- N. Items taxed as personal property
- O. Parking lot sealing and patching
- P. Real property or equipment acquisition

Program Selection Criteria

In the selection of projects for program assistance, the following factors listed in no particular order will be considered by the program review panel and the DDA Board of Directors:

- A. Whether building is currently occupied or facade improvement project guarantees occupancy
- B. Whether building has historical designation or significance
- C. Timeframe for project completion
- D. Potential for enhancement of property value
- E. Front facade versus side or rear facade project
- F. Project design
- G. Potential for job creation, if other factors are equal
- H. Building location
- I. Upgrade the visual appeal of the building, landscaping or spaces
- J. Eliminate blight
- K. Restore architecturally significant elements of a structure that are authentic to the period in which the building was built or period when the building was designed (e.g., cornices, molding, parapets, window mullions, signs, etc.)
- L. Availability of DDA matching funds

Application Requirements

The following information must be submitted by program applicants along with the application:

- A. Description of proposed use of building after completion of project
- B. Project design plans
- C. Breakdown of detailed project cost estimates; copies of vendor's cost estimates are acceptable, 2 or more estimates/quotes are preferred
- D. Timeframe for completion of project
- E. Written consent for program participation by property owner, if applicant is a tenant
- F. Photographs of buildings before initiation of project

Review Process

The Village of Grass Lake Downtown Development Authority shall approve this set of guidelines for the operation of the Revitalization Grant Program. The program Review Panel shall review all applications with the assistance of Village staff and make recommendations to the DDA Board of Directors for final project approval.

Review Panel

The DDA Board of Directors will appoint members of the Program Review Panel that will be comprised of the members of the Budget Sub-Committee.

Program Administration

The program shall be administered by the DDA administrative staff with the cooperation and assistance of the Village of Grass Lake staff.

Project Approval Process and Payment Procedures

- A. Approval Process
 - a. Applicant submits completed application, design plans, all required additional information and forms to the Village Office to the attention of the DDA Review Panel (“Review Panel”).
 - b. Applicant collects all necessary bids prior to application review by panel
 - c. Application is approved or rejected by Review Panel
 - d. If application is rejected, the DDA Executive Director communicates this result to applicant
 - e. If application is approved, then it is submitted to the full DDA Board for consideration at its next regularly scheduled meeting
 - f. DDA Board approves or rejects the application
 - g. DDA Executive Director communicates results to applicant
 - h. Modification to the plan or approved application must be referred back to the Review Panel
 - i. Construction may begin upon DDA approval and applicant obtaining required permits
 - j. During construction, the DDA Executive Director must authorize any changes to the approved scope of work or the DDA may rescind the funding commitment
- B. Payment Procedures
 - a. After approved project completion, distribution from the Revitalization Grant Program will be paid upon:
 - i. Approval of final village inspection or certificate of occupancy (if required)
 - ii. Submittal of copies of paid invoices for approved work to DDA Executive Director
 - b. The DDA Executive Director reviews submitted invoices and prepares a check request to the DDA Treasurer.
 - c. DDA Executive Director mails check to applicant or notifies applicant when the check is ready for pick up.

Rights Reserved

The specific program guidelines detailed herein are subject to revision with the approval of the Village of Grass Lake DDA Board of Directors. The DDA and the Village of Grass Lake may discontinue this program at any time, subject to any prior agreements.

Upon completion of the project the DDA reserves the right to:

1. Place a commemorative plaque on the building structure (in a location approved by the owner) to recognize the contribution of funding from the Revitalization Grant Program.
2. Coordinate a ribbon cutting ceremony with the local Chamber of Commerce to highlight the completed improvements.
3. Include pictures and updates on the DDA website and/or other community media or social media as the project evolves.

For further information or questions, contact the DDA Chairman,
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