



Alabaster Downtown Redevelopment Authority
Façade Improvement Grant
PROGRAM OUTLINE

In order to encourage economic development and maintain the aesthetic character of commercial property, the **Alabaster Downtown Redevelopment Authority** (ADRA) is announcing a **Facade Improvement Grant Program** for buildings within the Alabaster Project Area District. Limited funding is available, and an application process is required.

1. **Program Description:** The purpose of the Grant Program is to 1) rehabilitate and/or restore commercial buildings to historically compatible exterior design and 2) encourage new investment and commercial development in Alabaster.

1.1. Eligible work will be on any side of a building facing a public way or space and finished accordingly which includes:

- Signage and awnings
- Replacement of missing decorative features
- Restoration of doors, windows and chimneys
- Storefront or façade rehabilitation
- Removal of non-historic materials or additions
- Exterior paint (if used as an architectural element)
- Improving ADA access from the outside of the building
- Historic preservation-related maintenance which requires specialized care or expertise

1.2. In-eligible work includes:

- Major landscape improvements
- Plants
- Non-public faces of buildings
- Interior areas of buildings
- Normal, routine maintenance

2. **Funding Priorities:** The ADRA reserves the right to set priorities for which properties are eligible or ineligible to receive grant funds.

2.1. Currently eligible:

- Commercially-used property located within the Alabaster Project Area District.

2.2. Not eligible at this time:

- Residential properties within the Alabaster Project Area District.
- Government owned properties within the Alabaster Project Area District.

3. **Program Includes:** Each project is eligible for design consultation/project assistance from the City Building Inspector and Planning Commission, in addition to one of the following:

3.1. **Base Grant of up to \$2,500:** Direct grant, no match required.

3.2. **Base Grant + Matching Grant:** \$2,500 Base Grant in addition to ADRA matching dollar-for-dollar investment by property owner over the Base Grant amount, capping the ADRA's total investment at \$20,000 per application. (Requires a 50/50 match from the applicant for grant funds over and above the Base Grant amount.)

Examples:

ADRA spends	Applicant spends	Total project value
\$2,500 (Base)	0\$	\$2,500
Base + \$1,000 + \$1,000 matching	\$1,000	\$4,500
Base + \$2,500 + \$2,500 matching	\$2,500	\$7,500

4. **Who May Apply:**

4.1. Property Owners (One owner or business that occupies contiguous property equals one application.)

4.2. Tenants with Property Owner Approval

5. **Grant Status:** Grants will be awarded one per property. There can only be one open grant project per property.

6. **Other Funding:** Funds from other granting sources may be leveraged through this program.

7. **Application/Approval Process:** A multi-step application process is required. Appropriateness of applications is the decision of the ADRA, based on available funding, the application's ability to meet the goals and objectives of the Façade Improvement Grant Program, and the applicant's ability to begin and complete the proposed project within the terms of this program. The ADRA has sole authority to determine eligibility of proposed work, approve changes to approved grants, and confirm that work has been completed correctly. All designs must meet the requirements of the City's design standards. Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of funding, and funding on approved grants may be withdrawn if any portion of a project changes substantially from what was approved by the ADRA, without receiving prior consent. For more information or an application form, contact the Alabaster Building Services Office, Phone: (205) 664-6823.

8. **Design Assistance:** The following design assistance is available to project participants:

8.1. **Consultation.** Project participants will be encouraged to consult with the City Building Inspector and ADRA to design their façade improvements. They will be able to provide design assistance to participants in the program for rehabilitation of exterior building facades and storefronts.

8.2. **Façade Design Guide.** The Façade Design Guide used by the City of Minneapolis as a companion piece to their Great Streets Façade Improvement Program. It is available as a free resource on the ADRA's web page (<http://www.jacksonville-al.org/commercial-development-authority-1/>). This is a professionally developed guide that provides some suggestions and ideas for storefront improvements that will help send a positive message to potential customers and draw them into the business.

9. **Terms:**

9.1. All grants are paid upon completion of work once final inspection and approval has occurred, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

9.2. Reimbursement shall be made only on improvements specifically approved as a part of the grant.

9.3. The ADRA reserves the right to withdraw funds on any portion of a grant that changes substantially from what was approved without first receiving prior consent from the ADRA. Such consent is to be given by the Chairperson in consultation with the project consultant or the Board of Directors depending on the nature of the change.

9.4. Funding is dependent on timely completion of projects. All grant projects must begin within 30 days of the signed agreement. All grant projects must be completed, and grant monies expended within six months of the signed agreement, unless authorized otherwise. For projects not requiring a building permit, ADRA staff or designated representatives will visit the site to ensure timely progress. Projects that require a building permit shall obtain a valid permit and initial inspection within six months of the signed agreement.

10. **Approval of Work:** The ADRA will have sole authority to determine eligibility of proposed work and confirmation of completed work. Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of funding.

11. **General Conditions:** The following general conditions will apply to all projects:

11.1. Improvements funded by the grant will be maintained in good order for a period of at least five years; graffiti and vandalism will be dutifully repaired during this time period.

11.2. Property taxes must be current, and participants may not have debts in arrears to the City.

- 11.3. Grant recipients must provide proof of insurance on the property for which the grant is being awarded.
- 11.4. All contractors must obtain City business licenses prior to beginning work.
12. **Other Approvals:** Participants, with limited assistance from the ADRA and its consultant, will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals including those from local advisory boards, including the City of Alabaster Planning and Building Department, City building permits and other necessary permits. All work must comply with City, State and Federal regulations. Please contact the Planning and Building Department, 205-664-6835, for information regarding local regulations.
13. **Selection Methods:** The ADRA may utilize ranking systems or other determining factors to assist in the selection process depending on availability of funds and the number of applicants. If used, a ranking system may include, but not be limited to location, building use, historic qualifications, need of applicant, and the project's significance. Such ranking systems may be modified at any time to meet the goals of the ADRA.
14. **Construction Contract:** All contractors must be licensed by the City. All construction contracts will be between the participant and contractor. In addition, business tenants must have written authority of the property owner prior to the commitment of funds.
15. **Commitment of Funds:** Awards will be based on available funding, the application's ability to meet the goals and objectives of the Façade Improvement Grant Program, and the applicant's ability to complete the proposed project within the time limits specified in the terms of this program. All proposed work will be reviewed and approved by the ADRA, prior to the ADRA's executing an official agreement with the applicant. The agreement will outline all the terms and conditions of the grant. It will be signed by the ADRA and the applicant and serve as the legal commitment of both parties as to the scope, quality of work and the amount of funds committed.
16. **Disbursement of Funds:** Prior to disbursement of funds, all completed work will be reviewed by ADRA staff or designated representatives and approved for compliance with the agreement. **Once approved, the applicant will be reimbursed within five (5) business days from date of approval.** The ADRA cannot reimburse contractors directly. If a project is approved in phases over a period of time, the ADRA may agree, in writing, to schedule partial reimbursement after each phase of the project.