

# FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In a collaborative effort with the Columbia Heights Police Department (the “CHPD”), the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “EDA”) offers a Façade Improvement Grant Program (the “Grant Program”). The purpose of the Grant Program is to encourage businesses and commercial property owners to revitalize, rehabilitate, and restore exterior store fronts, but also for the CHPD to provide monitored surveillance in the City to reduce the incident rate of criminal activity, as well as increase business vitality and economic performance. The Grant Program reimburses businesses or commercial property owners for eligible improvements up to fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost, for a maximum reimbursement of \$5,000. However, businesses located within the Central Business Zoning District are eligible for an enhanced grant amounting up to fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost, for a maximum reimbursement of \$10,000. Moreover, if determined by the CHPD that an exterior surveillance system is warranted, the EDA will install surveillance equipment to monitor adjacent businesses and properties, as well as parks and open spaces.

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must be an owner of a commercial property, a commercial tenant with approval from the property owner(s), or a 501(c)(3) organization in the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”) located along 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 37<sup>th</sup> Place NE, 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, University Avenue NE, or Central Avenue NE. Applicants must be in good standing with the City, including but not limited to, legally operating with proper licensure; and current on property taxes, utility bills, and special assessments.

### ELIGIBLE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

Façade improvements must be visible from a public street ~~completed by a licensed contractor, and comply with one or more of the following eligible façade improvements:~~ or, for properties located within the Central Business Zoning District, from a public alleyway. All improvements must be completed by a licensed contractor and must correspond to one or more of the following eligible project types:

- Architectural Improvements
- Canopy or Awning Installation or Repair
- Exterior Lighting
- Exterior Painting, Re-siding, or Professional Cleaning
- Green Façade Improvement (i.e. Living Wall, ecofriendly [non-VOC] paint, reclaimed wood, etc.)
- Installation of New or Renovated Signage (Excluding LED)
- Masonry Repairs or Tuck-pointing
- Replacement of Windows and Doors
- Restoration of Exterior Finishes and Materials
- Permanent Landscaping (i.e. elements of hardscaping, large planters, trees, benches, etc.)
- Any other exterior façade improvement approved by the EDA

Please note: Labor costs of a contractor, including necessary design work, are eligible costs for reimbursement through the Grant Program. Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to, new construction, interior renovations, repair or replacement of a roof, ~~improvements to an alley façade~~, improvements started prior to receiving a signed grant agreement from the EDA, and any other improvements not listed above.

## EXTERIOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

The CHPD shall review all Grant Program applications submitted to determine if the installation of an exterior surveillance system is warranted. If it is determined that an exterior surveillance system is warranted, the applicant will then be required to enter into a Lease Agreement with the EDA. The Lease Agreement will allow the EDA to (1) install security cameras on the exterior of the primary structure; (2) install recording equipment inside of the primary structure in a locked and secured location to prevent destruction or tampering; and (3) allow for annual maintenance inspections for a period of five (5) years. All surveillance system equipment shall be installed by a consultant selected by the EDA, and reviewed by the CHPD. Since specifications of the surveillance system equipment may vary based on desired coverage, configuration, and size of the commercial property, the following are minimum specifications to be installed:

### Cameras:

- IP - Enabled
- Ability to operate in all resolutions up to HDTV 720p/ 1MP
- Ability to record thirty (30) frames per second
- Capable of recording optimal images in all lighting conditions
- Vandal-resistant
- Weather-proof in extreme temperatures from -40° to 131 °F

### Network Video Recorder:

- Sufficient memory to retain data from all cameras for a period of fifteen (15) days
- Capacity to deliver thirty (30) frames per second, per camera
- Ability to produce a DVD-R copy of desired data

## APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Applications will be open and accepted until annual allocation of funding is exhausted.
2. ~~When g~~Grants ~~are will be~~ awarded, ~~and~~ applicants will be notified via email correspondence. A Grant Agreement and if necessary a Lease Agreement for the exterior surveillance system must be approved and signed before commencement of any improvements. Please be sure to obtain all necessary Building Permits.
3. Upon ~~a grant~~ being awarded, a meeting will be ~~organized established~~ to go over the submitted improvement plan to discuss grant expectations and to address grant concerns.
4. The grant recipient or its contractor must commence the improvements ~~within~~ sixty (60) days after an approved Grant Agreement. The façade improvements must be completed within six (6) months after the issuance of the necessary Building Permits.
5. After façade improvements are complete, the grant funds will be disbursed for reimbursement to the applicant after all of the following pieces of information have been submitted:
  - a. Proof of Final Inspection by the Building Official
  - b. A Copy of the Final Invoice Received from the Contractor
  - c. Before and After Photographs
  - d. Proof of Payment to the Contractor (i.e. receipt, invoice, etc.)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Required Application Materials:

- A complete application sent to the attention of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority at following location: ~~590 40th Ave NE~~ **3989 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421**
- Clear ~~and~~ colored BEFORE photographs of ~~building~~ exterior ~~building~~
- A detailed improvement plan of new exterior façade improvements including design (sketches), color scheme, materials, project execution timeline, and overall budget for plan
- Proof of good standing with the City
- Submit 2 or more competitive proposal 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 the EDA.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

~~This~~ **These** Design Guidelines outline the standards, which must be followed when renovating buildings using a ~~F~~façade ~~G~~grant. These design guidelines take into consideration a building's historic significance in determining what would be appropriate treatment and the overall vision for the City. Architectural styles are diverse, from historic commercial or Mediterranean Revival to 20th century modern. The vision for the district is a commercial area that highlights the historical nature of Columbia Heights that stays in touch with dynamic changes of the City and is always pedestrian-friendly.

## FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS ENCOURAGED

### Windows & Doors:

- Window and door openings shall comprise at least 30% of the area of the ground floor of the primary street façade
- No tinted windows, only clear glass
- Windows and doors free of clutter and obstructions, allowing clear views between the business and the street

### Historical Preservation:

- Historic building repair or replacement should match current design of building
- Stay traditional to the character of the building
- Maintain similar color scheme

### Structure & Materials:

- Use durable materials such as brick, stone, stucco, etc.
- The base (ground floor) should appear visually distinct from the upper stories of the building

### Painting & Lighting:

- Unpainted brick stay unpainted, previously painted masonry may be painted
- Use of non-VOC paint encouraged
- No more than two principal colors (neutral or muted colors like browns, grays, dark blue) may be used on a façade or individual storefront

- Bright or primary colors should be used only as accents
- Spot or flood lighting to highlight the architectural detailing of a building should be inconspicuous and blend with the wall on which it is mounted
- Lighting recessed doorways is encouraged
- Energy saving light bulbs encouraged
- Light fixtures that complement the entire façade

**Awnings/Signage:**

- Attach awnings to the building at or below the lower edge of the sign band
- Awnings made of canvas and waterproof cloth designed to resist fading and tearing
- Colors that coordinate with the building and area
- Awning that's proportional to the building
- Awnings with thin profiles that do not obscure the building and storefront

**Signs:**

- Projecting/hanging signs: are double-sided and project from a building over the sidewalk
- Wall signs: are attached to the primary façade and best viewed looking straight at the building from across the street
- Are encouraged to be rectangular shaped
- Type fonts and colors that **are** legible from a distance

**FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS PROHIBITED**

- Covering, obscuring, or removing cornices, trim, or other architectural details
- Alterations that have no historical basis for historical buildings
- Covering brick or stone with vinyl, aluminum, or wood siding
- Sandblasting brick, which removes a protective exterior
- Reducing existing window size to accept standard residential window sizes
- Replacing windows with wall surface, wood, metal, or other materials
- Rigid materials like aluminum, vinyl, fiberglass, asphalt, or plastics that are sensitive to weather conditions
- No lights should move, flash or make noise
- Signs that are: blocking storefront windows, too large, small font making it difficult to read, using banners as permanent signage