

**SMALL BUSINESS FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
DESCRIPTION & APPLICATION**

Purpose

The City of Highland Park recognizes the importance of independent merchants to the City's image and sales tax base. The Small Business Facade Improvement Program (SBFIP) aims to provide assistance and incentive to commercial property owners and local businesses within commercial business districts to improve the look and functionality of their property and place of business. The SBFIP is available for small business operators and commercial property owners citywide.

A small business is defined as having a net worth of less than two million dollars and showing less than an average of two hundred thousand dollars in profit per year for two years after taxes. Owners of property are eligible when the subject property is occupied by a business that is a small business as defined in this document or where such property owner has executed a lease agreement for future occupancy with a small business as described in this document.

Program Goals

The program seeks to enhance Highland Park's image as a retail, dining, and entertainment destination and assist independent merchants who may feel pressure from national and regional competition. By making a financial investment in those commercial businesses that avail themselves of the SBFIP, the City will strengthen the competitive advantage of conducting business in Highland Park and its sales tax base. Additional benefits include the maintenance of a healthy mix of commercial establishments and community character.

Grant Description

The City's contribution is a grant in the form of a rebate up to \$5000. Payment shall only be made after the project is complete, paid receipts are submitted to the City Manager's Office, and the City Council approves disbursement.

If a business is the recipient of the City grant and goes out of business or moves out of Highland Park, the following payback schedule will apply:

Term of Grant Expired	Less than 1 Year	1 - 2 Years	More than 2 Years
\$ Repaid to City	66%	33%	0%

The payback schedule above applies to property owners if a change of use results in the premises being occupied by a business that does not fit the definition of a small business.

Eligibility

The following prerequisites define eligibility:

- A small business located and operating within a commercial building within a commercial district in the City with a net worth of less than two million dollars and showing less than an average of two hundred thousand dollars in profit per year for two years after taxes.
- Owners of property where the subject property is occupied by a business that is a small business as defined in this document or where such property owner has executed a lease agreement for future occupancy with a small business as described in this document.
- Applications may be submitted before improvements are initiated but no later than thirty (30) days after completing eligible improvement(s).

Ineligibility

The following stipulations, without limitation, delineate under what circumstances a property owner or business owner would not qualify for the program:

- If the business in question moves to another location within the City of Highland Park, they would not have to pay back the money but would not be eligible for the program for five years.
- SBFIP recipients would not be eligible to reapply to the program for five years.

Financing Structure

Eligible owners of commercial/retail buildings and small business owners operating within a commercial/retail building in a commercial district may apply for a City grant that may reimburse up to 50% of the approved improvement(s) to a maximum of \$5,000 per project.

Eligible Improvements and Reimbursements

- Improvements must be located on, and visible from, the frontage of a building or right-of-way and enhance the appearance of the building
- Removing excess facade materials

- Repairing damage from facade installation
- Repairing building deterioration and restoring original building materials
- Building cleaning (acid or pressure wash, or steam cleaning and tuck pointing)
- Installing new awnings/signage
- Making exterior accessibility improvements
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring exterior doors
- Repairing or upgrading exterior lighting
- Painting exterior
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring graphics (permanent)
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring gutters
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring that portion of a roof directly above a building frontage
- Installing new, replacing, repainting, or restoring permanent signs
- Replacing, repainting, or restoring trash enclosures, but only if undertaken as part of a comprehensive facade improvement project
- Replacing or repainting windows
- Architect's and Contractor's Fees explicitly related and exclusively to an Eligible Improvement.

Ineligible Improvements

- New construction, which is defined as any alteration or enlargement of a building that requires the removal of more than 40% of the total linear feet of the existing exterior walls of the building measured around the outer perimeter of the building

- Interior construction, renovation, and improvements of any kind, including, without limitation, interior accessibility improvements

Application Review and Approval Process

- Applications may be obtained from the City Manager's Office
- Applicant must submit a completed application form to the City Manager's Office along with the following:
 - Two itemized cost estimates or quotes from qualified, licensed contractors for all eligible improvement(s)
 - Digital photo of the existing façade
 - Digital photo of the proposed project area
 - Electronic version of a professional rendering of the improvement(s) within the context of the subject area
 - Completed W-9 form
 - Once the project is completed, an electronic version of one picture of the improvement(s) and one picture of the improvement(s) within the context of the subject area
- Applications submitted after initiating improvement(s) will only be accepted within 30 days after project completion
- Applications will be reviewed by staff within 15 days of submission to determine eligibility
- Priority will be given to those projects that exhibit a clear and substantial public benefit
- If eligible, staff will notify the applicant of the time, date, and place of the public meeting at which the application will be considered

- Applicant or its designee be present at all public meetings at which the proposed façade projects will be discussed
- The City Council has the final authority to approve the disbursement of the rebate
- If an application is approved, the applicant is responsible for future maintenance of the eligible improvement(s) installed pursuant to the program
- Applicant agrees to repair any damage to any public right-of-way that may be caused by or in connection with the installation of the eligible improvement(s)
- Applicant agrees not to apply for another grant for the same building within five years of the City's approval of the grant
- Applicant may not alter or tear down the eligible improvement(s) installed pursuant to this program
- Construction must be completed within 120 days from the effective date
- An extension may be granted, provided the applicant has applied for the proper City permits within 30 days of the approval letter; if there is difficulty obtaining the issuance of these items in a timely fashion, the applicant may formally request an extension in writing, and provide copies of all permit applications to the Office of Business Development along with an explanation of the basis for why such an extension should be granted.
- Failure to complete such work within the 120-day deadline without applying for and being granted an extension shall constitute a material breach of the program requirements resulting in the withdrawal of funding for the applicant's project without further notice.
- Upon project completion, the applicant must contact the Building Division to schedule an improvement(s) inspection and notify the Office of Business Development staff of the inspection date.
 - Office of Business Development staff will contact the Building Division to confirm that the project was satisfactorily completed and complies with the program's guidelines and the pre-approved plans.

- Once compliance with the program’s guidelines is confirmed, the applicant will be notified and, from that date, has 60 days to submit paid invoices and canceled checks from the selected contractor that shows all work has been paid in full. Failure to do so will result in the applicant forfeiting the award.

- Payment will be made to the grantee after the project is completed as agreed and approved per the final inspection. All cost receipts and applicable lien waivers are submitted by the property owner or business owner to the City Manager’s Office and reviewed and approved by City staff, and the City Council approves disbursement.

**City of Highland Park
Office of Business Development
1707 St. Johns Avenue
Highland Park, Illinois 60035
847.926.1027**

Business Name: _____

Project Address: _____

Type of Business Activity: _____

Applicant Name: _____

Address, City, State, Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Property Owner Name: _____

Property Owner Address, City, State, Zip: _____

Property Owner Telephone: _____

The business at the project address is a small business located and operating within a commercial building within a commercial district in the City of Highland Park with a net worth of less than two million dollars and showing less than an average of two hundred thousand dollars in profit per year for two years after taxes. Yes ____ No ____

Describe Proposed Improvement(s) to Building:

Grant Amount Requested:

Describe how the Proposed Improvement(s) will Advance the Goals of this Program:

All application materials must be submitted to the Office of Business Development along with the application. Partial applications will not be accepted.

Please provide the following materials with your completed application at the time of your submission:

- The property owner's written consent on the application form to implement the improvement(s) and participate in the program
- A professional rendering of improvement(s) within the context of the subject area
- An electronic picture of the existing façade, landscape, or area to be improved
- An electronic picture of the proposed project area
- Once the improvement(s) is/are completed, one electronic picture of the improvement(s), and one electronic picture of the improvement(s) within the subject area
- Two written itemized competitive cost estimates from qualified, licensed contractors must be obtained for all eligible expenditures proposed under this program
- Completed W-9 form

The Applicant _____ asserts that the preceding information is correct and will comply with all City regulations applicable to this program. The applicant fully understands that the City Manager's Office can make no variances to the guidelines or requirements except as authorized in writing. The applicant fully understands that if their

project fails to meet federal regulations or municipal ordinances, they will be ineligible for a rebate and agree to forfeit all rights pursuant to the acquisition or recovery of any claims or damages regarding those funds. The applicant also agrees to comply with the program guidelines in the Small Business Façade Improvement Program Ordinance and Program Description. The applicant agrees that in the event of their breach of any condition or provision, as described in the Small Business Facade Improvement Program Ordinance and Description, the City of Highland Park has the right to terminate this agreement on thirty (30) days notice and to cancel this agreement, without prejudice to any other rights or remedies of the City. The applicant understands that they must submit detailed cost documentation, including canceled checks, bills, copies of building permits, and professional rendering. If the applicant is other than the property owner, written consent by the property owner must be provided below.

Applicant's Signature

Date

If the Applicant is other than the owner of the building, the following line must be completed:

I certify that I, the trustee and owner of the property, give the above-signed applicant authority to implement improvement(s) at the above property as may be required under the Small Business Facade Improvement Program.

Property Owner's Name

Property Owner's Signature

Date

September 5, 2023