

**BUTLER AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS – DOWNTOWN
PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

I. PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Commercial Façade Improvement Program is one component of a comprehensive effort to revitalize the commercial area in the City of Butler. By offering financial assistance for façade restoration, the City of Butler and the Butler Area Development Corporation hope to continue the ongoing plan to eliminate blight and encourage restoration projects which will enhance the building's overall exterior appearance, thus creating a new retail focus and increase employment.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the Commercial Façade Program Grant are:

- a. To encourage property owners or lessees to become involved in the revitalization effort
- b. To stimulate private investment
- c. To create a cleaner, more attractive, visual environment
- d. To augment tourism
- e. To stabilize or improve the aesthetic and economic values of building in the West End/Downtown
- f. To regenerate interest by property owner in the restoration of their properties
- g. To encourage new businesses, development, and employment
- h. To foster civic pride
- i. To create a compelling image to increase commerce, attract new businesses, profits and community pride
- j. To preserve the architectural heritage of our downtown properties

III. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are property owners or tenants, with owner's permission (Authorization and Release of Liability), whose floors are occupied or will be occupied by any lawful commercial (retail or wholesale) or service business within the project area, excluding the following: New car and/or truck dealers, national gasoline and service stations, churches, and private households. If a storefront is leased or is to be leased, the application must contain a copy of an executed lease agreement for a period of at least two (2) years from the expected date of completion of the improvements.

The project area is Butler Downtown Footprint – Phase I will focus on the downtown corridor—Main Street from Wayne/Quarry Street to East Penn Street. Phase II will then be initiated onto the side streets off of Main Street to include East North from North McKean to Washington; East Jefferson from North McKean to North Washington; and East Cunningham Street from North McKean Street to South Washington.

Eligible properties must be located within the project area whose boundary lines are described and set under the Authority guidelines. A map of said boundary description is attached.

IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Only exterior improvements to commercial buildings within the defined Commercial Façade Program – Downtown program area are eligible. Private match funding for the project must be in place or verified as available before grant funds for Commercial Façade Improvement can be made. Both business owners (tenants) and property owners of record on the tax rolls may apply. Business owners will need written approval of the property owner. The application must be approved prior to any demolition or construction of that part of the project for which funding is being sought. Matching (private) funds must be available at contract execution.

Grant Application requires the following to be considered:

1. Applicant Identification
2. Property Owner Identification
3. Location/Address of the Property
4. Complete copies of the following:
 - Photograph of each project
 - Signature(s) of the applicant and property owner
 - Proof of Ownership
 - Proof of Current Paid Property Taxes
 - Proof of Insurance and Flood Insurance, if applicable
 - Written project description

Non-profits may be eligible for the grant. Please contact Butler Area Development Corporation office for eligibility determination.

V. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Applications will be accepted for review at any time throughout the year. The awarding of grants is dependent on funding availability. There is no certainty that funds will be available at any given time. Completed applications will be considered by date and time of receipt (first-come, first-served). If more applicants than funds are available, preference will be given to those who have not previously received funding.

The Commercial Façade Program – Downtown Application form can be obtained from the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Butler, 129 West Cunningham Street, Butler, Pennsylvania, 724-283-0116 or by visiting their website at www.RedevlopmentAuthorityCityofButler.net.

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifying commercial properties include single-purpose retail and office buildings; and mixed-use buildings containing combinations of retail, office and residential apartments. Structures that are wholly residential shall **NOT** qualify.

Projects will be evaluated in terms of quality, design compatibility, and level of visual impact. The selection of grant recipients is based solely on project merit, level of improvement, and objectives and priorities of the revitalization initiative. The goal of this program is to see the building presented in its most appealing form. Storefronts should compliment the overall building in which it is housed.

Grants will be awarded based upon the level of improvement(s), the accuracy of historic preservation and the vitality and significant impact the project will make to the environment. Only completed applications will be accepted for processing. The grant application will be reviewed by Butler Area Development Corporation for completeness of information and supporting documents.

The Butler Area Development Corporation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national & ethnic origin, religion, familial status (families with children), handicap, age, ancestry and use of guide or support animals because of blindness, deafness, or physical handicap of the user or because the user is a handler or trainer of support or guide animals in the administration of any of its programs.

VII. GRANT OFFERED

Building façade improvements (Grant total cannot exceed \$5,000 per storefront or up to \$7,500 per business with multiple storefronts).

VIII. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Eligible activities may involve the major maintenance, repair, general rehabilitation, and restoration of commercial storefronts and upper story facades in conjunction with the Butler Downtown Improvement Guidelines. See attached. It may also include the removal and replacement of commercial signs and awnings.

There are a number of activities under the program that qualify for grant money. They include but are not limited to:

Façade restoration:

- a. Brick & Stone Masonry: Structural repairs, cleaning, re-pointing and painting

- b. Doors & Windows: Maintenance, repairs, replacement and restoration of window sash, exterior doors, and installation of storm windows in conjunction with other significant façade improvements
- c. Exterior Woodwork: Maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of sills, window and door frames, bulkheads, storefront and roof cornices, window hoods, decorative moldings and shutters.
- d. Storefronts: Removal of inappropriate coverings and additions, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and restoration of display and transom windows and lighting.
- e. Painting: Surface preparation, cleaning, painting
- f. Awnings: Installation, repair, and maintenance of fabric awnings, in connection with real property improvements
- g. Exterior Lighting
- h. Signage: Maintenance, repair, removal, and/or replacement that meet City Ordinance Regulations – No restoration or plastic signage
- i. Architectural Metals: Repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, duplication, and restoration of exterior building components, e.g., cast iron, pressed tin
- j. Historic Markers: Restoration, repair, cleaning, refinishing, and painting
- k. Structural Deficiencies: Stabilization and/or repair
- l. Gutters and Downspouts: Replacement
- m. Handicapped Access: compliance with ADA (handicap) access regulations—ramps, thresholds, entrances in conjunction with other design improvements

IX. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

1. Interior Renovations and Improvements
2. Removal of Architectural Details
3. Covering of Stable Architectural Details
4. Internally-Lighted Signs
5. Non-Fabric Awnings
6. Landscaping
7. Roof & Siding Repairs
8. Sidewalks, driveway, and parking lot repairs
9. Energy conservation measures
10. Design specs of the architectural façade, storefront, site, or signage
11. Facades that do NOT Face a Main Artery Street
12. Maintenance
13. New Building Construction
14. Plastic Signage

X. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design Elements Encouraged for All Kinds of Signs:

1. Signs integrated within a buildings overall appearance and existing architectural features
2. Distinctive sign letters, logos, and artwork specific to the business
3. Use of wood and decorative metal
4. Cut out and engraved letters
5. Short and simple sign text
6. Limit of signs to three per business location
7. External lighting using spotlights directed onto the sign

Design Elements Encouraged on Freestanding Signs:

1. Limiting the specifications to six foot height and eight foot width
2. Support posts at perimeter of sign
3. Landscaping around base
4. Limiting number of businesses on sign to three

Design Elements Discouraged on Buildings:

1. Signs integrated within a building's existing architectural features. One example is placing the business name in a sign box that was part of the original building
2. Pedestrian scale letters on glass; limit window signs to less than 1/3 of glass area
3. External fluorescent lighting
4. Freestanding signs that are greater than six feet high and eight feet wide
5. Using more than three signs per business location
6. Wall signs above first floor levels, except for small projecting signs
7. Long and complicated sign text
8. Signs painted on facades
9. Signs covering important building features

XI. SIGN AND AWNING PROJECTS

Signs and awnings play an important role in how a business is initially perceived. Not only are they a marketing tool, but also set the appearance from the roadway. Consistent signage and awnings adds to the character of the area in which they are placed, and could be considered to be a unifying factor in a commercial block or district. Lighting should be external, using spotlights directed onto the sign or awning. Neon signs may be considered.

Eligible Signs & Awning Projects

1. Building Signs
2. Freestanding Signs
3. Projecting Signs
4. Removal of Signage to Re-expose Original Architectural Feature(s)
5. Sign Restoration

Ineligible Sign & Awning Projects

1. Plastic or Digital Signage
2. Internally Illuminated Signs
3. Revolving Signs
4. Box Signs
5. Temporary & Promotional Signs
6. Rooftop Signs
7. Projecting "V" shaped Signs
8. Maintenance

XII. GRANT PROVISION

1. Subject to restrictions contained herein, Butler Area Development Corporation will provide a matching grant in an amount up to \$5,000, but not exceeding 50% of rehabilitation costs for exterior/façade improvements.
2. In order to qualify for a façade improvement grant, the building must be in substantial conformance with the Statewide Building Code and the International Property Maintenance Code, as appropriate. If the building does not meet those standards, the owner must bring it into substantial conformance with those standards to qualify for the façade improvement program.
3. The grant agreement between Butler Area Development Corporation and property owners will be in the form of a recorded contract that will require the owner or his successors to maintain the façade in a condition that meets the Statewide Building Code and the International Property Maintenance Code for five years from acceptance of the work. Upon failure to do so, Butler Area Development Corporation will have the right to recapture a percentage of the investment at 20% per year.
4. The owner/applicant must secure any funding exceeding the grant amount prior to the start of work. No money will be paid in anticipation of work -- only for work completed by the architect and/or contractor.
5. If a contractor hired by a building owner to make façade improvements under this program fails to complete the work, the owner may be required to make up any difference in cost that may result from hiring another contractor to complete the job.
6. Agree to comply with, in accordance with all applicable regulations, terms and conditions of the City of Butler Code Ordinances and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

XII. GENERAL GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

1. Applications – Butler Area Development Corporation will make known by newspaper, radio, and mailings of the available grant money to those properties within the designated boundaries.
2. Owner/Applicant shall pay a \$50 non-refundable application fee upon submission of the letter of commitment to the Authority stating their façade restoration objectives. Owner/Applicant must also provide proof of current paid real estate taxes with application. If applicant is a leaser, a copy of the lease agreement is required and owner's permission for program participation.
3. Butler Area Development Corporation will conduct individual interviews with interested property owners to review the initial design concept restoration. All activity of restoration must be consistent with the design element of downtown Butler. Architectural renderings may be required.
4. The Owner/Applicant's façade restoration objectives along with the design drawing (if available) will be forwarded to the Downtown Revitalization Committee or the existing City approved entity to determine whether they are

- consistent with the design element and otherwise acceptable (in compliance with local codes and/or State Labor & Industry requirements) for approval.
5. A Work-Write-up shall be prepared and submitted to Butler Area Development Corporation. The Work Write-Up will determine the total amount of work to be undertaken and will be used by the contractors as a basis for estimating the cost of the rehabilitation. In no case will assistance be rendered for improvements or activities which are already ongoing or which may have been completed prior to the initiation of procedures listed above.
 6. Once the design and Work Write-Up has been approved, the Owner/Applicant will be responsible for obtaining a minimum of two (2) bids from qualified contractors. At the Owner/Applicant's request Butler Area Development Corporation may provide assistance in inviting reputable contractors to submit bids by providing a list of contractors for the owner to select from.
 7. If facade improvements are in excess of \$25,000, Federal Davis Bacon/Prevailing wage rates are applicable to façade rehabilitation projects utilizing grant funds. The only exception is when a façade project is completed by a small construction company where there are only owners, not employees, in the company.
 8. The contractor's bid will be limited to those items specifically identified in the Work Write-Up unless a written change order is obtained and approved by both the owner and Butler Area Development Corporation. The Owner/Applicant may select any contractor whose bid is within 115% of Butler Area Development Corporation's estimate for the work.
 9. Contractors must furnish evidence of comprehensive public liability insurance coverage in the amount of not less than \$50,000/100,000, workmen's compensation insurance, Worker Protection and Investment Certification, and a Performance Bond.
 10. It shall be the responsibility of the contractor to obtain any permits for rehabilitation work in the City.
 11. Once an acceptable bid is obtained from a contractor, the Owner/Applicant's application will be approved or rejected by the Authority solely on the basis of the pre-established criteria. Complete compliance by the Owner/Applicant is necessary in order to qualify for funds.
 12. After approval of the application, settlement will be scheduled. The order for executing documents at settlement is as follows:
 1. Pledge of Owner's Share
 2. Rehabilitation Contract
 3. Proceed Order
 13. Once the Owner/Applicant secures his entire share, if required, any payments from Butler Area Development Corporation shall be as work progresses in the form of a check upon approval of the executed Payment Request form (see attached). Checks will be made payable to the contractor.
 14. Progress payments may be made upon inspection and approval of the work by Butler Area Development Corporation.
 15. A final inspection shall be performed by BADC to ensure that the work was completed in conformance with the Work Write-up prior to final payment. Butler Area Development Corporation will obtain the signature of the property owner

indicating satisfaction with the completed work. Butler Area Development Corporation will not be involved in any way with work completed by the contract that was not specified in the Work Write-up.

16. No façade improvements may be made by "property/business owner" contractors under this program.
17. The Owner/Applicant is fully responsible for all liability involved with the work contracted. Butler Area Development Corporation is held harmless.
18. Butler Area Development Corporation will accept a 2nd lien position.

Attachments:

Authorization and Release of Liability
Application
Boundary Map
Butler Downtown Improvement Guidelines
Payment Request Form