

DOWNTOWN WEST ORANGE FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2009

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM?

The purpose of the Façade Grant Program is to provide financial assistance to the business and property owners of the West Orange SID District as an incentive for the improvement of their building facades, such as signs, awnings, new storefronts, etc. This financial assistance consists of grants to be matched by the recipient and to be utilized only for facade improvements as described herein. The objective of the program is to improve the viability of the business as well as improve the appearance and historic character of the Downtown.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

The funds for this program are a part of the Downtown West Orange Alliance (DWOA) budget. The funds come from the Special Improvement District Assessment that the commercial property and business owners pay each quarter to the Township. The township turns over the SID funds to the DWOA for its work program.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Façade Grant Program will be managed by the Executive Director of DWOA. The Executive Director will review all grant applications for completeness, consult with applicants on design selections, and will approve or disapprove applications with assistance from the DWOA Design Committee.

Business and property owners who wish to renovate their storefront have the opportunity to apply for a grant with the obligation to match that grant dollar for dollar through their own resources. Grant amounts and limits vary depending on the type of project:

- Façade improvements, which include signage, awnings and/or lighting: 50% matching grant, maximum of \$2,000.
- Building Maintenance that fronts on public area: matching grant of 25%, maximum of \$1,000.
- Window display or Landscaping Improvements: matching grant of 33%, maximum of \$1,000.

The maximum amount of grants to be distributed each year through the Façade Grant Program shall be determined by the amount available after the annual work program and budget are approved by the DWOA Board and the West Orange Town Council, this will determine how much, if any, will be allocated to the program.

ARE THERE ANY STRINGS ATTACHED?

Just a few. Applicants must meet all of the following prerequisites:

1. The proposed projects must be within the boundaries of the DWOA SID District, as illustrated on the attached map.

2. The proposed projects must comply with all the terms of this “**Downtown West Orange Facade Grant Program**” as established by the Downtown West Orange Alliance.
3. Applicants are expected to match dollar-for-dollar the funds granted to them, and to meet all other additional expenditures required to complete their project, through their own resources.
4. Applicants must be business and/or property owners.

WHAT KIND OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

Applications for grants may be submitted, and matching funds may be provided for any one or any combination of the following renovation projects:

- Cleaning and/or graffiti resistant painting of building facades
- Installation of new and/or repair of old storefronts, exterior walls, siding
- Restoration of original facades
- New awnings
- New signage
- Installation of new lighting
- New entrances
- Other projects on approval.

Fees paid to design professionals for their services related to the improvement may also be included. All eligible improvements must be visible from a public street or parking area.

WHAT CRITERIA WILL BE USED IN DETERMINING IF MY PROJECT RECEIVES FUNDING?

All projects will be judged based on the following criteria:

1. Positive impact of the project on the business of the applicant
2. Positive impact of the project on the aesthetic appearance of the building
3. Positive impact of the project on the aesthetic appearance of the downtown
4. Preservation and enhancement of the architectural integrity of the building
5. Adequacy of documentation presented

In addition, applicants should consider the following when proposing a project:

1. Projects should be tastefully executed using colors and materials compatible with the building in which the building is located and historic quality of the surrounding buildings and the downtown.
2. Improvements, especially signs and awnings, should be of a size appropriate to the pedestrian nature and scale of the downtown.
3. Improvements should not attempt to “cover up” existing signage or other unsightly

building features. These items should be removed prior to installation of the improvement.

4. Projects must be in compliance with all applicable State laws and regulations and with the ordinances of the Township of West Orange.

CAN I GET FREE TECHNICAL GUIDANCE FROM THE DOWNTOWN WEST ORANGE ALLIANCE?

Yes! The Executive Director shall make every effort to facilitate the process of approvals by the applicable authorities of the Township of West Orange, and to provide contacts and information on appropriate design, colors, materials, etc.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A GRANT?

To assist you in applying for a grant, the Executive Director will act as your liaison. The Director will contact you to discuss your project and any questions you may have. Then each applicant should complete pages 1-4 of this package and return them along with all requested documentation (see page 2) to the DWOA office located in Town Hall. Be sure to carefully read and sign the letter of agreement (page 3 & 4).

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY?

The Executive Director will review all applications, select the grant award recipients and allocate the amounts awarded. Selections by the Executive Director shall be submitted to the designated representative from the Board of Trustees of DWOA for final approval.

Upon notification of the conditional awarded grant, **the recipient shall obtain the necessary permits from the appropriate officials of the Township**, and then proceed with the implementation of the project as per the drawings and specifications approved by the DWOA.

WHEN DO I COLLECT?

No payments shall be made to a grant recipient until the project is completed. Upon completion, the applicant shall submit itemized records of eligible expenditures with costs of labor and materials, describe the work performed, and include original invoices and proof of payments made for the project. Upon inspection and verification of these payments, the Executive Director shall inspect the work performed and approve or disapprove the final work. Upon such field inspection and approval, the Executive Director will notify the DWOA Board of the approval and add the reimbursement to the "bills list" to be approved at the next meeting of the Board. Within one week of said Board meeting, the DWOA office will send or deliver the check to the recipient of the grant for the approved amount.

WHAT DEFINES THE WEST ORANGE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT?

The boundaries of the West Orange Downtown Business District are delineated on the attached map. Basically, it is the Main Street corridor from the Orange border up to and including

Harrison Street to the Montclair border. It also includes Valley Road from Main to Joyce St. and Northfield Avenue to Wheeler St. The "Façade Grant Program" is applicable within these boundaries. Only businesses and properties within these boundaries shall be eligible to apply for grants.

LIABILITY WAIVER

The responsibility for conformance with all the applicable building codes, ordinances and regulations for any given project sponsored by the "Façade Grant Program" lies entirely with the property and/or business owners, recipients of the grant, and their architects/engineers. An approval granted by the Executive Director of the Downtown West Orange Alliance, Inc. applies only to **compliance** with the eligibility guidelines for the award of the grant. Under no circumstance shall DWOA and/or any individual representing this organization, be held liable for building code errors and/or omissions, property damages and/or personal injuries to any individual or entity, during and after construction.