

## **FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM INTRODUCTION**

As part of the Building a Better Berwick enhancement plan, the Berwick: The Next Step Steering Committee is exploring applying for a state grant to help improve building facades in the downtown area. Façade grant funds could be available to business and property owners in the form of matching grants. The first step in this process is determining the level of interest.

Examples of the types of improvements which are eligible under the program are signs, awnings, repair and/or restoration of storefront exteriors, and the cost of professional design services. Funding may be allocated to any one business location for up to 50 percent (50%) of the total project not to exceed total reimbursement of \$5,000 per storefront. Anyone who owns or leases commercial property in the designated downtown program area (map attached) would be eligible, however, tenants would have to provide written approval of the building's owner.

If the grant is approved, the Committee will be utilizing design guidelines to serve as a reference guide. The guidelines offer basic information about applicable standards of physical improvements, which have proven to be effective in the revitalization of other downtown business districts throughout Pennsylvania. In addition, the guidelines would establish a set of principles to ensure that improvements are consistent with the scale and character of its architecture. These principles stress good property maintenance and preservation of original architectural features and encourage the compatibility of any replacement architectural elements and building additions.

A sub-group of the Committee would review applications, determine eligibility, and approve the buildings to receive assistance. Projects will be evaluated on the basis of quality, design compatibility, and the level of visual and economic impact. If more applications are received than there is money available, grants would be awarded from available funds on a first-come, first-serve basis to eligible applicants.

At this point, all that is needed is a list of potential projects with estimated costs. Contractor quotes, designs, etc. are not needed for the application.

Based on sufficient interest, the grant application would likely be submitted in early 2020, with funds to be available later that year. Projects completed or started prior to approval would not be eligible for reimbursement.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***What types of projects are eligible?***

Signs, awnings, building façade improvements (painting, siding, masonry work, etc.), and professional design services for these projects. Only exterior improvements to buildings are eligible.

### ***Who is eligible?***

Business proprietors and property owners of buildings in the designated downtown program area. (Map attached)

### ***How much are the matching grants?***

Up to \$5,000 per property/storefront.

### ***What are the basic criteria for awarding matching grants?***

Projects will be evaluated in terms of quality, design compatibility and level of visual and economic impact. The selection of grant recipients is based solely on project merit, not financial need.

### ***Could I apply for more than one property/storefront?***

Yes. Multiple applications will be considered.

### ***What would I need to provide with my application?***

A completed application form, application fee (approximately \$100), photographs of the existing structure, at least two (2) contractor or vendor cost estimates, verification of property control/approval, property insurance, and architectural plans, drawings, etc. as appropriate.

### ***When would I receive payment for the grant?***

Prior to payment of the matching grant, all work must be complete in a manner consistent with the work described in your application. All work must be completed within six (6) months from the date the grant is approved; otherwise, the grant will be forfeited.

### ***Who pays the contractor?***

The business or property owner pays the contractor, and then submits documentation to receive payment of the grant.

### ***Could I do the work myself to save money?***

Yes, but you will be reimbursed only for materials. The grant will not reimburse for your time.

### ***What paperwork would I need to provide when the project is completed?***

The grant recipient would need to submit documentation that substantiates the total and final cost for the work. Specifically, supporting documentation that substantiates the work is complete. Photographs of the completed project, a copy of a signed contract with the vendor or contractor, final invoice, and cancelled checks or confirmations of payment in full will need to be provided.

Façade Grant Program Area

