

TARENTUM BOROUGH FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT GUIDELINES

PROGRAM POLICIES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Funding and Administration of the Façade Improvement Grant Program are made possible by Tarentum's Electric Fund. Grants are awarded per the policies outlined herein and must conform with all applicable state and local requirements.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Tarentum Borough Façade, Improvement Grant Program, is intended to stimulate private investment in the Borough. The program seeks to preserve and restore historic architecture and to foster image-making improvements to all commercial properties regardless of their historical significance.

Projects must achieve visible results that enhance Tarentum Borough's image, marketability, and economic vitality. Façade Improvement Grants have the following specific objectives.

- Enhance the visual appeal of businesses.
- Assist with the preservation of historic commercial buildings and ensure that such buildings are rehabilitated in an appropriate manner.
- Utilize properties in their characteristic purpose or provide new uses that require minimal changes to the defining characteristics of individual building exteriors, their site, and their environment.
- Reduce or eliminate vacancies in Tarentum Borough while promoting the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any person(s) or legal entity that owns or leases commercial buildings in the C-1 Zone is eligible to apply. Applications by lessees/tenants require the consent of the property owner.

PROGRAM GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

Consideration will be given to commercial properties located within the designated target area, Tarentum Borough's C-1 Zone.

DEFINITION OF FAÇADE

For these guidelines, the façade of a building is generally the front of a structure but may also include, at the discretion of the Tarentum Borough Planning Committee, the side and/or back of a building.

AMOUNT OF GRANT

The grant will award up to \$5,000 per approved project by reimbursing eligible activities. All selected applicants will be required to have a match of 10% of the total approved grant amount. For example, if a grantee is awarded a \$5,000 grant, they will be required to match \$500.00. Failure to provide the required match will disqualify the grantee. A maximum of 10 grants will be awarded in any given year.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

A variety of commercial property improvements, including major maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of storefronts and facades, are eligible activities. Eligible grant activities include:

- ❖ Signage — Maintenance, repair, removal, and replacement. Signs must conform to the Borough of Tarentum Building Code and the Zoning Ordinances for the Borough of Tarentum (if applicable).
 - Types of signs recommended and their definitions are as follows:
 - Flush Signs are meant to be viewed from a distance. They are visible when you directly face a structure's façade or from across the street. Flush signs should be placed on vacant panels above doors or display windows.
 - Projecting Signs are meant to attract pedestrians' attention as they hang over the sidewalk. This type of sign is most effective on buildings abutting a sidewalk.
 - Freestanding Signs are appropriate when a structure is set back ten or more feet from the sidewalk. They alert people of a business when its structure may be partially hidden from pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
 - Window signs are applied on the inside of display windows or doors.
 - The placement of signs should exhibit the following characteristics:
 - Use of display windows for creative signage.
 - Placement of signs and awnings may not cover or overwhelm architectural details such as cornices, trim, windows, decorative brickwork, or other unique architectural features.
 - The orientation of signs should be geared toward sidewalk pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Avoid extraneous information on signs and scale them to attract the attention of vehicular traffic.
 - Limited signs on storefront display windows and doors. Signs should be sized and scaled to balance and should not hide or overwhelm the structure.
 - Construction and Design guidelines for signs are as follows:
 - Return to or re-create period signage, utilizing the lettering characteristic of the period. Sign material and design should reflect the period of the building and the original design of the storefront.
 - Colors of signs and awnings should complement the overall color scheme of the building's façade and downtown streetscape.
 - Use artisan-crafted signs & quality sign materials manufactured specifically by the sign industry.
 - Use graphic elements, details of the building, and architectural motifs as part of the sign design when feasible.
 - Lettering should be kept to a minimum. The message should be brief and to the point. A logo or illustration can be substituted or included to communicate the nature of the business.
 - Multiple signs are to be avoided when one sign is sufficient so as to avoid confusion and distraction. Small secondary signs used for direction purposes are acceptable so long as they maintain the same design elements of the main identification sign. Freestanding sandwich signs advertising daily specials or events are acceptable so long as they maintain the same design elements of the main identification sign.
 - Lighting for signs should adhere to the following:
 - They are to utilize external lighting fixtures rather than internally lit plastic features.

- The use of flashing lights is not permitted.
 - Sign lighting should be directed to the sign itself and not used to light the surrounding area. Separate fixtures should be used for area lighting.
 - Lighting fixture design, if visible, should be consistent across the façade and complement the architectural period of the building.
- ❖ Awnings – Installation, repair, and maintenance of fabric awnings in connection with real property improvements. Characteristics of approved awnings are as follows:
 - Both fixed position and retractable awnings are acceptable.
 - The name and nature of the business may be displayed on the front face and/or side facings so long as simple lettering designs are used and the message is brief.
 - Awnings may be used on street level and upper stories so long as they are appropriate to and maintain the architectural style of the façade.
 - Weather-treated canvas or natural-looking materials are to be selected. Plastic awnings are not appropriate.
 - An awning should not be oversized; it should fit within the storefront area and not cover architectural elements.
- ❖ Brick and Stone Masonry – Structural repairs, cleaning, repointing, and painting.
- ❖ Architectural Metals – Repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, duplication, and restoration of exterior doors and installation of storm windows in conjunction with other significant façade improvements.
- ❖ Doors and Upper-Story Windows – Maintenance, repairs, replacement, and restoration of window sashes, exterior doors, and installation of storm windows in conjunction with other significant façade improvements.
- ❖ Exterior Woodwork – Maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of sills, window and door frames, bulkheads, storefront and roof cornices, window hoods, and decorative moldings.
- ❖ Storefronts – Removal of inappropriate coverings and additions, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of display and transom windows and lighting.
- ❖ Improvements to Sides or Backs of Buildings – The building's side must be fully exposed to a public street or other public area.
- ❖ Painting – Surface preparation, cleaning, painting.
- ❖ Landscaping & Streetscaping – Installation of landscaping and streetscaping (hardscaping, for example paver stones and fencing, or softscaping, for example: plant and shrub materials).

Eligible activities will be evaluated based on appropriateness of design, impact on the program area and objectives, as well as the order of receipt of application.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- General and/or minor Maintenance Projects
- Plastic Signage and Electronic Digital Signage (e.g., LED and LCD signs)
- Roofing Repairs
- Sidewalks, Driveways, and Parking Lot Repairs
- New Building Construction

TERMS OF GRANT AWARD

The Tarentum Borough Façade Improvement Grants are part of a broader planned effort to restore the Borough's commercial image and character. The maximum Façade Improvement Grant that may be awarded is \$5,000. Recipients must pay 10% of the requested grant amount upon acceptance of the grant to receive funding. A process of application, design review and approval, and satisfactory construction completion in accordance with the program requirements.

- All Borough financial obligations must be met before an applicant is eligible for approval of funds. This includes all utilities, fines, and or fees owed to the Borough.
- All State and local taxes must be paid entirely to the current fiscal year on all properties owned or co-owned by the applicant.
- Receipt of grant awards is contingent upon the submission of construction cost invoices from bona fide contractors or tradesmen.
- A joint façade improvement project (with 2 or more properties that share a common wall) is eligible for grants up to \$5,000 per deeded property.
- One grant per storefront will be considered for tenant/leaseholder/owner applicants. No owner or partial owner shall receive a grant for more than one owned property in any given year.
- All work must conform to local and state ordinances and permits from the Borough of Tarentum, and/or permission from the property owner will be required, if applicable.
- All work must be completed in a manner consistent with the work described in the approved Façade Improvement Grant application. Proof of a 10% of payment must be provided in order for the funds to be issued via reimbursement at the end of the project.
- The applicant must submit to the Tarentum Borough Planning Committee documentation that substantiates the work completed.
- All work must be completed within 12 months of the grant approval date; otherwise, the grant may be forfeited. Extensions of no more than 6 months may be granted at the Committee's approval.
- Project costs are inclusive of appropriate Pennsylvania sales taxes.
- All projects must have a building inspection completed by the Borough Code Enforcement Officer before final approval of the project by the Borough Council. Failure to have a completed inspection will result in automatic denial of the grant.
- All grant applications must be signed and submitted by the application deadline set by Borough Council each year.
- The Borough of Tarentum reserves the right to withdraw funding from any applicant who does not comply with the stated guidelines and processes.

GRANT APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

- Obtain a Tarentum Borough Façade Improvement Grant Application. Applications are available at the Municipal Office of Tarentum Borough, 318 East 2nd Avenue, PA, 15084, and online at www.tarentumboro.com or call 724-671-7474.
- Submit to the above address the completed Application, inclusive of the following:
 1. Applicant identification and contact information.
 2. Property owner identification is different from the applicant's.
 3. Property location.
 4. Written project description, design plan, drawing, schematics, photographs, etc. Professional design consultation is recommended to ensure compliance with the Program Design Standards.
 5. For projects being completed by the property owner, a written cost proposal along with a list of 1 contractor and their price quote must be submitted.
 6. Signature of the applicant and property owner (if different from the applicant).
- The Tarentum Borough Planning Committee reviews the application for completeness and conformance to Program design standards within 45 days of receipt.
 1. The Tarentum Borough Planning Committee will score grants based on the approved Façade Grant Application Scoring Rubric. (Appendix B)
- Tarentum Borough Code Enforcement Officer will complete a building inspection and submit a recommendation to the Borough Council with the Planning Committee Recommendation.
- All applications are subject to approval by the Tarentum Borough Council as a condition of the grant award.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Project activities must conform to the following:

- The Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* **if** the building is designated as historic by the State of Federal Registries. (see Attachment "A")
- Tarentum Borough Code and Zoning Ordinances and Guidelines.

ATTACHMENT "A"

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S
STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION
&
GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. Removing historic materials or altering features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires the replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials. Documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence shall substantiate the replacement of missing features.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. If appropriate, the surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If the resource must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old. It shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired

ATTACHMENT "B"

Façade Grant Application Scoring

Applications will be scored according to the following criteria. A maximum score of 75 points is possible.

General Description of Project – 10 points		
10	5	1
Project is well described and considers the impact the project will have on the business and the community	Project is described. Impacts on the business and the community are not well described	The project is not well described, lacking specifics on the business and/or community.
Visual Impact of Project – 10 points		
10	5	1
Project will have high visual impact on the building façade that will have a positive impact on the community	Project will improve the building façade and may have some positive impact on the community	Project lacks visual impact and will have little impact on the community
Project is Historically Appropriate and/or conforms to Tarentum Design Standards – 10 points		
10	5	1
The project restores/enhances the original look of the building and that of Tarentum's history.	The project considers the historic look of the building.	Project lacks consideration of the historic look of the building and that of Tarentum's history.
Project will increase business, employment, or encourage others to improve their façade – 10 points		
10	5	1
Project will help increase the business's revenue and/or employment, and that of those businesses around it.	Project may help increase the business's revenue or employment, and /or that of those businesses around it.	Project will have little impact on the business' viability and that of those businesses around it.
Project Costs – 10 points		
10	5	1
A clear, detailed, and reasonable cost estimate has been provided. Owner is providing a significant investment.	A budget or estimates have been provided. Owner participation is moderate.	No, or minimal, budget has been provided. Costs are not realistic or reasonable. Minimal owner participation.
Project Drawings or Renderings are provided – 5 points		
5	3	1
Project drawings or renderings are detailed, professional, and complete.	Project drawings were provided and convey the basics of the project.	No professional project drawings or renderings were provided.
Project Timeline – 5 points		
5	3	1
A detailed and realistic timeline was provided.	A timeline was provided.	No, or unrealistic, timeline was provided.

Applicant Eligibility – 5 points		
5	3	1
Applicant meets all eligibility requirements for participation in the grant program and has been an active member of the Tarentum Community for three or more years.	Applicant meets all eligibility requirements for participation in the grant program.	Applicant does not meet one or more of the requirements for participation in the grant program.
Application Package – 10 points		
10	5	1
A complete, detailed, and organized application was submitted.	A complete application was submitted.	Application is incomplete or does not address key criteria.

