

CITY OF Knox

BUSINESS FAÇADE GRANT GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The City of Knox desires to financially assist downtown building owners in the exterior rehabilitation of their building facades within the defined downtown area on the included map (Washington Street to Bender Street and Pearl Street to Shield Street). Applicants may apply for funding one time.

Projects eligible for grant funding include awning, repair and improvement of masonry. Wood, windows, doors, decorative lighting for signs, exterior painting, and replacement of glass that visually improves the façade and contributes to the character of the building may also be considered. Projects must provide a pleasing aesthetic with a goal of attracting new businesses and customers and should promote architectural appreciation using practices that conserve existing building stock and encourage enhancement of historic or distinct architectural features whenever possible. Priority will be given to buildings with inappropriately applied facades or awnings, with a goal of historic restoration and preservation.

Routine maintenance, including roof repair and replacement, broken glass replacement, siding repair, HVAC installation or repairs are not eligible for façade grant funds. Fees including engineering, architectural, recording, and permit fees are also not eligible for grant reimbursement.

The City of Knox will cover 80-percent of eligible costs, up to \$10,000. The building owner is responsible for the remaining 20-percent of the total project cost.

PURPOSE

The Business Façade Grant Program is intended to promote visual improvements for all businesses within the defined downtown Knox business district. This includes historic preservation and structural integrity.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- The business must be located in the downtown Knox area specified by the Knox Redevelopment Commission (RDC). It must also be compliant with all City codes and appearance requirements.
- The applicant must own the building.
- Neither the applicant nor any of their principals may be in default of any obligations to the City of Knox.
- The applicant must demonstrate the ability to pay for the project prior to grant approval.
- Property must be zoned for, or occupied by, a commercial mixed property. Vacant properties are not eligible unless occupancy is verified with a signed lease agreement, with occupancy to begin within three (3) months of the application date. Failure to occupy the property within three (3) months may subject the applicant to repayment of the City's 80-percent match, at the City's absolute and sole discretion.
- All property taxes and/or assessments, general and special, must be paid and current.

- The property may not have previously received a façade grant from the City of Knox.
- Project improvements must visually enhance the building’s exterior façade and may not be used for repair of existing code violations or general maintenance.
- Project improvements must comply with all City zoning and building code requirements and all applicable permitting as required by City ordinances. Any outstanding zoning or building code violations must be corrected before grant approval.
- Improvements not specifically listed as eligible, or ineligible are subject to review as to their eligibility or ineligibility by the RDC at its sole and exclusive discretion. All RDC determinations of eligibility are final.

TERMS

1. Application packets are available at Knox City Hall and on the website CityofKnox.net.
2. Applicants are required to attend a pre-application meeting with the RDC to discuss planned renovations, including any awnings, and must schedule an appointment with staff prior to submission.
3. Photographs displaying the current state of the building façade must be submitted to the RDC with the application.
4. Applicants are required to attend meetings during application review. In-person attendance is preferred, but requests to attend virtually will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
5. The building owner will be responsible for obtaining at least two written estimates of project costs and submitting them to the RDC for review.
6. All contractors must be licensed by the City. If the applicant is doing work themselves, they must also be licensed by the City and must provide two additional written estimates for the work from two licensed contractors.
7. The façade grant agreement must be signed, notarized, and recorded, with the applicant to pay the recording fee. The RDC will ensure the document is recorded.
8. Grant recipients are required to maintain the improvements for a 10-year period. This will be conveyed with the sale of the property, and the property owner is responsible for making sure the purchaser is aware of the obligation to maintain the work. The RDC will evaluate waiver requests from prospective purchasers on a case-by-case basis.
9. The applicant may apply for all necessary permits after the document is recorded and must notify the City of the anticipated construction start date.
10. The applicant shall not start façade improvements before the letter of commitment is signed and building permits are issued. Any work performed, materials purchased, or contracts entered into prior to an executed letter of commitment will NOT be eligible for grant assistance, including the 20-percent building owner match.
11. The applicant is responsible for ensuring the contractor is qualified and must verify that they are registered with the City of Knox and properly licensed, bonded, and insured. The applicant shall indemnify protect, defend, and hold the City harmless from and against all losses, claims, liabilities, environmental cleanup costs, fines, penalties, suits and actions, judgements and costs, including attorney fees and the costs of litigation, which shall arise from or grow out of any injury to or death of persons, or damage to or loss of property, or

violation by the Contractor or any other person, of any governmental statute, law, regulation, rule, or ordinance, directly or indirectly arising out of or resulting from the Owner's regulation, rule, or ordinance, directly or indirectly arising from the Owner's failure to properly vet Contractor for their qualifications, quality of work, or workmanlike qualities, or for any other negligent act or omission on the part of the contractor or Owner.

12. Work must start within three months of the grant approval and must be completed within six months of the start date. The RDC will consider written requests for additional time on a case-by-case basis. Approval will be rescinded if a project is not completed on time without a written request for an extension.
13. If a project is expected to take longer due to complexity, this must be clearly stated and explained in the application, and an anticipated completion date must be provided. This should not be more than 12 months from the start date.
14. The 20-percent match provided by the owner will be applied to all qualifying costs first. Receipts for expenses must be submitted to the City of Knoxville. The remaining 80-percent will become effective once the project is completed and approved by the grant applicant and the city. The City will make payments directly to the contractor or subcontractor who has been hired to do the work. The City reserves the right to hold back funds to ensure any deficiencies are remedied by the project contractor prior to full payment. The Owner shall work with the City in pursuing any remedial action against the contractor if necessary.
15. The RDC will conduct a mid-project review, and the applicant must submit a mid-project written report.
16. Applicants must display required signage acknowledging RDC assistance. Signs will be provided and installed by the City.
17. The RDC and Mayor expressly reserve the right to reject any and/or all applicants or to request more information from any and/or all applicants at its sole and exclusive discretion.
18. No Partnership Created. Nothing in the grant application documents, or any work order or contract shall hereinafter be construed to create a partnership between the City and the Owner. And neither the City nor the Owner shall be responsible for any debts or obligations of the party thereby.
19. Proof of Completion documents must be submitted to the RDC, and a compliance inspection must be completed by the City Code Enforcement Officer and a member of the RDC before the project is deemed finished and final payment is approved.

Appendix A – Knox Redevelopment Commission Business Façade Grant Guidelines Eligible Area

