



ABERDEEN FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2026

Program Overview

The Façade Improvement Program provides matching grants to property owners and businesses to stimulate improvements to building frontages for commercial properties located within the Aberdeen Sustainable Community Area, which encompasses areas of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area and U.S. Route 40.

The benefits of the Façade Improvement Program are to enhance the local economy, increase visibility and foot traffic, preserve historic architecture, leverage private investment and provide a safe and clean environment in the downtown area.

Assistance Available

Approved projects are eligible to receive a dollar-for-dollar matching grant to assist with the exterior rehabilitation of eligible commercial and mixed-use structures and interior improvements may also be considered. Sources of match will be cash match directly related to the physical improvements.

Eligibility Requirements

Existing structures currently zoned for commercial uses and being used or planned for a commercial use, within the City of Aberdeen's Sustainable Community Area.

If a building code or zoning violation is present, correction of the violation must be made as part of the façade improvement work.

Eligible applicants include the owner of a commercial building or the owner of a commercial business. All applications must be signed by the property owner to indicate consent for proposed improvements. The determination of eligibility and priority for assistance is at the discretion of the City of Aberdeen. Work which qualifies for assistance includes improvements to the exterior of a building which are visible from the public right-of-way, and may also include documented costs for architectural design, permitting and inspection services. Assistance may also include interior improvements on a case-by-case basis determined by the City of Aberdeen.

All awards made for a Façade Improvement grant must be utilized and work completed within six (6) months from approval.

Ineligible Improvements:

- Improvements made prior to award approval
- Structural Repairs that exceed \$5,000
- Roof Repairs
- Routine maintenance on the building
- Parking Lot Resurfacing
- Projects that are duplicative and have previously been funded with a Community Legacy Façade Improvement grant

Process Steps 1. Application Process

The applicant must fill out all sections of the application, which is located on the City's website, www.aberdeenmd.gov. The following requirements are outlined in the application:

- ✓ Submission of completed application form
- ✓ Color photographs of existing building façade
- ✓ Conceptual design plan and specific scope of work
- ✓ Two itemized project cost estimates
- ✓ Documentation of owner's approval and permission for tenant improvements
- ✓ A meeting with the Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development is required to review the application and discuss the proposed improvements.

2. State Approval

The completed application will be sent to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and the Maryland Historical Trust for approval prior to the city authorizing a grant award. The State approvals may take up to 30 days.

3. City Approval

The completed application and award amount will be reviewed and approved by the City Manager/Mayor and Department of Planning and Community Development. Please note, the requested award amount on the application may differ than the actual award granted or may also be denied for funding.

4. Notice to Proceed

The Notice to Proceed with construction activity will be issued by the City of Aberdeen to the grant applicant. The Notice to Proceed does not guarantee the issuance of required building permits, which must be secured prior to the start of construction.

5. Modification

Any modification to an approved design requires the grant recipient to contact the City of Aberdeen for approval of the modification. Modifications will be reviewed and approved by the City Manager/Mayor and Department of Planning and Community Development. Grant recipients shall not authorize execution of plan modifications until they have received written approval from City staff. Doing so may jeopardize the guarantee of project funding.

6. Project Schedule and Payment

The grant recipient will have six (6) months from the date of award in which to complete the required improvements. Exceptions for new construction or pending leases will be considered at the time of application. If grantee does not utilize funds within the given term, funds may be redistributed, and grantee will have to reapply.

Following the completion of the improvements, the grantee should submit all paid invoices and cancelled checks to the Director of Planning and Community Development for reimbursement to include photographs of the complete improvements.

Cash payments for work completed will not be accepted for reimbursement by the City of Aberdeen. Partial reimbursements may be requested as line items are completed and costs are incurred, provided

that all required documentation is submitted with each request for reimbursement. If the completed work does not conform to the approved plans and specifications, the City may instruct the grant recipient to bring the work into compliance.

The City will not process the reimbursement payment and issue a check until all improvements have been satisfactorily completed and all required documentation has been submitted. In no case shall payment exceed the amount stipulated in the grant award.

City of Aberdeen Façade Improvement Application

Please return your completed application with all supporting documents to:

Facade Improvement Program
City of Aberdeen
Department of Planning and Community Development
60 North Parke Street Aberdeen, Maryland 21001
410-272-1600 ext. 216
Fax: 410-273-7402

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Completed application form
- ☐ Photographs (color) of existing exterior building facade
- ☐ Conceptual plan of improvements or architectural rendering
- ☐ Letter from property owner authorizing work to be completed
- ☐ Two contract estimates/bids attached to application

This Application is for assistance to:

Name of Business: _____

Business Address: _____

Business Phone Number: _____

SECTION A. BUILDING OWNERSHIP INFORMATION (Only if different from applicant)

Property Owner's Name: _____

Property Owner's Address _____

Property Owner's Phone Number: _____

Please note:

- There can be no liens other than mortgages against the Applicant's property. All payments to the City of Aberdeen and other government entities must be current (taxes, water, etc.).
- Projects must conform to applicable building codes, zoning regulations, and/or requirements for public accessibility. Other conditions may apply.
- Applicant is responsible for obtaining appropriate building permits, obtaining bids for construction activity, and agree to an inspection of the work by the City of Aberdeen.
- Applicant is responsible for submitting design drawings to the Aberdeen Architectural Review Committee (if applicable).

Instructions: Applicants must answer all items; incomplete applications will be returned. Any items which do not apply to your project should be marked "N/A".

SECTION B. PROPERTY INFORMATION

- 1. Number of businesses occupying the building: _____
- 2. Number of vacant commercial units in the building: _____
- 3. How long have these units been vacant: _____
- 4. What year was the building constructed: _____
- 5. Building size (total square footage): _____
- 6. Are there any outstanding debts (mortgages, encumbrances, liens, attachments) on the property?
Yes___ No___

SECTION C. PROJECT INFORMATION

Please describe the type of improvements you propose to make to the building façade or interior. Include a brief description of all other improvements (use additional sheets, if necessary).

Total Project Cost: \$ _____

Source of Funds: _____

Grant Request in the amount of: _____

Matching Fund obtained through: _____

Have you sought architectural assistance? Yes___ No___

Architectural firm's Name, Address, and Phone # _____

Please list the names of all contractors who provided an estimate and attach copies of all estimates

Contractor's Name and Address: _____

Contractor's Name and Address: _____

Contractor's Name and Address: _____

SECTION D. APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

I/we certify that all information provided in the application is accurate and that I/we will complete a facade improvement project in accordance with plans approved by the City of Aberdeen. Upon notification that my/our project is approved for the Façade Improvement Program Grant. I further agree that at the conclusion of the facade improvements to maintain the completed project. I/we understand there will be no alterations of the completed work without approval from the City of Aberdeen.

Applicant(s) Signature(s):

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____