



2019 Façade and Sign Improvement Grant Program FAQs

What is the Façade and Sign Improvement Program?

The program is a partnership between the City and Beverly Main Streets to help improve the appearance of downtown properties, which in turn makes the whole downtown more attractive. The 2019 program is funded at \$25,000.

How long does the application and approval process take?

The process takes 4-8 weeks, depending on when you apply. The DRB only meets once a month, and you must have your application into Beverly Main Streets at least 4 weeks before the city's DRB meeting application date (which is 8 days before the actual meeting date).

How much money may I get?

Each grant can be up to \$7,500. Since it's a matching grant, that means for every dollar you invest, the City will match it, up to \$7,500. Owners of a large property with multiple first-floor tenants may apply for multiple grants, with the total award per property being a maximum of \$10,000.

Who can apply for a grant?

Owners or tenants of any commercial property in the Main Streets downtown district can apply (see map on beverlymainstreets.org). No more than one Façade grant will be awarded to a specific property in a 5-year period (regardless of whether it's the property owner or business owner who applies). Businesses may apply for one Sign grant during their lifetime in a specific location.

What is the deadline to apply?

There is no deadline; applications will be reviewed until the funding is completely allocated.

What factors are considered in selecting the recipients?

First, be sure to submit a complete application to Beverly Main Streets. The Committee then looks at the overall impact the project will have on the appearance of the building and the whole block, and whether they meet the City's Sign Ordinance, Downtown Design Guidelines and Main Streets standards (all available on www.beverlymainstreets.org). We want visitors to say "wow" when they see the project completed, so new colors, new signage and new awnings all help. We want businesses to be illuminated at night, not just for appearance but for safety and security, so lighting will also be a factor. We want improvements and signs to support the fact that we now have an Arts District in the downtown so color, dimensionality and uniqueness will be considered.

In addition, we consider how well you maintain your property and sidewalks now and whether you respect and abide by all city ordinances, including but not limited to the sign ordinance. These are likely indications of how well you'll maintain the improved property.

Do I have to pay the money back?

No. This is a matching grant program, not a loan. For every dollar you are awarded, you match it from your own funds.

Can I get the money before I start work? Can the money be used to pay my contractor?

No. You must pay all costs and submit receipts showing this, and the City will verify payments and work and then reimburse you. The grant money is reimbursed only at the end of the entire project.

I've already done some work on my building. Can I submit for reimbursement of that work?

No. Only work that is approved by BMS and the Design Review Board as part of the 2018 Program is eligible for reimbursement, and work may not start until you have those approvals.

If I run out of money and don't make all the improvements that I apply for, can I still be reimbursed for what I do?

No. Reimbursement will be made only if all improvements applied for and approved are made as approved.

Where does the Façade and Sign Improvement Program money come from?

The money comes from a variety of grants which the City has received which are designated for downtown revitalization and economic development.

Where do I send my application?

You can mail or drop off your application: Beverly Main Streets, 248 Cabot Street, Beverly.

What do I need to submit?

You need to submit:

- Completed application with all required signatures (if you don't own the building, you'll need the owner's signature)
- 1-3 high resolution color photos of the building as it looks today with nothing impeding the view (ie, cars, snowbanks, etc)
- Perspective renderings in full color drawn by a professional architect / designer; note that signs and lighting must be shown to scale on the building
- Paint samples of the proposed colors
- Budget estimates on contractor letterhead (one per contractor)

Who selects the recipients?

Planning Department staff from the City of Beverly and the Design Committee of Beverly Main Streets review all applications and score each application according to the same criteria. Recipient projects must then be approved by the Design Review Board.

I have let my building deteriorate and now I'd like to fix it up. Is that eligible?

Yes, it is technically eligible. However, priority will be given to projects that are not primarily related to deferred maintenance and which make a significant improvement in the appearance of the building. For example, replacing windows or repairing rotted wood probably won't significantly improve the appearance of the building so you need to do more than that. If you haven't kept your building well maintained, you should be prepared to explain how you would do so in the future if you did get a grant.

I'd like to paint my whole building, not just what faces Cabot Street. Is that covered?

No. The program is designed to improve what people can see from the main street(s). If you choose to paint the whole building, the City will only reimburse you for the portion of the project visible from the main street(s).

I own multiple properties. Can I apply for grants for each of them?

Yes. Your chances of getting a grant for each property or for multiple properties depends on several factors, primarily the impact of your proposed improvements.

What's my responsibility once the project is done?

The main thing you have to do is keep up the property once we have helped you improve it. When you accept your grant, you will sign an agreement that states that you will follow all city ordinances including those regarding signage and trash; that you will keep the sidewalks clear of litter and snow; and that you'll maintain the outside of the building as it appears after completion.

I have additional questions. How can I get answers?

Call Gin Wallace at 978.922.8558 or email gwallace@beverlymainstreets.org.