

**DOWNTOWN
FACADE
IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM**

APRIL 2021

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**LAWTON
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DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

ALL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS MUST BE APPROVED PRIOR TO WORK COMMENCING

DOWNTOWN FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Lawton Downtown Development Authority has created a Downtown Façade Improvement Program that is intended to stimulate design improvements to downtown buildings in a coordinated fashion, stressing the compatibility and uniqueness of Lawton's downtown structures. The appearance of individual buildings, storefronts, signs, alleys, window displays, parking lots and sidewalks establishes the visual character of the downtown and plays a major role in the success of the business district.

The purpose of the façade improvement program is to encourage improvements to commercial facades visible from the public right of way. The program funding is intended to provide financial incentives for quality façade development.

It is also the intent of the program to strengthen the economic viability of downtown Lawton by improving the exterior physical appearances of buildings. The perception of the downtown has a significant influence on its economic success. By improving its physical appearance, the downtown will have a much greater potential for attracting and retaining business as well as creating an image of strong economic health and vitality.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS:

A property must be located within the legal boundaries of the Downtown Development District to be eligible. A building is eligible for the Façade Improvement Program one time within the specified timeframes provided within each assistance program description. An owner or tenant with multiple buildings may apply once for each building, again within the given time restrictions. The following criteria will also apply:

- ✓ An application must be submitted on the official Lawton DDA Façade Improvement Program Application.
- ✓ Only buildings with retail, commercial or professional uses consistent with desired downtown land uses are eligible.
- ✓ Properties must be structurally sound, roof intact, and meet basic public safety codes.
- ✓ Only facades abutting public right of ways are eligible projects. This includes side and rear facades.
- ✓ Building owners or tenants are eligible. If a tenant applies for assistance, they must provide written proof that the building owner has authorized proposed improvements. All Village of Lawton volunteers, committee, board, or council members are eligible to apply for program funds.
- ✓ Applicants will be required to complete an application form provided by the Village of Lawton and all related paperwork pertaining to the Façade Program.

- ✓ All required municipal/governmental permits must be pursued by the building owner/tenant and must be obtained prior to the start of any construction.
- ✓ Property taxes and other Village accounts must be current.

The Lawton DDA reserves the right to award the funding it deems to be in the best interest of the Village of Lawton, the DDA and the Façade Improvement Program. The DDA and Village of Lawton reserve the right to nullify assistance awards which are found to be noncompliant with the conditions of this program.

Annual program funding will be limited, with projects awarded as funds as available. The DDA will make final determinations on individual project eligibility and can reject any application based upon insufficient program funds.

INELIGIBLE USES OF PROGRAM FUNDS:

Façade Program funds *may not* be utilized for any of the following uses:

- Refinancing existing debt
- Property acquisition
- Interior improvements or furnishings
- Site plan, building or sign permit fees
- Property appraisal costs, legal fees, or loan origination fees
- Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or relatives of owner/applicant, unless otherwise approved.
- Projects which are related to parking such as resurfacing, painting or stripping of parking lots/spaces, or construction of new parking.

Please note that the aforementioned examples of eligible and ineligible costs are not all- inclusive and final determination of eligibility requirements are governed by the DDA Board.

GRANT PAYMENTS

- DDA grants are awarded to recipients on a reimbursement basis.
- All work must be in compliance with the stated program requirements.
- Original receipts for work performed must be provided in order to receive reimbursement.
- In order to receive grant reimbursement, the establishment must be open for regular business 90% of the time.
- Grant payments must be personally guaranteed by the business owner through signing the provided personal guarantee agreements. If the business does not remain open for 12 consecutive months after grant payment, 50% of the grant funding must be re-paid to the DDA. If the business remains open for 24 consecutive months, no repayment is required.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

This Façade Improvement Program is a 50/50 matching program. The program will fund assistance up to \$1,000 to building owners/tenants for the purpose of having specified building improvements. For example, if an owner has a \$1,000 project, the DDA will fund up to \$500 for the project. If an owner has a \$2,000 project, the DDA will fund up to \$1,000. Eligible Façade Improvements include:

- Painting, stucco or other exterior enhancement (Color combinations will be reviewed and approved by the DDA Board).
- Facade detail and trim restoration or replacement
- Brick, stone, and wood façade restoration or replacement
- Restoration or replacement of window and door framesets
- Addition or replacement of awnings and canopies
- Removal of old signage and installation of new conforming signage

Non-refundable assistance will be awarded at the completion of the project, if completed according to the pre-approved plan. Facade projects must commence within 30 days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) for funding and be completed within 180 days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board). If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion, submission of receipts, and final approval.

Funding assistance is awarded per building, not per building owner, and will be available per building one time every five years from the completion of previous use of façade paint assistance.

Façade Improvement funds are being provided by the Lawton DDA. Following are additional guidelines:

- 1) Program funding/award will be in the form of a non-refundable, reimbursement grant.
- 2) The applicant must complete the program application as provided by the Village of Lawton. Along with the application, the following information must be provided:
 - a) Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided. If it is the intent of the owner or applicant to complete the work themselves, the Village will then reimburse the owner/applicant for labor for up to 75% of the low bid on labor. The intent is to reasonably reimburse owner/applicants for their time spent painting, and guard against owners realizing a profit off of the labor on the painting project.
 - b) Applicant must provide a copy of their current insurance coverage to ensure that the subject property is properly insured.
 - c) A recorded property deed with the legal description of the property.
 - d) Proof that all property taxes paid to date.

- e) If the tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be provided.
- f) Grant payments must be personally guaranteed by the business owner through signing the provided personal guarantee agreements. If the business does not remain open for 24 consecutive months after grant payment, the grant funding must be re-paid to the DDA.
- g) The applicant is responsible for compliance of all local, State and Federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, lead and asbestos removal. The Village of Lawton and the Downtown Development Authority shall not be held responsible for violations.

PROJECT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS:

The DDA and Village staff will work closely with property owners and tenants to determine initial eligibility under program guidelines. Once the initial scope of work has been determined, staff will present the project to the DDA Board. The DDA Board will meet as needed to provide input, make suggestions to the scope of work and approve or deny individual projects.

EXCEPTIONS:

The Village of Lawton and the Downtown Development Authority utilize this document as a guideline for the basis of making decisions. However, because of the nature of the program and periodic changes in focus for downtown development, exceptions may be made. The Village of Lawton and the Downtown Development Authority reserve the right to approve all applications and interpret the guidelines in the best interest of the Downtown, at the sole discretion of the Village of Lawton and the Downtown Development Authority.

RIGHTS RESERVED:

The Village of Lawton and the DDA reserve the right to reject any and/or all applications. The specific program guidelines detailed herein are subject to revision or amendment by the DDA. The Village of Lawton and the DDA may discontinue this program at any time, subject to availability of program funding.