

City of Hillsdale Tax Increment Finance Authority \$10,000 Façade Improvement Grant Guidelines



Purpose

The City of Hillsdale Tax Increment Finance Authority Façade Improvement Grant was established to:

- Promote economic viability and community revitalization by providing an incentive for business and property owners to make exterior building improvements, including signage, that are appropriate to the overall historic nature of the TIFA district.
- Encourage business and property owners to utilize professional design and planning assistance when undertaking a façade improvement project.

Eligible Applicants/Properties

The City of Hillsdale Tax Increment Finance Authority Façade Improvement Grant is available to:

- Property owners or leaseholders of commercial or mixed-used properties located within the TIFA district.
 - Leaseholders must have the written permission of the property owner to apply for program funding.
 - A property (or contiguous properties owned or leased by the same individual or business) may only receive a total of one (1) grant award within a thirty-six (36) month period dating from completion and reimbursement of a previous façade grant.
- Properties located within the City of Hillsdale TIFA district.
- **Tax exempt properties are not program eligible.**

Program Funding

The City of Hillsdale TIFA will allocate funds each fiscal year, commencing July 1, for the Façade Improvement Program.

- Façade Repair/Rehabilitation projects - a reimbursement of up to 50% of eligible expenses is available per property (or contiguous properties) up to a maximum grant award of \$10,000.00.
- A maximum of \$2,000.00 of grant funds may be used for signage.
- Exterior paint only projects - a reimbursement of up to 75% of eligible expenses is available per property (or contiguous properties) up to a maximum grant award of \$3,000.00.
- A minimum grant award of \$1,000.00 applies except for projects submitted under the exterior paint only portion of the program.
- Façade Improvement Grant available to each TIFA building once every three years starting from date of issuance of previous grant reimbursement.
 - \$10,000 Business Attraction Grant may also be available to Façade Improvement Grant recipients.
 - \$25,000 Restaurant Attraction Grant may also be available to Façade Improvement Grant recipients.
 - \$10,000 Business Expansion Grant may also be available to Façade Improvement Grant recipients.

- \$10,000 Historic Building Grant may also be available to Façade Improvement Grant recipients.
- All project work must be pre-approved by TIFA before funding.

Application and Funding Award Process

Interested applicants must submit their application and supporting documentation to the Zoning Administrator at least ten days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the TIFA Board for consideration of approval at that time.

In addition to the completed Façade Improvement Grant Application the following information must be included with all funding requests:

- Brief narrative explaining the scope of the project.
- Color photos or renderings of the existing façade.
- Color photos or renderings showing the location of the proposed façade improvements.
- Samples of proposed paint colors.
- Proposed project timeline.
- Detailed cost estimate(s) from licensed contractor(s). Funding preference will be given to local contractors.
- Letter of permission from property owner stating their approval of the application for assistance and proposed improvements.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

- The TIFA Program Review Committee will meet to study the proposals and may request additional or clarifying information in support of any application. Written recommendation regarding each proposal is then presented to the TIFA Board which is solely responsible for the official approval or denial of all applications. The TIFA Board, upon review, may send the proposal back to the applicant with requests for modifications.
 - Applicants will be notified in writing of their acceptance or rejection of the proposal.
 - A Façade Improvement Grant Agreement shall be executed by the TIFA Board and the applicant for all approved applications.
 - Upon execution of the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement, work on the project may commence.
 - Project work which has already begun may be considered if the work was commenced and the application for the Façade Improvement Grant was received after the last meeting of the full TIFA Board and after the Program Review Committee has agreed to recommend to the full TIFA Board for approval. TIFA will only consider work which was begun after these requirements; there is no guarantee that work which has already commenced will be approved.
 - Grant work given preliminary approval by Committee may be started prior to TIFA Board final approval at applicant's own risk.

Project Reimbursement

Reimbursement will be made in one lump sum at the completion of all project work.

All work must be completed and all required documentation submitted for reimbursement before June 30th (6/30) of the fiscal year for which the grant funds have been allocated. Any request for an extension must be submitted in writing to the TIFA Board. TIFA checks may be written for work which is completed by the contractor and paid by the applicant, upon receipt by TIFA of “paid in full” invoices showing work complete.

Prior to reimbursement, the following items must be received:

- “Paid in full” invoices and the corresponding cancelled checks, credit card or cash receipts for each contractor or supplier to whom they have made payment.
- Proof that the improvements have passed any local or state building code or safety requirement, if applicable.
- Reimbursement will not be made for any project work without specific TIFA Board approval or execution of the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement.
- Reimbursement may be withheld for all or a portion of completed work if the applicant has deviated from the originally approved scope of work.
- Building Owners/Business Owners and their immediate family shall **NOT** be reimbursed for their own labor.

The TIFA Board may consider additional applications for funding if the applicant is seeking assistance because:

- Their business has relocated to a different location within the district.
- They are the new owner of subject property.

General Requirements

- Applicant is responsible for ensuring that contractors performing work are properly insured and licensed.
- All work must be performed by licensed and insured contractors.
- All project work must be pre-approved by TIFA before funding.
- All property taxes and assessments owed to the City and all City service accounts, and assessments must be current at the time of approval and funding.
- Any changes to the originally approved scope of work must be approved in writing by the Program Review Committee **PRIOR** to construction or installation.
- All work must be performed in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal codes. This includes obtaining any necessary permits through the City of Hillsdale Code Enforcement Office, Department of Public Safety or Public Services, or the Hillsdale County Building Inspection Department and other applicable permits.
- Applicant is responsible for all construction management during the course of project including relationships with contractors or suppliers.
- Code deficiencies or violations related to the work being performed in connection with the Façade Improvement Grant must be corrected as part of the renovation.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance with the requirements of any state or federal historic tax credit program for which they may be seeking project funding.
- All work should follow Secretary of the Interior Guidelines (SHIPO).

Eligible Improvements/Activities

The TIFA reserves the right to determine the eligibility for all items in a project's scope of work. This determination shall be conclusive and final. Building code related improvements are all eligible. The building features eligible to be improved with grant dollars include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Grant funded improvements must be permanent and fixed in type or nature.
- Woodwork and architectural metal repair, cleaning, restoration, painting or replacement, including shutters.
- Masonry repairs, tuck pointing or low-pressure cleaning.
- Exterior painting.
- Window and door repair, restoration, repainting and replacement of windows and exterior doors. Window boxes for plantings are eligible expenses.
- Cornice, parapet repair, restoration or replacement.
- Awning repair, replacement, or installation of new awnings.
- Exterior lighting fixtures.
- Signage, particularly two-dimensional, exterior lighted perpendicular signs.
- Storefront exit or entrance improvements including compliance with ADA regulations. Sidewalk repairs if necessary for ADA compliance (Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Energy efficiency improvements.
- Roof replacement and repairs are eligible for funding if completed within a comprehensive, acceptable façade improvement plan.
- Replacement of existing roof-mounted mechanical equipment is eligible for funding if completed within a comprehensive, acceptable façade improvement plan.

Ineligible Improvements/Activities

- Property acquisition, mortgage, land contract, or financing of loan fees.
- Permit fees for a building permit, sign permit, and/or other construction permits.
- Appraiser, attorney, or accountant fees.
- Wages paid to the applicant or building owner, or to those immediate family members residing in the same household as the applicant or building owner for work associated with the facade improvement project.
- Architectural, engineering or professional design fees.
- Furnishings, trade fixtures, display cases, counters, or other items taxed as personal property.
- Landscaping other than fixed planting structures such as window boxes.
- Sidewalk repair unless necessary to comply with ADA requirements for handicap accessibility.
- Grant awards are not transferable.

Program Amendments

The City of Hillsdale TIFA has the authority and may, at its discretion exceed any of the guidelines it has established and disregard any of the restrictions it has imposed in any case where the TIFA Board determines that the program purpose will be best served by doing so.

Any such action or change to the guidelines must be approved by vote of the City of Hillsdale TIFA Board.

Preservation of Historic Buildings

In order to be as sensitive as possible to the historic nature of the TIFA district and its buildings and to provide a design guide for the applicant and/or their contractor, architect, or designer, the TIFA Board has chosen to adopt the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation.

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Contributing Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places must be restored or rehabilitated according to the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of and Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. These standards can be accessed at:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/index.htm>.