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# STORY COUNTY FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

A Public-Private Partnership Program sponsored by Story County  
to revitalize small town commercial business areas

Story County, Iowa



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# STORY COUNTY FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

### PURPOSE

Story County identifies that the aesthetic quality and the economic vitality of each business is linked with the success of surrounding commercial establishments. Revitalized business districts can contribute greatly to the revitalization of the community at large and extends beyond the community to the entire region. The **Story County Façade Improvement Grant Program** provides financial assistance to the city governments, working in collaboration with private commercial businesses within their city limits, for façade improvements. The purpose is to support the revitalization of business districts in small towns by stimulating private investments that enhance the appearance of buildings and properties.

### ELIGIBILITY

#### ALLOWABLE AWARDS

The County will award a one-time reimbursement grant up to 20% or not more than \$10,000 towards the total project costs of façade improvements. The city shall provide matching funds equal to or greater than the maximum provided by the County. The matching funds can be either direct funds or in-kind. In-kind matching funds must be demonstrated through the following means:

- assigned value is reasonable, consistent, and is suitably allocated within the program budget; and
- basis used for determining the value of the personal services, material or equipment, facility use or building contributed is documented.

The Story County Board of Supervisors annually budgets \$10,000 each fiscal year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. The County reserves the right to fund one or several applications as funding allows. An applicant may only submit and receive funding for one application each fiscal year.

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

It is the goal of the program to create public-private partnerships between the business owners, city government, and the County, to create the greatest benefit to all citizens both within the city and county as a whole. The city acts as the “applicant” for all applications for the **Story County Façade Improvement Grant Program**. Eligible properties and/or businesses shall work with the city council of their respective community. A city shall apply on behalf of the eligible properties and/or business and all funds disbursements from the County shall go to the city. Additional applicant requirements are identified in the “Terms of Agreement” found at the end of the program guidelines.

Eligible properties are located in communities within Story County with a population less than 2,000 persons, according to the 2010 US Census.

The eligible business shall be a legally established and licensed business in the State of Iowa and shall be in conformance with all applicable City/County/State codes and regulations. The County reserves the right to deny and/or withhold funding to properties delinquent on payment of fines, fees or taxes. Ineligible properties include owners of--primarily residential structures, churches and other religious institutions, tax delinquent property or a property whose owner has any other tax delinquent property.

In addition, any projects that have commenced prior to their approval by the County shall be ineligible for grant funding.

### **ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS**

Eligible expenditures will include only projects oriented towards the exterior improvements of existing structures; the portion visible from the road right-of-way upon which the structure fronts. All work must result in a publicly visible improvement. Grants cannot be used to correct code violations or occurrences covered by insurance.

All improvements, except for painting, shall be completed by a licensed contractor, and shall be made in conformance with all applicable building codes, laws and zoning requirements.

#### *ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:*

- Exterior buildings improvements, either cosmetic and/or structural
- Signage\* (not including billboards)
- Lighting\*
- Landscaping\*

\*These improvements shall apply if it has been determined that the structural and cosmetic conditions of the façade are at an acceptable level.

Exterior improvements must be of compatible color/style with the surrounding building and architecture. Exceptions may be considered on a case by case basis. If a structure is of historic significance (i.e. it has been listed as a local landmark, is listed or is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places), improvements must be in conformance with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, as well as *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* will apply.

During the application review, special consideration will be given to projects that meet the following criteria:

- Structures located in their respective central business district, i.e. Main Street.
- Projects that leverage more private investment than the required matching amount.
- Projects designed by a licensed architect.
- Historic structures.

### **APPLICATION ROUTING**

Once the application materials are complete, a property/business owner shall submit all materials to their respective city. The city will review the application and make a determination of the maximum match they are able to contribute towards the project, keeping in mind there the requirement that the city shall provide matching funds equal to or greater than the maximum provided by Story County. Once the city has made a match determination, they shall forward the application to the County, for review.

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Applications are accepted at any time; however, an application must be approved by the Board of Supervisors prior to work being undertaken. Qualified projects to be awarded on a first come, first served basis following the beginning of the fiscal year.

Work is expected to be completed and bills submitted within 12 months of the grant award date. A complete copy of bills from expenses relating to the project must be presented to Story County before the grant money will be awarded. The amount of the grant may be adjusted if the actual cost is lower than the estimated cost. Any deviations from the approved application may disqualify the applicant.

# STORY COUNTY FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM



## PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PROPERTY OWNER \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS OWNER \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_  
*(IF DIFFERENT FROM PROPERTY OWNER)*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

APPLICANT (CITY CONTACT PERSON) \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT REQUESTED: \_\_\_\_\_ MATCHING AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

### APPLICATION ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST

In addition to the completed application, please attach the following:

- Written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct improvements
- Color photographs of existing conditions
- Written statement that outlines in detail scope of the project
- Project budget that includes detailed cost estimates prepared by contractors
- Any design documents prepared by a licensed architect or engineer, if available

## PLEASE READ

By signing below you certify that to the best of your knowledge you have submitted all the required information to apply for a façade grant and that the information is accurate. You further acknowledge that you have read and agree to the Terms of Agreement outlined on the back of this form.

SIGNATURE OF PROPERTY/BUSINESS OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title (Chief Elected Official)

### SUBMIT COMPETED APPLICATION TO:

Story County – County Outreach and Special Projects Manager  
900 6<sup>th</sup> Street - Nevada, Iowa 50201  
or email to: [lharter@storycountyiowa.gov](mailto:lharter@storycountyiowa.gov)

# Terms of Agreement

- The applicant is the city.
- The applicant and property/business owner meets all of the eligibility criteria outlined in the **Story County Façade Improvement Grant Program**.
- No funds are approved for the proposed improvements until the applicant is notified in writing and meets all Program requirements. **Work completed prior to final approval is ineligible for funding.**
- All funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis after all work is completed.
- The applicant shall ensure that work is performed in a satisfactory manner, as determined by the County, conforming to the approved application, project budget, and project schedule.
- The applicant shall be responsible for at least the matching funds equal to or greater than the maximum provided by the County. The applicant shall keep record of all documents, receipts, lien waivers, etc., to substantiate that they are in conformance with this requirement.
- No changes to the approved project plans shall be made without prior consent from Story County.
- Grant funds shall be disbursed only upon the satisfactory completion of the project in accordance with the approved plans for the project. It is the responsibility of the applicant and/or business to demonstrate that the project is satisfactorily complete.
- Grant funds are only to be used for the scope of the project approved by the County, and no other renovations or improvements of the structure or business.
- The applicant authorizes Story County to promote their approved project, including, but not limited to, displaying a sign at the site during and after the construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in County media materials.

## Acknowledgement of Terms of Agreement

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title (Chief Elected Official)