

# BEAVER COUNTY DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

## *FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES*

The Financial Incentive Program provides grant funds through the Community Development Program of Beaver County to downtown commercial building and/or business owners to renovate their storefronts. As part of the comprehensive approach to downtown revitalization in Beaver County, the Financial Incentive Program specifically addresses the importance of the storefront and its crucial role in attracting customers and enhancing the physical appearance of the downtown area.

The decision to “spruce up” your storefront is an exciting, though often times, challenging one. The Financial Incentive Program administered by the Community Development Program of Beaver County offers both financial and technical assistance for façade renovation. When participating in the Financial Incentive Program, you will be required to follow a step-by-step process for completing a storefront renovation.

The Financial Incentive Program is a *rebate program*; therefore, the applicant is initially responsible for assuming all contract costs for the storefront renovation. Once the renovation is successfully completed, a reimbursement payment is made directly to the applicant based on the percentages or maximum dollar amount as specified in the grant guidelines section.

If you plan to do substantial façade renovations, architectural services for a conceptual design of your building are available through the Architectural Conceptual Design Program funded through the Community Development Program. This will be the first step in planning for your façade renovation. Following the design phase, construction drawings and a zoning/code compliance review may be necessary.

If you plan to do a smaller project, such as repainting, new signage and/or awnings, the Community Development Program will offer assistance with selecting colors/materials/design. On all projects, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the local zoning/code enforcement officer and obtain any necessary permits.

### **BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS**

#### Eligibility:

Any owner or tenant whose commercial building is located within the project area as determined by the Downtown Local Revitalization Organization (LRO).

#### Eligible Activities/Costs:

##### Exterior:

##### Façade Improvements:

Storefront renovations, cleaning of façade materials, painting, brick pointing, awnings, signage and other repairs or improvements *in accordance with locally adopted design guidelines.*

Repair or replacement of roof is eligible only if substantial façade renovation is included in the scope of work. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Community Development Program.

##### Interior:

##### Code Related:

Improvement or replacement of electrical, plumbing, and heating/air-conditioning systems as required to meet local/state code requirements.

##### Technical:

Architectural fees for architectural design of proposed improvements.

### Ineligible Activities/Codes:

Improvements to rental residential units in a structure.

Non-permanent equipment and merchandising fixtures.

Building permit fees and any other miscellaneous fees.

### GRANT GUIDELINES

1. The County of Beaver via the Community Development Program will offer up to a \$20,000 grant rebate per address as approved by the LRO. The grant rebate is based on 70% of the first \$20,000 of expenditures and 50% on the balance of expenditures up to \$32,000 for approved exterior and interior building improvements, including 100% of any architectural fees. If total rebate amount for a project is less than \$20,000, the property owner may re-apply for additional funds after a five (5) year waiting period. After a ten (10) year period, the property owner may reapply for additional funding of up to \$10,000 for façade improvement.
2. Eligible owners or tenants must first improve their building façade in order to be eligible for other exterior or interior repairs. The façade treatment *must meet locally adopted design guidelines*. The local organization responsible for the façade program along with the Community Development Program will determine whether or not the individual applicant's building façade is in need of improvement. If the local organization determines the applicant's façade is in good condition and compatible with design guidelines, this requirement can be waived and code enforcement items may be addressed.

A report from the local or state code enforcement officer is required to qualify interior improvements, which are code violations.

3. Approved improvements must be completed no later than ninety (90) days after final approval and award of grant unless otherwise determined.
4. The building owner will agree to the filing of a judgment note for the full grant amount against the property. The lien is reduced at the rate of 20% per year and fully forgiven after five years. If the property is sold or transferred prior to the five-year period, a pro-rated repayment is required.
5. A vacant building must be occupied by a business within sixty (60) days after completion of construction before rebate will be released unless otherwise determined.

### PROGRAM STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS:

No matter how small or large your project is, you will be required to follow a step-by-step process that has been developed by the Community Development Program to ensure adherence to all guidelines and federal regulations. The design phase to actual construction through the completion of a project may take anywhere from six (6) months to one (1) year.

The following checklist summarizes what will take place during the process:

#### A. Preliminary Phase:

1. Completed Pre-Application and picture of building submitted to LRO.
2. Pre-Application reviewed by LRO. (LRO may recommend architectural services for façade design through the Architectural Conceptual Design Program). Once design and pre-application are approved, the project is forwarded to the Community Development Program of Beaver County.

3. Pre-design meeting is held to discuss the scope of work, including color selection, etc. as appropriate.
  - a. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) approval is submitted, if required.
4. Pre-Bid meeting is held and the following items discussed:
  - a. Two (2) bids required with accompanying non-collusion affidavits.
  - b. Federal Labor Standards – Prevailing Wage Rate (Davis-Bacon Act).
5. Pre-Construction conference held.
6. Agreement executed and notice to proceed received.
7. If needed, submit completed construction documents to obtain necessary permits and approvals through the local Zoning or Code Enforcement officer.

B. Construction Phase:

1. Payroll sheets submitted by contractor on a weekly basis.
2. Project site inspections by Community Development Program.
3. On-going technical assistance and support by Community Development Program.

C. Post Construction Phase:

1. Certificate of work form signed by Applicant indicating satisfactory completion of work.
2. Applicant submits proof of payment in full to contractor(s).
3. Contractor submits any outstanding payroll forms, required documents and/or EEO Compliance Letter. (It may be advisable not to pay your Contractor in full until all required documents have been submitted by the Contractor to the Community Development Program).
4. Once all required documentation is received by the Community Development Program, the rebate check is issued to the applicant.
5. A judgment is filed at the Beaver County Prothonotary's Office. Upon expiration of the five-year lien period, the applicant will be notified.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your LRO or the Community Development Program of Beaver County at (724) 847-3889.

# BEAVER COUNTY DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

## *FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES*

### *MINI-GRANTS*

#### Definition:

A project qualifies as a “mini-grant” if the total cost of the project is \$2,000 or less.

#### Rebate Process:

The County of Beaver via the Community Development Program will offer a grant (rebate) of 70% of the total project cost. For example, if the project cost is \$2,000, the rebate amount is \$1,400, which is the maximum rebate for a mini-grant.

#### Other Issues Regarding Mini-Grants:

#### Labor Standards Related to Mini-Grants:

If the total cost of a project is less than \$2,000.00, the project is not subject to Prevailing Wage requirements for employees.

#### Judgment Notes:

If the total cost of a project is less than \$2,000.00, the property is not subject to the filing of a judgment note.

#### Other Applicable Guidelines:

All other applicable guidelines set forth for the Financial Incentive Program will be adhered to in the event a project qualifies for mini-grant status.