



## **Façade Improvement Grant Program**

The City of Longview is helping local businesses in eligible areas improve their curb appeal with the store front/Façade Improvement Program.

A key element to the design-planning component of a revitalization effort is the return of business activity to the SLIP area commercial corridor. (Please see attached Appendix A- SLIP Map.) Fresh paint, new awnings, or complete facade rehabilitation are the first signs that something positive is happening. These first few steps can be the spark to ignite interest and spur new commercial excitement. The Façade Improvement Grant Program (FIGP) provides a catalyst for these first steps.

The City of Longview provides money through this grant process to commercial property owners or business owners (with property owner approval) to encourage restoration projects of building facades and to enhance the building's overall exterior appearance. The grants are funded by the City of Longview Community Development using Community Development Block Grant money. The money is from federal funds made possible through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The City of Longview offers this book to serve as a reference guide. These guidelines cannot cover every situation nor solve every problem; rather they offer basic information about the process.

## **Application Parameters, Process and Procedures**

**A FAÇADE IS-** the principal face or front elevation of a building, often the side of a building facing the street.

The purpose of the Façade Improvement Grant Program is to:

- Reverse the deterioration of commercial structures in the targeted areas.
- Enhance efforts to market vacant space and attract new businesses.
- Stimulate new, private investment and economic growth.
- Promote consistency in design and create a fresh and aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Assist property owners with the appropriate exterior rehabilitation of their buildings and bring them up to code. .
- Invest in historic preservation and rehabilitation.

### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Only properties located in South Longview Initiative Program (SLIP) area as shown on the attached map will be eligible for incentives under this program. Its purpose is to facilitate and providing funding assistance to improve and rehabilitate building facades in the SLIP area.

Historic Designated Building Only- Buildings designated as historic by the State of Texas or the Longview Historic Preservation Commission will have at min. \$10,000.00 set aside for preference of those selected buildings. These selected building will need to meet State and Local Historic Guidelines set by each agency before any work may begin.

Main Street District Business's Only-Main Street Historic District specific design guidelines are established by the Main Street Design Committee and follow closely the recommendations of the Texas Main Street Center. Design guidelines characterize the unique features of the district and express the participants' vision for preservation and enhancements of the physical environment.

In establishing Design Guidelines, the Design Committee addresses area history, problems, and standards for improvement. The adopted design guidelines of the specific target area will be used in developing concepts for potential projects to be funded by the FIGP.

## **ELIGIBLE AREAS**

Grant applications will be accepted for any commercial property within the designated target area of the South Longview Initiative Program (SLIP) Area. (Please see Appendix A- SLIP area map)

## **GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES**

Please see the attached map for the geographic boundaries of the South Longview Initiative Program Area (SLIP) area

## **NON ELIGIBLE AREAS**

Commercial and retail corridors located outside of the SLIP are not eligible to participate in the FIGP.

## **ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES**

Applications may be submitted for commercial properties, either owner or tenant occupied within the SLIP area. Owners of vacant buildings are encouraged to apply and improve property as a catalyst for future occupancy. Mixed use buildings with retail/commercial in the storefront may be considered.

## **NON ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES**

Properties used primarily as residences without commercial or non-profit business are not eligible for the FIGP.

## **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Commercial property and business owners located in eligible areas may apply for assistance. Tenants must have a signed lease and the property owner's approval.

Existing or new businesses and property owners within SLIP area may apply to the City of Longview Community Development Office to take part in the FIGP.

## **ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS**

The FIGP will fund facade improvement projects. All improvements must be permanent or fixed. Eligible improvements may include, but are not limited to:

- Complete facade rehabilitation;
- Replacement of broken window panes, aluminum or wood windows and broken store front glass;
- Repair or replace worn awnings or canopies;
- Removal of metal slipcovers to expose original materials;
- Scraping, priming, and painting of window frames, cornice and store front;
- Repair or replace deteriorating signage and brackets when attached to the facade;
- Repair or replace missing or broken tile;
- Painting of brick facades where brick has been previously painted;
- Rehabilitation of the upper facade and display areas or side walls of a building may also be eligible if street level improvements are approved,
- Roof repair when incidental to overall facade improvements
- Other minor repairs when incidental to overall facade improvements such as:
  - o exterior lighting
  - o certain security elements
  - o repair of sidewalks, or
  - o detached signage

## **INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS**

The following improvements are not eligible for funding:

- Improvements which do not conform to the adopted design guidelines;
- New construction;
- Parking lots (except for exterior lighting);
- Burglar bars;
- Roofs by themselves;
- Blank walls unless the blank wall is a side wall facing the street
- Work which has been performed or which has been placed under contract prior to approval of an application.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. The fiscal period for each year is October 1 – September 30. Applications that are awarded funds must complete their projects by September 1 in order to receive reimbursement within the fiscal year.
2. An initial meeting with the Community Development Administrator is required when receiving the Façade Improvement Grant Program packet to review all contents and make certain all necessary items are included.
3. Applicants that are located in the One Hundred Acres of Heritage Historic District may complete a Request for Design Assistance from the Texas Main Street Center. Applicants should plan for the time necessary to submit a request and receive design assistance which includes a review and recommendations process with the Texas Main Street Center. (Please see appendix B- One Hundred Acres of Heritage Historic District)
  - a. Applicants are required to meet with the Design Committee to discuss their project prior to completing the application process. Call the One Hundred Acres of Heritage Main Street Office to arrange this meeting.
4. Grant funds will be made available on a reimbursement basis with original proof of payment(s). Funds will be released upon satisfactory completion, inspection, and acceptance of all work. Work must begin within 30 days and be completed within 180 days from date of agreement.
5. The total reimbursement per application and project will not exceed 50% of the total project cost up to a maximum of \$10,000.00 or as otherwise noted. The grant cannot pay for work that is currently in progress or has been completed.
6. More than one application per project will not be funded in any given fiscal year. Funding for phased projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis only when compelling circumstances are presented by the applicant.

7. Applications for grants in this term from \$2000 to \$10,000 are accepted throughout the year as funds are available. The grant amount must be matched equally by the business or property owner, dollar for dollar. In-kind contributions and profits generated by applicant serving as contractor will not be considered as part of the required match. Total project costs can exceed \$20,000, however, the maximum FIGP funding for a project will be \$10,000.
8. Applications will be accepted for review at any time throughout the year. The awarding of grants is at the sole discretion of City of Longview, Texas and is dependent on funding from the Community Development office of the City of Longview. It is based on the allocation of funds for the Façade Improvement Grant Program from CDBG. There is no certainty that funds will be available at any given time.
9. The Façade Improvement Grant Program application form is provided in this packet. Submit the completed grant application form with the following:
  - Applicant Identification
  - Property Owner Identification
  - Copy of SSN or Tax ID Number
  - Exact Location of property
  - Proof of Property Insurance.
  - Two (2) copies of the following:
    - written project description,
    - design plan(s)
    - drawing(s)
    - schematic(s)
    - and historical photograph(s) for each project
  - Contractor and material cost estimates for each project. (Please see attached for example)
  - Matching fund verification, proof of financial responsibility.
  - Signature of the applicant and property owner.

## 10. Selection Process

- Grants will be awarded based upon the level of improvement(s), the accuracy of historic preservation and the vitality and significant impact the project will make to the SLIP area environment. Only completed applications will be accepted for processing.
- The grant application will be reviewed by the Community Development Administrator and Manager for completeness of information and supporting documents and compliance with the Façade Improvement Grant Program requirements. The review process will be completed within seven (7) working days of time received.
- During this time an Environmental Review will be performed this review could take up to thirty days (30 days) for completion.
- 45 Days from the date the application was received a letter should be mailed to the applicant with instructions of the next phase.
- Applicant's projects are required to meet all applicable codes and ordinances of the City of Longview. Applicants are also required to secure any necessary permit(s) from the City of Longview Development Office before work can commence. Copies of permits are a requirement for reimbursement.

11. All projects must comply with the Davis Bacon Wage Act. The act requires contractors to pay their employees a specific minimum wage determined by the Secretary of Labor to be prevailing for similar work in any given area. The prevalent wage rate for Gregg County is included in this packet and available at:  
<http://www.gpo.gov/davisbacon/TX.html>

12. The applicant is responsible for the full compliance of all contractors and workers hired for the project.

13. The applicant is responsible for the completion of all required payroll records. Payroll records can be submitted on the provided U.S. Department of Labor form or on a copy of the contractors pay record

as long as it includes Name of employee, work classification, days worked, hours worked, rate of pay and gross amount earned.

14. Longview's Community Development Department will conduct employee interviews according to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development form HUD-11.
15. Once an application is approved, but before work can commence a pre-construction meeting will be held with the applicant, principal contractor (if different than applicant) and the Community Development staff as a final step before work can begin.
16. Once the application is approved, but before work can commence the Longview Community Development Department to conduct an Environmental Review (ER). All federally funded projects (CDBG & HOME) must receive an environmental review using the criteria and statutory authorities specified in the HUD regulations 24 CFR Part 58 and for more complex projects, using procedures from the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). Once the review is complete and Community Development Departments will notify the Chamber of the outcome of the Review. If completed and approved the project may proceed. If any mitigation is necessary these will be reviewed and evaluated before the ER can be approved and work may begin.
17. Grant funds will be paid on a reimbursement basis to the applicant once Longview Community Development Department has determined the following items have been satisfactorily addressed:
  - Receipt of invoices for all work completed and paid. Invoices must show detail for the specific work performed.
  - Receipt of paid invoices from all subcontractors and material vendors/suppliers.
  - Receipt of reports of the wages paid weekly to each employee for the work performed on the project. These documents must show the hours, the job classification, the wages per hour paid, and the total paid for each week.
  - The project has been completed in conformation with the design plan and/or project as submitted, reviewed and



approved by the Housing and Community Development Committee;

- Pre-approval of all changes in the project scope of work, contract change orders or materials has been obtained from the Design Committee, if applicable and
- The completion of final inspections, if required by the City of Longview. There will be no reimbursement if city code or ordinance violations exist.

18. The Community Development Department must ensure that all aspects of the project have been satisfactorily completed.
19. Only work approved by the Community Development Department will be eligible for the Façade Improvement Grant Program. Project work may not commence until the applicant/property owner receives a notice to proceed from the Community Development Administrator.
20. Once the project has been completed, the applicant must send a letter of project completion and all invoices and required documents to the Community Development Administrator.
21. Once the work is completed and reviewed by the Community Development Specialist and Administrator, a request to process payment will be submitted to the Community Development Office of the City of Longview and a check will be dispersed to the applicant of the received reimbursement funds according to the approved application.
22. Although every effort has been made to include all necessary steps and all required processes for application, record keeping and submission for payment, the Community Development Department does not represent this packet as complete and without error. The Community Development Department reserves the possibility that processes will change. There is the possibility that some requirement has not been covered in this packet and the applicant will be notified if and when any changes are made known to the Community Development staff.

I/We affirm to have read this Application Parameters, Process and Procedures document and understand its content.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_