

FY 2017/18 Florence Façade Improvement Program

Program Overview and Purpose

The Program provides a reimbursement of up to 50% of eligible pre-approved façade improvement costs on commercial buildings. The maximum amount for any individual grant award is \$5,000 per property owner or tenant per building.

Grants are awarded for exterior improvements only and may be applied to a front, side or rear façade provided façade faces a public street or parking area. Grants are awarded based on the availability of funds, scope and impact of the project. Façade improvements made prior to approval of an application will not be funded by the Program.

The Program's mission is to generate commercial activity by addressing deteriorating property conditions in the slum and blight designated Florence Redevelopment Area. A map is included of the Florence Redevelopment Area properties eligible for participation.

The purpose of the Façade Improvement Program is to improve the street-facing exteriors of a building or residential structure that has been re-designated as commercial or office located in the Downtown.

Applications for the program are accepted throughout the year. Grants are awarded on a first come, first served basis.

Eligible Participants

Eligible participants of the program include property owners of commercial buildings within the Florence Redevelopment Area and tenants of commercial buildings in the Redevelopment Area. A business owner who leases space must have written approval from the property owner to participate in the program. Applicants may apply to the program more than once; however, will not be awarded funding more than once in any five (5) year period on the same property unless the ownership changes. An applicant may only have one grant award at a time.

Eligible Improvements

Eligible improvements must contribute to the visual enhancement of the property as viewed from the public right of way. Improvements must be comprehensive and may incorporate several of the acceptable components of the existing façade. The property must meet all Town of Florence Building and Safety Codes upon completion of work. In the event there is a violation, correction of the violation must be made prior to disbursement of the grant.

Examples of Typical Eligible Improvements include:

1. Exterior painting and façade repair;

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2. Façade detail and trim restoration or replacement;
3. Accessibility improvements for ADA compliance;
4. plants and landscaping;
5. awnings;
6. doors and windows;
7. façade and display window lighting;
8. demolition of obsolete structures; and
9. addition of a patio or outdoor space.

Exterior signage (street facing) and parking lots/parking lot striping may be considered as eligible projects based on a complete façade design package.

Ineligible Improvements and Exclusions

Examples of ineligible activities include:

1. New building construction;
2. any interior work;
3. roof repairs, except those portions that directly attach to a new or renovated façade; and
4. any items that are not allowed by the Town of Florence Town Code or Building Code.

Funds may not be used for working capital; property, equipment or inventory acquisition; refinancing of existing debt; or refinancing private funding.

Façade Improvement Program Administration

The Program provides participants the opportunity to receive a reimbursement of up to 50% of eligible pre-approved improvement costs. The maximum amount for any individual grant award is \$5,000 per individual property owner.

All projects should be permanent to the structure or façade and should remain as part of the property if the building is sold or applicant moves outside of the Florence Redevelopment Area.

The Façade Improvement Program is administered by the Florence Industrial Development Authority (IDA). Final decisions of grant awards, the amount of grant award and eligible projects will be made by a review committee of the Florence IDA. Appeals may be submitted to the Florence IDA within 30 days of notification. Funding for the program is subject to availability each fiscal year. The Town of Florence provides funding to the Florence IDA for the implementation of a façade program to fulfill the following goals:

- To encourage well-designed improvements.
- To restore or improve architectural elements and interest to the structure.

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- To visually improve facades to encourage economic growth in the Florence Redevelopment Area.

Application Process

1. **Complete and submit a formal application** to the Florence Town Clerk, Florence Town Hall, 775 North Main Street, Florence, AZ 85132. The Town of Florence will accept applications on behalf of the Florence IDA. Submissions must include:
 - a. a completed application,
 - b. a site plan drawn to scale including landscape placement,
 - c. altered property rehabilitation plans drawn to scale,
 - d. photographs of the existing condition,
 - e. estimated total project costs including at least one bid for each project (bids are subject to review; additional bids may be requested),
 - f. Paint chips/samples if work includes painting of buildings, doors, awnings, etc.,
 - g. if tenant is the applicant, authorization must be given by the property owner indicating permission to apply for the project, and
 - h. an electronic copy of submission materials.

2. **Application Review Process:** The Florence IDA Review Committee will evaluate applications on the following criteria:
 - a. Total project budget,
 - b. Design plan,
 - c. Location within the Redevelopment Area,
 - d. Returning facility into a productive use and/or creation of new uses within the space, and
 - e. Total linear feet of storefront to be improved.

Façade improvement projects on properties located with the Florence Townsite Historic District must be approved by the Town of Florence Historic District Advisory Commission.

3. **Following approval, the Florence IDA will issue a formal “Notice to Proceed”:** Any work initiated before “Notice to Proceed” will not be eligible for funds reimbursement. Participants will be required to enter into and execute a written agreement with the Florence IDA to establish the terms, conditions, and requirements for participation in the program.

4. **Following the “Notice to Proceed”, but prior to work starting, the applicant must secure any required building or development permits through the Town of Florence.**

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5. **The applicant must submit copies of paid bills, cancelled checks, contractor lien waivers and receipts to the Florence IDA for reimbursements.** Reimbursements can be requested on the last day of each month for work that has been completed. A receipt, picture of the completed work, along with the line item within the application that the work applied to will be needed for each reimbursement.

6. **The Florence IDA Review Committee will inspect the completed project to ensure that work was performed as outlined in application.** This inspection does not replace or supersede any additional inspections that may be required by the Town's Building Safety Division.

7. **The Applicant will be reimbursed up to the amount of the approved grant.** Work must be completed within 6 months of the stated start date unless otherwise noted in application.

Contact the Florence Industrial Development Authority at 520-705-2541 or call the Town of Florence at 520-868-7549 for more information and to apply for the program.