

Florence Downtown Redevelopment Area Improvement Program

Program Overview and Purpose

The Florence Downtown Redevelopment Area Improvement Program provides reimbursement of up to 50% for eligible, pre-approved façade improvements or fire suppression system installation costs on commercial buildings. The maximum amount for any individual façade grant award is \$7,000 or \$15,000 for fire suppression system installation. The intent of the program is to generate commercial activity by addressing deteriorating property conditions in the slum and blight designated Florence Downtown Redevelopment Area.

Grants are awarded to install fire suppression systems or for exterior improvements applied to a front, side or rear façade that faces a public street or parking area. Grants are awarded based on the availability of funds, scope and impact of the project. Any façade improvements or fire suppression system installations made prior to approval of an application will not be funded by the program. Applications for the program are accepted throughout the year. Grants are awarded on a first come, first served basis.

The purpose of the Downtown Redevelopment Area Improvement Program is to improve the street-facing exteriors of a building or a former residential structure that has been re-designated as commercial, office, or public/institutional located in the Downtown. Fire suppression system grants assist with the reduction of damage and/or destruction from fire in commercial buildings. A.R.S. §36-1472 allows a public body to expend public funds to preserve public health and safety that assists in the elimination of slum and blight in the designated redevelopment area.

Eligible Participants

Eligible participants of the program include property owners and tenants of commercial buildings located within the Florence Downtown Redevelopment Area. Eligible properties must be zoned Downtown Commercial (DC), Neighborhood Business (B-1), Highway Business Commercial (B-2), Neighborhood Office (NO), Planned Unit Development (PUD), or Public/Institutional (PI). A business owner who leases a commercial property must have written approval from the property owner to participate in the program. Applicants may be awarded funding for one façade improvement project and/or one fire suppression system installation project within any five (5) year period on the same property.

Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible facade 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 of building or safety codes, correction of the violation must be made prior to disbursement of the grant.

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Examples of typical eligible improvements include:

1. exterior painting and façade repair;
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; routine maintenance or repairs; property, equipment or inventory acquisition; refinancing of existing debt; or refinancing private funding.

Eligible Costs for Fire Suppression System Installation Grants

Any costs associated with installing a fire suppression system that is acceptable to the Town's Building Official and Fire Marshal.

Program Administration

The Program provides participants the opportunity to receive reimbursement for up to 50% of eligible, pre-approved improvement costs. The maximum amount for any individual façade grant award is \$7,000 per individual property owner. The maximum amount for any individual fire suppression system grant award is \$15,000 per individual property owner.

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The Downtown Redevelopment Area 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 the program to fulfill the following goals:

- To encourage well-designed improvements.
- To restore or improve architectural elements and interest to the structure.
- To visually improve facades to encourage economic growth in the Florence Redevelopment Area.
- To reduce the risk of damage by fire in commercial buildings.

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

Property Owner Obligations

The Property Owner shall be solely responsible for all improvements. The Property Owner's obligations under this Agreement include, but not limited to:

1. The Property Owner shall be responsible for providing a professionally installed fire suppression system or façade improvements.
2. The Property Owner shall be responsible for maintaining façade improvements or completing maintenance of its fire suppression system for proper operation.
3. The Property Owner shall allow access to the Town's employees, agents, and representatives for inspection of all improvements.

Indemnity

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Property Owner and Tenant shall jointly and severally protect, defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Town of Florence, its Council members, agents, officers, officials, representatives and employees from and against all suits, claims, demands, damages, losses, liabilities, fines, charges, penalties, administrative and judicial proceedings and orders, judgments, remedial actions of any kind, and all costs and cleanup actions of any kind, together with expenses (including but not limited to attorneys' fees, court costs, experts' fees, the cost of appellate proceedings, and all claim adjusting and handling expenses), relating to, arising out of, resulting from or alleged to have resulted from the Property Owner's and Tenant's acts, errors, mistakes or omissions relating to any action or inaction of the Property Owner or Tenant under this Program, including, but not limited to the acts, errors, mistakes, omissions, work or services of the Property Owner's and Tenant's agents, employees, contractors,

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subcontractors or anyone for whose acts they or the Property Owner or Tenant may be liable in the performance of the improvements.

The Property Owner's and Tenant's duty to defend, hold harmless and indemnify the Florence Industrial Development Authority and Town, its Council members, agents, officers, officials, representatives and employees shall arise in connection with any suits, claims, damages, losses or expenses that are attributable to or otherwise relate to, result from, or are alleged to have resulted from the Property Owner's and Tenant's acts, errors, mistakes or omissions relating to any action or inaction of the Property Owner and Tenant, including but not limited to the acts, errors, mistakes, omissions, work or services of the Property Owner's and Tenant's agents, employees, contractors, or anyone for whose acts they or Property Owner and Tenant's may be liable in the performance of this Agreement, regardless of the legal or equitable grounds upon which such suits, claims, damages, losses and expenses are based.

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 for façade grants 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, written authorization must be given by the property owner indicating permission to apply for the project, and
- h. an electronic copy of submission materials.

Submissions for fire suppression system installation grants must include:

- a. a completed application,
- b. a site plan drawn to scale,
- c. fire suppression system specifications,
- d. estimated total project costs including at least one bid for each project (bids are subject to review; additional bids may be requested),
- e. If tenant is the applicant, authorization must be given by the property owner

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indicating permission to apply for the project, and

- f. An electronic copy of submission materials.

2. Application Review Process: The Florence IDA Review Committee will evaluate applications based 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 if applicable.
- f. Approval and recommendation of the Fire Marshal.

3. The Florence IDA will issue a formal “Notice to Proceed” after application approval: 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. Prior to work starting on the project, the applicant must secure any required building or development permits through the Town of Florence Community Development Department. Façade improvement and fire suppression system projects on properties located with the Florence Townsite Historic District must be approved by the **Florence Historic District Advisory Commission.**

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 Town of Florence at 520-868-7549 for more information and to apply for the program.

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