

DDA HISTORIC FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

In 1985, the City of Rochester Downtown Development Authority established the Facade Improvement Program (FIP) to encourage historic restorations and improvements to the exterior of downtown commercial buildings and sites.

The DDA finds that the creation and maintenance of an attractive downtown is a public purpose, which can be achieved in part through improvements to building facades. Downtown Rochester is pivotal to the economic health of the greater Rochester community because its condition, whether perceived or actual, plays a large part in the impression people have of the area. Downtown Rochester is the focal point of the community, and any neglect will create an image of a deteriorating economic base. As a result, potential businesses may be discouraged from locating in downtown Rochester, and existing property owners may defer maintenance and reinvestment in the real estate.

The intent of the FIP is to strengthen the economic viability of downtown Rochester by providing financial incentives for improving the exterior appearance of its buildings. The FIP provides an opportunity to preserve the architectural heritage of downtown Rochester and enhance the unique atmosphere that downtown Rochester provides to the greater Rochester community. It is important to the aesthetic enhancement of a downtown that building design treatments be compatible with each other. The DDA believes the best approach is through the preservation of a building's original architectural features.

The dominant emphasis of the program is the preservation of Downtown Rochester's architectural heritage. This preservation-based philosophy is a key component of Main Street America that has been the backbone of Rochester's Downtown Revitalization plans since the DDA was formed in 1983.

These guidelines are designed to assist you with your Historic Facade Improvement Program project. After reviewing these guidelines and the FIP packet of information, contact the DDA office at 248-656-0060 and set an appointment to discuss your project.

Historic Facade Improvement Program Guidelines

Program Description - Subject to funding availability and project approval, the DDA may rebate up to 20% of the cost of exterior building facade and site improvements, 10% of certain professional fees, plus a bonus of 5% of the expense of permanent interior and code compliance improvements such as HVAC. Except as otherwise noted in these guidelines, the total rebate for the Historic Facade Improvement Grant may not exceed \$15,000 per project or 20% of the cost of exterior facade improvements, whichever is less. However this restoration of the front facade must be carried out under the strict adherence to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

Who is Eligible Applicant – Any owner and or tenant of a building located within the DDA district may apply for FIP funds. Public agencies are also eligible to apply for FIP funds.

What is an Eligible Building – Any existing building located within the DDA district, which is owned and used by an eligible applicant, is considered eligible for FIP funds.

Where a building under one ownership is divided into more than one unit for purposes of commercial tenancy, each separate unit that has an individual storefront facade and an independent ground floor entry shall be eligible to receive FIP funds. These multiple tenant facade projects shall not exceed \$15,000 per unit and \$30,000 for the entire building, subject to funding availability.

Design Guidelines – Projects approved for Facade Improvement Program funds must comply with the DDA's Design Guidelines and all applicable City of Rochester building codes and ordinances. Approval of funding by the DDA Board does not indicate City approval. All projects will need a building permit and most will require site plan approval by the Rochester Planning Commission, and Rochester City Council (if applicable).

Eligible Exterior/Facade Improvements – 20% rebate.

Materials and wages for improvements to the front, rear and side facades of eligible buildings:
Facades of additions to existing building and the exterior portion of newly constructed buildings, subject to funding availability:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carpentry• Masonry Cleaning• Building Removal/Demolition• Storefront Construction• Window Repair/Replacement• Awnings• Doors/Entryways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lighting• Signs• Painting• Roof repair (when completed in conjunction with a significant renovation project and when the roof is distinctive element of the facade and is visible from the street)
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Eligible Site Improvements – 20 % rebate.

Incident to and when completed in conjunction with extensive exterior facade improvements, the DDA Board may add up to 20% of the cost of materials and wages for:

- Landscaping, sidewalk construction/replacement, lighting, parking lot development, and other pedestrian amenities on private property.
- Improvements to the public right of way as required by the City of Rochester such as sidewalk replacement, curbs, unless such improvements are part of a Special Assessment District.
- Public infrastructure improvements as required by the City of Rochester to meet code requirements for interior building improvements. For example, water lines installed for sprinkler systems or storm sewers.
- Site amenities as recommended by the Downtown Alley Master Plan and other applicable DDA and City of Rochester plans.

Eligible Professional Service Fees – 10% rebate.

Fees for architecture, design and engineering services.

Eligible Interior Renovation Expenses – 5% rebate.

This rebate is only for the renovation of existing structures and does not apply to new buildings.

- Improvements required by City of Rochester health and safety codes such as handicap access and bathrooms, sprinklers.
- Permanent real estate improvements such as HVAC, plumbing, electrical and other items taxed as real estate.
- Flooring if in conjunction with items above.
- Ceilings, emergency lighting, carpentry and or wall construction if in conjunction with items above.
- Demolition if in conjunction with items above.
- Code work to an existing building necessitated by the construction of a building addition.

Ineligible Expenses-

Any expense not specifically stated under eligible expenses such as but not limited to the following items:

- Expenses incurred prior to the DDA's receipt, review and approval of a FIP application.
- Property acquisitions.
- Mortgage, land contract refinancing or loan fees.
- City of Rochester site plan, building & sign permit fees.
- Construction of new buildings or additions except for the facade portion.
- Appraiser, attorney, interior designer fees.
- Wages paid to the applicant or relatives in record line of consanguinity unless licensed to perform such work.
- Interior furnishings, trade fixtures, display cases, counters, any reusable or removable item or other items taxed as personal property.
- Site improvements done in conjunction with a City of Rochester Special Assessment District.
- Any portion or expenses for which applicant pays a contractor in merchandise or trade for service.

Project Timetable

1. Once approved, the applicant has 6 months to receive a commitment for project financing if they indicated on the application that a private financial institution would be involved. If no commitment has been secured by the end of this 6-month period, the DDA commitment expires. The applicant may reapply if financing is secured at a later date; however, this is **subject to available funding at the time of reapplication.**
2. Once approved and with a financing commitment in place, the financial commitment of the DDA shall be for one year. If the project is not completed within this 12-month period, the applicant must resubmit an application to receive grant funds. At the time of re-application the DDA Board will evaluate the status of the project and at its discretion, will approve or deny the funding commitment. This reapplication is **subject to available funding at the time of the resubmission.**

Other Program Guidelines

1. Construction work and disbursement of the FIP rebate may be phased over a period of time.
2.
 - a. Within a five year period, a property owner may not apply for FIP funds more than twice for the same store unit.
 - b. Within a five-year period, a business tenant may not apply for FIP funds more than twice for the same store unit.
 - c. The total amount rebated to property owner and or business tenant for the same store unit during a 5-year period may not exceed \$15,000.00.
3. At the DDA's discretion, an exception to any FIP guideline may be granted due to special conditions or situations.
4. All FIP projects are subject to audit by the City of Rochester.

Application, Approval and Payment Procedures

1. Contact the Rochester Downtown Development Authority office for Facade Improvement Program information, application and design guidelines.
2. Review the proposed facade improvement design with the DDA Director.
3. Submit a completed application, design plans, and cost estimates to the DDA office. The DDA accepts applications throughout the year. The DDA Board reviews and acts on FIP applications at the regular monthly DDA Meeting held the third Wednesday of each month. To be placed on the DDA Agenda for review the deadline for a submission of FIP application containing all required information is the first Friday of each month.
4. After being submitted the application is reviewed by the DDA Director who may consult the DDA Executive Committee. After being reviewed a written recommendation for approval, modification or rejection is prepared for consideration by the DDA Board.
5. The DDA Board acts upon the application for FIP funding. After DDA Board approval, applicants receive a letter committing funds or advising them of the project's status, including any conditions for receipt of funding.
6. After Planning Commission approval, final engineering approval and issuance of a building permit, a pre-construction meeting is held with the DDA Director & Deputy City Manager to finalize all project details.
7. The DDA Director may refer a change in construction plans to the Executive Committee or back to the full DDA Board and must authorize any modifications to the approved application and facade design in writing. Modifications may have to be reconsidered by the Planning Commission.
8. During construction, any changes to the approved facade plan including but not limited to exterior changes in materials, window, doors, cornices, etc. must be authorized in advance by the DDA in writing or the funding commitment may be rescinded.
9. Upon completion of construction the applicant prepares a project financial report and provides the DDA with proof that approved renovation expenses are paid (canceled checks, paid invoices, contractor's sworn statements, sub-contractor's waiver of lien, etc). *Note: The use of merchandise or trade for service as payment is lieu of cash for a DDA approved renovation project is specifically prohibited.*
10. The DDA Director prepares a final project report, which summarizes actual project expenses and payments for work completed, for review by the DDA Board. If all conditions for payment are satisfied the DDA Board authorizes disbursement of FIP funds.
11. Historic Facade Improvement Program funds are usually disbursed to the applicant and or lender within 30 days of DDA Board approval of completed work.

Any questions regarding the Historic Facade Improvement Program guidelines should be directed to the DDA Office at 248-656-0060.