

2024 Small Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines



The Small Business Façade and Property Improvement Program provides grants to commercial property owners and business owners willing to renovate the street-front exteriors of their structures. The goal of the façade grant program is to encourage property owners and small businesses to improve the exterior of their buildings and storefronts to attract new customers and beautify the area.

This is a rebate program where business and property owners receive **reimbursement for between 50-90% of the cost of the project** in amounts **ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000** for completed work. For access to the online application and application period, refer to the website. If you have limited access to internet or a computer, please contact LISC. The following information outlines the details of the program, eligible costs, ineligible costs, application requirements, and the grant selection process.

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| Eligible Applicants | Any building owner or tenant of a commercial or industrial building located in Marion County is eligible to apply. All applications from building tenants require the signature and approval of the building owner. Minority-owned buildings and businesses will be prioritized for receiving the grant. Exterior improvements must be completed within 6-9 months of award. If awarded, the award letter will include deadline for when the work needs to be completed. To be eligible, businesses must be for profit. |
| Eligible Boundary | Incorporated boundaries of the City of Indianapolis and Marion County. Priority will be given to projects located in LISC neighborhoods . |
| Eligible Improvements | Eligible costs (to be reimbursed by grant) have to be improvements on the front street-facing exterior of commercial properties. Improvements can include attached <u>signage, building entrances, lighting, doors, windows, awning, brick, art murals, stone, tuck-pointing, or other building surfaces material</u> . Additionally, flexibility will be given for façade improvements that incorporate design elements to prevent crime (e.g. nighttime lighting, windows looking onto streets and parking lots, etc.). Permitting fees for this work, when required, are also eligible. |
| Ineligible Improvements | Site improvements such as parking lots, paving, raised planters and planting areas, street trees, detached signage, fencing and railings, roof repairs and improved pedestrian amenities including sidewalks, or benches <u>are ineligible</u> . These types of improvements can be counted as the building or business owners contribution, but cannot be reimbursed by the grant. Grants cannot be used retroactively for building improvements already completed. All related construction and improvements to be supported by the program must occur after the grant has been awarded. Apartment/rental properties and buildings that have a primary purpose as a place of worship are ineligible for grant funding. Commercial buildings that house establishments related to gambling, gun stores, adult bookstores, etc. are not eligible for the program. |

Application Requirements: The online application includes questions about the applicant, commercial building, and planned improvements. Before you begin an application, ensure that you have consulted the community development corporation (CDC) that serves your area. CDCs can often provide guidance with the application and typically play a role in the reimbursement process for the grant. Applications submitted without the name/support of a CDC are less likely to receive an award.

Supplementary documentation will be required (as attachments) and include the following documents:

- Construction Estimates from the contractor or business likely to do the façade improvements.
- Detailed project budget outlining the breakdown of construction costs and financing/sources of funds to complete the project.
- Proof of financial ability to complete project which can include bank statements, or letter from a bank attesting to funds sufficient to cover the cost of façade improvements
- Photos of the building in jpeg format (please, no PDFs)
- Support letter from the local community development corporation (if available)
- Drawings of the improvements to be completed (if available)

For reference, see [map](#) to find the Community Development Corporation (CDC) that serves your area. If you would like an introduction, please contact Kelly Evans at kevans@lisc.org.

Grant Program Timeline:

1. The online application will remain open for three weeks.
2. After the application closes, the review committee will review applications and make award decisions over the following 2-3 weeks.
3. After the review period, applicants will be notified if their project was awarded, grant amount, and grant deadline. If the project is declined grant funding, applicant will also be notified.
4. If awarded, LISC will setup a meeting with the CDC and applicant to ensure clear understanding of the responsibilities of all parties.
5. Following the meeting, grant recipient will sign an award letter with the grant details, project deadline and expectations. LISC will sign a grant agreement with the program partner community development corporation (CDC) who will administer the grant funds and be the point of contact for the applicant.
6. The grant recipient is required to give bi-monthly updates to the CDC throughout the construction process.
7. The CDC will submit to LISC to the release of grant funds. The grant funds will be provided to the grant recipient from the CDC.
8. After the improvements are completed, the grant recipient will need to provide copies of receipts/paid invoices, proof of payment (copy of checks or bank statements), and photos of completed work to the CDC to review and approved. A completed impact survey and photos will also be required.

The following is the criteria the committee will be using to evaluate applications:

- Projects in underinvested neighborhoods and commercial corridors;
- Business and property owned by minorities, women, and veterans;
- Small businesses and property owned by Indianapolis residents;
- Projects that support small business retention, expansion in LISC neighborhoods; <https://www.lisc.org/indianapolis/where-we-work/>
- Projects that incorporate design elements to prevent crime such as but not limited to nighttime lighting, windows looking onto streets and parking lots, etc. Reference the [CPTED Tips for Businesses](#);
- Projects in areas with high motor vehicle and pedestrian visibility;

- Exterior improvements with high quality design and/or value based on recognized professional standards or best practices;
- Projects that align with design standards established for a neighborhood, when applicable, which may include historic preservation;
- For vacant commercial properties, having an identified end use (office, retail, etc.) and tenants secured (at least a letter of intent); and
- Projects that have a clear construction timeline and can be completed in 6 months.
- Project unable to move forward without at least 50% funded with a grant.

Grant Awards: The Small Business Facade and Property Improvement Program will **reimburse up to 90%** of the total project costs. Half of the grant award will be disbursed upfront and the remaining will be disbursed after half of the exterior improvements are completed. Project costs incurred before the grant award are not eligible for reimbursement, so please do not begin construction prior to applying for the program or receiving notification of award. The maximum contribution awarded per address is \$20,000.

Additional Financing: If you need financing for your renovations and your bank is unable to provide a loan, here are some other potential options:

- CDFI Collaborative Loan [Interest Form](#)
- [Real Estate Assistance Fund for Black Businesses](#)

List of Community Development Corporations

[See map here](#)

Alliance for Northeast Unification - Referral Partner

3908 Meadows Dr, Indianapolis, IN

<https://anuimpact.org/>

(317) 222-1296

Crooked Creek Community Development Corporation - Program Partner

6002 N Michigan Rd. Indianapolis, IN

<https://www.crookedcreekcdc.org/>

Englewood Community Development Corporation - Referral Partner

57 N Rural St, Indianapolis

(317) 639-1541

www.englewoodcdc.com/

Edna Martin Christian Center - Referral Partner

2605 E 25th St, Indianapolis, IN

<https://ednamartincc.org/>

317-637-3776

FlannerHouse - Referral Partner

2424 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., Indianapolis, IN

www.flannerhouse.com

317-639-1541

Hope CDC of Indiana - Referral Partner

4001 N Franklin Rd, Indianapolis, IN

<https://www.mtparanchurch.com/>

317-542-8200

Indy Gateway - Referral Partner

700 N High School Rd, Indianapolis, IN

<https://www.indygateway.org/>

317-223-4614

International Marketplace Coalition - Referral Partner

3610 Guion Rd, Indianapolis, IN

www.imcoalition.org

317-925-5722

Mapleton Fall Creek Development Corporation - Referral Partner

130 N 30th St, Indianapolis, IN

317-923-5514;

Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation - Program Partner

2855 N Keystone Ave #130, Indianapolis, IN

<http://mbcdc.org/>

317-924-8042

Midtown Indianapolis, Inc. - Referral Partner

3965 N Meridian St G, Indianapolis, IN

www.midtownindy.org

317-340-3014

Near East Area Renewal - Program Partner

960 N. Rural St, Indianapolis, IN www.nearindy.org

317-808-2369

Near North Development - Referral Partner

1630 N Meridian Street, Suite 1110 Indianapolis, IN

<http://www.nearnorthdevelopment.org/>

(317) 927-9881

Renew Indianapolis (formerly King Park) - Referral Partner

1704 Bellefontaine Street, Indianapolis, IN

<https://www.renewindianapolis.org/>

317-924-8116

Riley Area Development Corporation - Referral Partner

875 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 101 Indianapolis, IN

www.rileyarea.org

317-637-8996

Southeast Neighborhood Development - Program Partner

3230 Southeastern Ave. Indianapolis, IN

www.sendcdc.org

317-634-5079

Westside Community Dev Corporation - Referral Partner

2232 W. Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN

www.wcdcindy.org

(317) 684-0611

West Indianapolis Development Corporation - Referral Partner

1211 S. Hiatt, Indianapolis, IN

www.westindydev.org

317-638-9432