



Historic District Commercial Façades

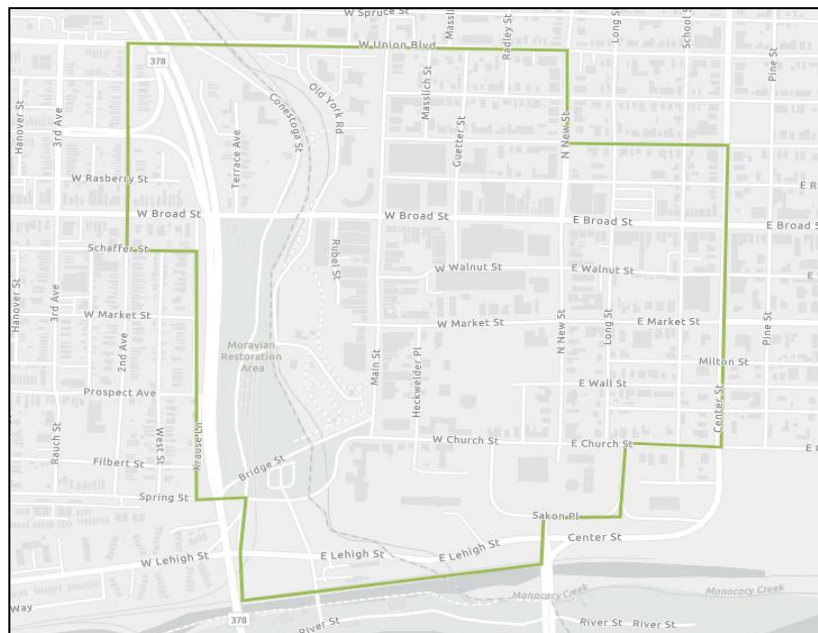
Program Guidelines

Goals: To beautify the City of Bethlehem's ("City") Historic Downtown District and provide an opportunity for local businesses to make improvements that will stimulate private investment in properties, foster an attractive environment, and preserve architectural heritage. This project aligns with the goals of the City's World Heritage nomination, which, if awarded, will designate Bethlehem's historic Moravian Church settlements as a World Heritage site. This program is administered by the City's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and funded via the Commonwealth's Keystone Communities Program.

The **Historic District Commercial Façades Program** is designed to provide an incentive to building owners to restore or rehabilitate the primary elevation of a building in targeted areas in the below outlined section of the City. Funds may also be used to repair or replace exterior building systems in order to preserve, protect and stabilize a building. In addition, businesses that occupy first-floor space may redesign their storefront to reflect historic architectural precedent, or current architectural design or business trends, as deemed appropriate for the building, block face, and streetscape. \$5,000 in grant funding is available for these improvements, with a dollar-for-dollar match by the business, property owner, a combination therein (collectively known as the "Applicant"), or other source(s) subject to approval by the City, in its sole discretion.

Program Eligibility: Aligned with the goal of this program, to be considered for funding a project must meet the following criteria:

1. A building must be located in the Historic North Side Business District:
 - a. From W. Union Blvd to Monocacy Creek (North to South)
 - b. From 2nd Ave. to Center St. (West to East)



2. Construction/alteration plans must achieve the goals and meet design guidelines of the program as determined by the City.



3. Only project costs incurred following execution of the Grant Agreement and by June 30, 2026 will be eligible for reimbursement through this grant funding.
4. A building must include a commercial or business occupant as determined by the Certificate of Occupancy as issued by the Bureau of Code Enforcement and the Zoning Officer; this does not include Home Offices and Home Occupations.
5. Use of the property must comply with the City of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance. A valid Certificate of Occupancy or eligibility to receive a Certificate of Occupancy must be demonstrated. *(Consult with Zoning Officer (610) 856-7094)*
6. Construction/alteration plans for buildings located in certain areas of the City may require review by the applicable architectural and historic review board when it is determined by City staff that historic resources may be affected by the Applicant's proposed project. *(Consult with Zoning Officer (610) 856-7094)*
7. Construction plans must comply with the City's Building Codes, applicable at time of plan submission. To the extent practical, correction of code violations as they relate to the exterior of a building will be eligible for funding. *(Consult with Chief Building Inspector (610) 865-7091)*
8. Compliance with other codes, law and regulations, as determined to be applicable to the project, including Federal, State, and local regulations, must be met before, during, and/or upon completion of project, as applicable. The City may impose additional conditions on the project, in its sole discretion.
9. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* provide the guidelines the City's local historic districts' Boards and Commissions employ in their review for Certificate of Appropriateness; these architectural design guidelines are available from the City of Bethlehem Department of Community and Economic Development. *Call (610) 865-7085.*

Program Conditions: As they relate to the subject property, the property owner must agree to the following conditions:

1. All municipal taxes related to the property and the business must be current.
2. The property owner must agree to a building code inspection of the exterior of the structure.
3. The applicant will submit three (3) cost estimates for construction/alteration plans.
4. All construction related work must be performed by a licensed professional pursuant to City regulations.
5. In addition to construction expenses, i.e., labor and materials, grant funds can be used for professional fees which will directly relate to and result in building improvements.
6. The grant recipient(s) is/are responsible for completing the City-approved project.
7. A licensed contractor and/or tradesperson must complete construction.
8. A tenant who makes an application must provide proof in writing that the owner-of-record has given consent for the building alterations.

The City reserves the right to impose additional terms and conditions applicable to the grants and/or project(s) described in this document, from time-to-time, in its sole discretion.

Terms of the Grant:

1. Funds contributed to Applicant's project may not exceed \$5,000 per façade improvement.



2. A dollar-for-dollar match to the \$5,000 grant is required by the property and/or business owner, or another City-approved source.
3. Grant disbursement will be reimbursement for invoices paid and presented to the Department of Community and Economic Development in accordance with the executed Grant Agreement and any other Grant Documents (defined below). Reimbursement will occur at intervals determined by the City.
4. All funds must be used to carry out the activities and project improvements outlined in the application and, if approved, subsequent Grant Agreement. The Applicant will be responsible for any costs not eligible under the Agreement.
5. If approved for a façade grant, the Applicant, in signing the Grant Agreement, will be required to attest to included nondiscrimination/sexual harassment provisions.

Program Application: An application form is available either on the City's website or by contacting sziller@bethlehem-pa.gov. A property owner or his/her assign may apply for funding. A tenant who makes an application must provide proof in writing that the owner-of-record has given consent for the building alterations. An applicant who has a long-term agreement of sale (Installment Sales Agreement) must submit a copy of the agreement of sale and provide written consent from the owner-of-record for the alterations.

Application Process

Step 1: Contact the City Department of Community and Economic Development at sziller@bethlehem-pa.gov, providing applicant contact information, property owner contact information (if different), property address, and an overview of proposed improvements. To further discuss the program and eligibility, please contact Sean Ziller via email or at 610-849-2142.

Step 2: Schedule an Exterior Building Inspection with Bureau of Code Enforcement at (610) 865-7091.

Step 3: Develop a facade and/or building treatment plan. Include plans to address any exterior building code violations that may have been detected. Depending on the scope of improvements, it may be advisable to procure the services of an architect who is qualified in the area of historic resource treatment. The City Department of Community and Economic Development can provide a list of credentialed architects upon request.

Step 4: Complete application form and attach required exhibits and attachments.

Required exhibits include the following:

- i. A copy of the Property Deed.
- ii. A copy of the Lease Agreement, if appropriate.
- iii. A written, notarized statement of consent from the property owner allowing the tenant to make building alterations.
- iv. Copy of Certificate of Appropriateness, when applicable.
- v. Two (2) current photos of the façade(s) to be improved (*at minimum*).
- vi. Plans or sketches of the proposed façade improvements.
 - a. Architectural drawings may be required depending upon the scope and complexity of the proposed work.
- vii. Three (3) construction/alteration cost estimates prepared by bona fide licensed contractors based on plans submitted with the grant application package. The City reserves the right to disallow quotes



that appear to be, in the opinion and sole discretion of the City, unreasonable or out for the normal parameters of contracting for like work in the area.

- viii. A copy of the Exterior Building Inspection Report issued by the City of Bethlehem Building Inspector.
- ix. A copy of the Certificate of Occupancy as issued by the Bureau of Code Enforcement and the Zoning Officer if issued within one (1) year of the application date or a copy of scheduled code compliance inspection through the City building inspector's office.
- x. A copy of scheduled inspections for Building Code compliance, as deemed necessary.
- xi. Incorporated financial documents, if applicable
- xii. Individual financial documents, if applicable
- xiii. Lender participation documents, if applicable

The City may require additional exhibits and information as it deems appropriate.

Step 5: Submit grant application and attached exhibits (as listed above) to:

The City of Bethlehem
c/o Sean Ziller
Department of Community and Economic Development
10 E. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Or email all materials to: sziller@bethlehem-pa.gov

Step 6: The Department of Community and Economic Development will schedule a review of the application once deemed to be complete.

Step 7: The decision of the City will be communicated to the Applicant. Upon approval, Applicant will be required to execute a Grant Agreement and potentially other documents (each a "Grant Document" and together, "Grant Documents"), in the City's sole discretion. The terms of the Grant Documents, will include conditions that must be satisfied by the Applicant, as grant recipient, including, but not limited to, completion of all approved building improvements and repairs.

Step 8: Upon execution of the Grant Agreement, the recipient shall have thirty (30) days to enter into a contract with a licensed building contractor to have approved alterations and repairs completed. *(After thirty (30) days, the grant application approval will no longer be valid, and the applicant will need to re- apply if there is an interest in completing the project.)*

Step 9: Approved alterations and repairs shall be made in a timely manner in accordance with the Building Permit issued by the Bureau of Code Enforcement. The façade project must begin within forty-five (45) days of full execution of any Grant Agreement, unless the City approves an extension based on circumstances such as weather or any other reason deemed appropriate by the City. The grant recipient will be requested to display on site, within public view, a project sign supplied by the City Department of Community and Economic Development. All grant disbursements must be completed within six (6) months from the date of execution of the Grant Agreement unless the City approves an extension in its sole discretion

Step 10: Proceeds of the grant will be dispersed in accordance with the terms of any applicable Grant Agreement after improvements have begun. The recipient shall submit contractor's invoices for labor, materials, and equipment to the Department of Community and Economic Development. The Department of Community and Economic Development will ascertain that eligible work has been completed prior to submitting a request for payment to the City Controller's Office or other City agency for processing. Funds



will not be disbursed until proof is provided that correction of any code violations noted on the code inspection report are being addressed. The City may impose additional conditions on disbursements as it deems appropriate. All change orders, cost overruns, or obligations that exceed the approved limits in any applicable Grant Agreement and Grant Document(s) are the responsibility of the recipient.

Procurement Information

The following procurement thresholds must be used for any items purchased in whole or part by these grant funds, unless stated otherwise in these guidelines:

- A. Purchases up to \$1,000 require one (1) quote.
- B. Purchases from \$1,001 - \$6,000 require three (3) quotes
- C. Purchases from \$6,001- \$10,000 require three (3) formal quotes
- D. Purchases from \$10,001 - \$24,999 require three (3) requests for quote forms
- E. Purchases of \$25,000 or more require competitive sealed bids

Eligible Improvements

Purpose: Funds for building owners to repair or replace exterior building systems; correct building code violations; or restore, rehabilitate, or otherwise improve the façades of their building. Funds may also be used to restore or otherwise improve their storefronts in a manner deemed appropriate by the City for the building, streetscape, and the business.

Eligibility: A project must meet program eligibility criteria, and the following additional criteria to be eligible for funds:

A building owner may receive only one (1) façade grant per building location.

Examples of eligible façade, building alterations and storefront improvements include, without limitation:

- i. Improvements to windows such as shutters, frames, etc.
- ii. Repairs to windows – i.e., waterproofing
- iii. Columns, porches, and porticos
- iv. Decorative features found on the building façade
- v. Repairs and replacement of existing features and systems
- vi. Gutters and downspouts
- vii. Doorway stoops, ramps for accessibility, railings
- viii. Storefront plate glass display windows and framing
- ix. Lighting fixtures for illumination of main entrance and signs
- x. Doors
- xi. Awnings (non-sign awnings only)

Architectural Design Guidelines: Design for building alterations shall follow the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, when applicable. Applicability of the Standards is determined by the location and/or the age of the building. The architectural design for buildings located in the Bethlehem Historic District requires a Certificate of Appropriateness upon recommendation of the Historic Architectural Review Board and approval by City Council. Further information and guidance on the Standards can be found on the



National Park Service website: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/treatment-standards-rehabilitation.htm>

Terms: The fund will provide a dollar-for-dollar match of construction/alteration costs. The grant amount will be derived from at least three (3) cost estimates. Proceeds will only be disbursed upon submittal of construction cost invoices for materials and/or from contractors or tradesmen for services provided. The City may impose additional conditions on disbursements, from time to time.

Funding for the cost of repair to building facilities, considered building stabilization such as roof repairs, spouting and gutters, and brick pointing can only be included in the grant where further façade improvements are being completed in concert with the program's goals and can only be covered for a maximum of 50% of the costs. The building stabilization costs may not be the majority of funding unless those costs include the replacement of non-appropriate materials with new appropriate materials.

The City may impose additional conditions on Applicant(s) grant(s) or project(s), in its sole discretion.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Can the property owner pay a contractor in cash?**
 - a. This is not recommended and should be avoided.
- 2. Can funds be used to renovate all four sides of a stand-alone building?**
 - a. No. The intent of the façade grant program is to enhance the primary façade of storefronts and other buildings.
- 3. Can the property owner complete his own façade work and be reimbursed for the labor?**
 - a. No. Property owners who provide their own labor will be reimbursed for materials only.

