



Façade Improvement Grant Guidelines

The Helena Business Improvement District (HBID) Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) program is designed to promote the improvement of commercial and multi-use properties in the Business Improvement District by helping property owners upgrade, rehabilitate, and preserve the facades of eligible structures in Historic Downtown Helena. The FIG program aims to make revitalization efforts affordable by providing matching grant funds up to \$5000.

Purpose: FIG grants are provided to owners in recognition of the positive impacts that individual building improvements can have on overall appearance, quality, growth, and vitality of the downtown.

Objectives: Façade improvement activities, assisted with funds made available through the FIG program, are intended to meet the following objectives:

- To encourage the leveraging of new private investment into Downtown Helena in the form of fixed asset investment related to exterior building improvements;
- To preserve, enhance, and restore the historical and architectural significance of buildings in Downtown Helena; and
- To perpetuate a positive and proactive business climate in Downtown Helena that encourages the revitalization of building and supports business improvement.

Minimum Requirements: to be eligible for funding, a proposed project must meet all the following minimum requirements:

- Private Funds Leveraged – the applicant must leverage a minimum of one dollar (\$1.00) of private funds for every one dollar (\$1.00) of grant funds requested.
- If a historic building – exterior renovations shall to the extent practical, preserve and promote the significant architectural and historic features of the building. Modifications to listed historic buildings must be reviewed and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Compliance with Applicable Laws – applicant shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and codes.
- Project Completion – projects must begin within three (3) months of grant award letter and completed October 1.
- Project must be within the HBID boundary (inside shaded area), map attached.
- Applications may be submitted by a property owner or tenant within the area shown on the map.
- Properties must be commercial or residential properties turning commercial or multi-use.

Eligible Improvements Grants shall be available to eligible applicants for the following improvements:

- Awnings – repair or installation
- Rehabilitation or compatible reconstruction of storefronts
- Removal of metal siding and exterior slip covers (surfaces), exterior cleaning, painting*, and/or paint removal
- Masonry repair and repainting
- Repair and replacement of architectural details or materials
- Window repair or in certain cases replacement
- Improvement to backs of buildings are eligible if done in conjunction with a front façade improvement or if the front façade is already considered satisfactory according to program guidelines

*Proposals with permanent improvements will score higher

Ineligible Improvements Grants shall not be available for the following activities:

- Improvements made prior to grant approval
- Interior rehabilitation unless it is essential to rehabilitate the building's façade
- Interior decoration
- Refinancing of existing debt
- Inventory and equipment
- Sweat equity (payments for applicant's own labor) although building materials/supplies are eligible for funding if the applicant does not use an outside contractor
- General business operations expenses (payroll, taxes, utilities, etc.)
- Business signs

Terms and Conditions include:

- Grant amounts are subject to the availability of program funds but shall not exceed \$5000. The Façade Grant Committee has the authority to recommend award of grants exceeding the \$5000 maximum if a project is deemed especially beneficial to the FIG program objectives.
- Grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement guaranteeing the project will be completed according to the details included on the grant application and approved by the Façade Grant Committee and HBID Board of Trustees.
- Grants will be paid in a lump sum at the end of the project as a reimbursement of costs incurred. Invoices need to be sent no later than the project completion date.
- Awarded grantees will agree to any and all PR.

Building Design Requirements

- Exterior renovations shall, to the extent practical, preserve and promote the significant architectural and historic features of the building.
- All construction work shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal building codes.
- The program is geared towards façade projects that protect the historic integrity of the building and improve the overall appearance of the downtown area.
- The goal is to return the building facades in the downtown area to their appearance following their initial construction; however, it is recognized that some buildings may have a different period of architectural significance that supersedes the original construction appearance.
- Ideal projects will retain or repair original features and use historic materials. For example, installation of vinyl siding would not be funded but the repair and repainting of original wood siding would.
- Projects should draw upon the history and architecture of the building while still reflecting the current use.
- The goal is not to try to recreate some past time in the history of Helena; instead, it is to draw upon the architectural and historic distinctiveness of the downtown to enhance its value.
- Creative new uses for existing building stock will be strongly encouraged, as well as modern yet compatible awnings, signage, lighting, and other fixtures to enhance the appearance of storefronts and downtown.

Distribution of funds - prior to releasing grant funds, the following documentation must be in place.

1. **Notice of Award** – will be emailed and/or mailed to awardee
2. **Grant Agreement** – will be included in the award letter
3. **Evidence of Program Expenditures** – documentation shall be provided by the awarded applicant of expenditures prior to the release of funds which can include bills, invoices, or receipts for materials. All documents shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director.
4. **Inspection** – the Executive Director shall perform a visual inspection to ensure the project activities were completed per the grant agreement. A photograph of the completed project will be filed.



2019 Helena Business Improvement District Façade Application

Application Deadline April 15, 2019

Completion date of work October 1, 2019

To apply for the Façade improvement grant, each applicant will need to provide a

- Cover Letter
 - Business Name, location (include business card if applicable)
 - Summarize the projects improvements indicating the investment
- Proof of ownership of the building, or agreement between lessor and lessee
- Evidence of investment expenditures (2-3 quotes)
- Colored photographs of the property
- Answers to: (feel free to copy A-D questions and answer in a word document)
- A. Impact – overall impact of the project on the HBID
 - a. Are inappropriate design elements removed?
 - b. Will the project eliminate what was previously a liability for the district?
 - c. Does the project seek to restore the historical or architectural significance of the building?
- B. Financial Leverage – projects that leverage more private investment will be graded higher than those seeking the maximum match.
- C. Sustainability/Permanence – eligible costs must be structural
 - a. How permanent are the improvements?
 - b. Is there a maintenance plan for improvements?
- D. Community Contribution – is the applicant a good neighbor
 - a. Is the area around the business kept clean and free of debris on a consistent basis?
 - b. Does the business participate in organized Downtown Helena promotions, events, or other community-based activities?
 - c. Does the applicant actively promote downtown Helena and their own business?

Applicants are encouraged to use the following table to check their competitiveness

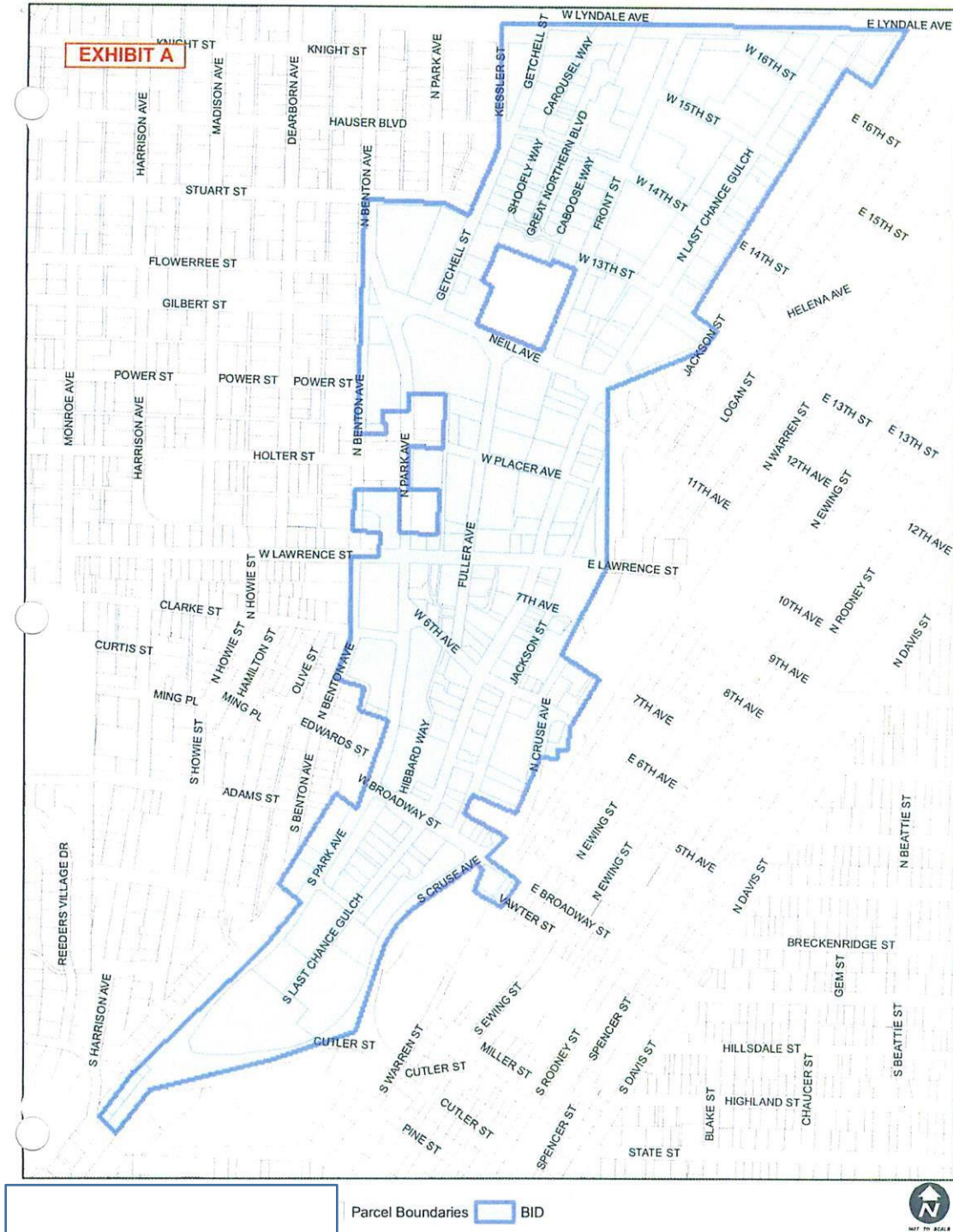
Project falls within the HBID Boundary	Yes	No
Project is multi-use or commercial	Yes	No
Private funds leveraged	Yes	No
Colored photographs of property included	Yes	No
Sketches/drawings of proposed project included	Yes	No
Cover letter attached with the application summarizing improvements	Yes	No
Have you answered the questions A-D above	Yes	No
Do the exterior renovations, to the extent practical, preserve and promote the significant architectural and historic features of the building	Yes	No

Applicants should address their application to the following and include five copies:

Helena Business Improvement District
Micky Zurcher, Executive Director
Façade Improvement Grant
318 Fuller Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

1. Within 30 working days of the application deadline, the Façade Grant Committee will meet to score applications and will reject or accept proposals.
2. A written Notice of Award will be mailed to the applicant explaining the terms of the grant and the grantee will sign the agreement.
3. A written Rejection of Award will be mailed in a letter to the applicant. Any applicant who receives a rejection letter is encouraged to reach out to the Administrator for tips on how to make a competitive application.

Map - Helena Business Improvement District (HBID)





Façade Improvement Grant Agreement

- A. Grantee agrees to timely complete the project as described in the application and approved by the Façade Grant Committee. This grant may be used only for eligible project activities described in the Grantee's façade improvement grant application and approved by the Façade Grant Committee and the HBID Board of Trustees.
- B. Grantee agrees to adhere to the project schedule requirements outlined in the application.
- C. Grantee agrees to preserve and promote the significant architectural and historic features of the building.
- D. Grantee agrees to provide additional information and documents as the HBID may request and allow HBID and its representatives to have reasonable access to the site for the purpose of evaluating the progress and completion of the project.
- E. Grantee agrees to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and codes.
- F. Grantee agrees to maintain the property and improvement.
- G. Grantee agrees to allow the HBID to promote the project including, but not limited to, displaying a HBID logo sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in HBID promotional materials and/or social media.
- H. HBID reserves the right to withhold any payments to be made under this grant award if, in the HBID's sole discretion, such action is necessary: (1) because Grantee has not fully complied with the terms and conditions of the grant; (2) to protect the purpose and objectives of the grant; or (3) to comply with any law or regulation applicable to Grantee, to HBID, or this grant.

On behalf of Grantee, I understand and agree to the foregoing terms and conditions the HBID grant, and hereby certify my authority to execute this agreement.

Business / Organization Name

Applicant's Signature

Date

Building Owner's Signature

Date