



Façade Improvement Grant  
(FIG)  
2021 Application Guidelines

# Facade Improvement Grant Guidelines

## Introduction

The Helena Business Improvement District (HBID) Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) program began in 2018. The 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 more affordable by providing matching grant funds up to \$5000.

Since 2018, the program has helped fund **eight projects** equaling **\$34,983**.

## General Provisions

The policies and procedures contained within these guidelines are to present the criteria which govern the façade improvement activities assisted with funds made available through the HBID FIG program.

**Purpose:** FIG grants are provided to owners or tenants (with documentation) 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 promote a positive and proactive business climate in Downtown Helena that encourages the revitalization of buildings and supports business improvement.

**YOU MUST COMPLY WITH ALL THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS STATED BELOW FOR YOUR APPLICATION TO BE COMPETITIVE AND REVIEWED FOR SCORING**

**Minimum Requirements:** to be eligible for funding, a proposed project must meet all the following minimum requirements: Check the box next to the number once you have answered the requirement in your application. If you do not check this box, your application will not be reviewed.

1. **Private Funds Leveraged** – the applicant must leverage a minimum of one dollar (\$1.00) of private funds for every dollar (\$1.00) of grant funds requested.
- a. Applicants whose leverage is greater than the 1:1 match will receive up to 10 extra bonus points.

- 2. **Historic Building Relevance** – 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 and included in the application.
  - a. You must contact the Helena/Lewis and Clark Co. Heritage Preservation office with a letter attached to your application indicating your building is historic or your building is not historic.
    - i. City-County Building, Rm. 234  
316 N. Park Ave.  
Helena, MT 59326  
406.447.8357
  
- 3. **Compliance with Applicable Laws** – applicant indicates that the project complies with the following laws and codes. You must tell the reviewer how your project complies with laws and codes.
  
- 4. **Project must be within the HBID boundary** (inside shaded area), map attached.
  
- 5. **Who owns the building?**
  - a. Do you (applicant) own the property? Please provide a copy of a recorded deed showing that the Applicant and Grantor on the deed are the same entity or person(s).
  - b. If you do not own the property, are you a tenant? If so, please provide 1) a signed copy of your lease; 2) a letter of support for the project from landlord/property owner that indicates the remaining term on your lease. Grants will be not be given to applicants with less than \_\_\_\_ years left on their lease.
  
- 6. **Applicant property is**
  - a. currently commercial;
  - b. residential changing to commercial; or
  - c. multi-use.”
  
- 7. Applicant must **provide high resolution before pictures(s) within the application and emailed as a jpeg to [mzurcher@helenabid.com](mailto:mzurcher@helenabid.com)**
  
- 8. Applicants provides five copies of materials by the application deadline

**Please note, if awarded, you will be required to finish your project in one year. As a good faith clause, it is highly recommended you indicate your completion date in your cover letter.**

**Eligible Improvements Grants**

Eligible improvements may include:

- 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 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

### **Ineligible Improvements Grants**

Ineligible improvements may include:

- 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.
- 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 cooperate with any efforts of the HBID to publicize the grant award.

### **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.



## 2021 Helena Business Improvement District Façade Application

Application Deadline April 15, 2021

**Project must be completed by June 1, 2022**

We seek to assist the applicant by providing what the grant committee looks for while scoring the applications. By providing detailed information you will be competitive. Applications that do not contain the minimum requirements may not be reviewed for funding. **Applicants must be within the HBID boundaries.**

Your application should include (use the boxes to check completion and competitiveness)

- Cover Letter (10 points)
  - Business name and location (include business card if applicable)
  - Summarize the project's improvements; indicating the investment and whether the project is multi-use or commercial (minimum requirement)
- Proof of ownership of the building (lease or deed) and if a tenant, an agreement between lessor and lessee (minimum requirement)
- Evidence of investment expenditures including 2-3 quotes (20 points)
- Specify the amount being asked (do not just say 1:1 match) (minimum requirement)
- Sketches or drawings of the proposed improvements (20 points)
- Colored photographs of the property as part of the application and in jpeg form emailed to [mzurcher@helenabid.com](mailto:mzurcher@helenabid.com). More pictures the better. (minimum requirement)
- Applicant provides five hard copies of all materials by the application deadline
- Addendum to the cover letter

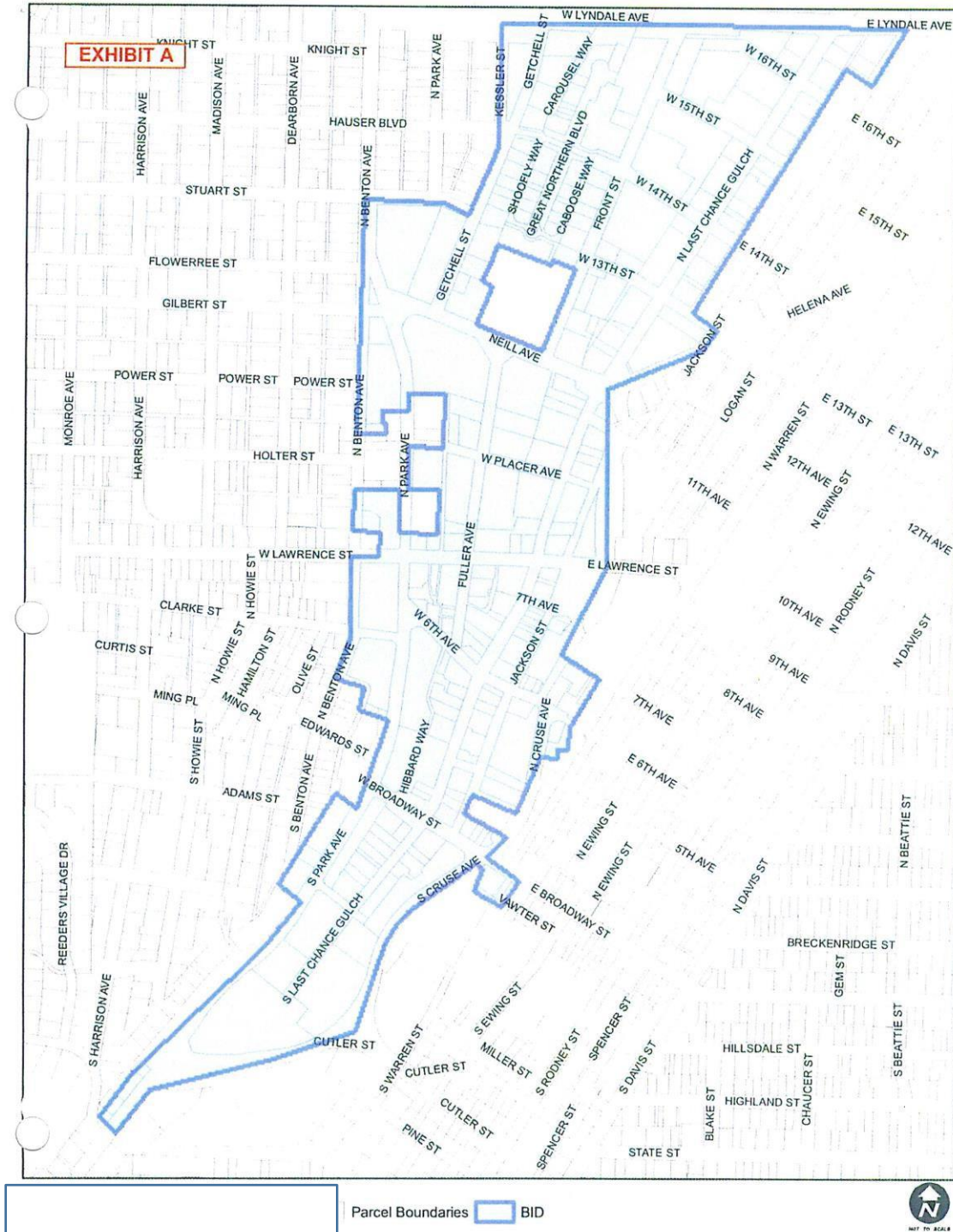
In a word document (Addendum), answer the following (50 points)

- A. Impact – **Detail** the overall impact of the project by answering: (Yes/No answers are not detailing)
  - a. Are inappropriate design elements removed?
  - b. How does the project bolster the neighborhood and encourage development? (15 points)
  - c. Does the project seek to restore the historical or architectural significance of the building? (5 points)
    - i. If you answer Yes to c. please include communication letter from Historic Preservation Officer (minimum requirement)
    - ii. If you answer No to c. indicate "not applicable"
- B. Financial Leverage – minimum 1:1 match – must indicate total estimate of project and amount asking for (be specific) (minimum requirement)
- C. Sustainability/Permanence – eligible costs must be structural
  - a. What is the expected lifetime of the proposed improvements?
  - b. What is the maintenance plan for improvements?
- D. Community Contribution – is the applicant a good neighbor
  - a. How do you maintain the area around the business to help keep it clean and free of debris on a consistent basis?
  - b. Does the applicant participate in organized Downtown Helena promotions, events, or other community-based activities?

**Mail Application to:  
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.
4. ***Official Rules are final and binding:***
  - By entering this FIG competition, applicants/grantees (“*Competitor[s]*”) acknowledge that they have read and understand these Official Rules, and fully accept and agree to be bound by the outlined terms.
  - Applicants acknowledge compliance with the Official Rules, including, without limitation, eligibility requirements and the decisions of the HBID.
  - Any competitor disputing these Official Rules shall be disqualified. **Failure to comply with these or any other Official Rules will result in disqualification.**
  - All decisions of the HBID, and/or its judges, are final and binding on all matters relating to this competition.

# Map - Helena Business Improvement District (HBID)







## Façade Improvement Grant Agreement

- A. Grantee agrees 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*