

CITY OF DOTHAN, ALABAMA



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT POLICY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Administered By:

THE DOTHAN BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS
and
The Department of Planning and Development

ADOPTED
November 2006

*Financial Assistance Provided Through
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*

OVERVIEW

The City of Dothan is receiving annual entitlement grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Housing and City Development Act of 1974 as amended. The Board of City Commissioners of the City of Dothan has determined that a part of the annual grant is to be set aside and used to conduct façade improvements that will benefit qualified businesses in a designated target area. This area includes commercial buildings facing the streets of Foster Street on the west, E. Crawford Street to the south, Museum Ave. to N. Appletree on the east, and Depot St. over to N. Foster to the north. This policy is adopted to set forth the procedures and guidelines under which this program will be conducted. It is meant to remain in force and effect from program year to program year unless amended or rescinded by the Board of City Commissioners.

FACADE IMPROVEMENT – PURPOSE AND DEFINITION

The purpose of the façade improvement program is to encourage economic development in targeted areas.

The term “façade improvement” as used herein is defined as:

General upgrading of a building’s external appearance with the façade being visible from the street.

Limitations –

- The façade improvement must be visible from the street.
- The target area is included in a Historic District and façade improvements may therefore be required to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- The maximum grant amount of \$5,000 will be matched dollar for dollar by the owner or other person who has permission to make such an improvement.
- An applicant may apply once per year for one building.
- The building will not be required to be occupied to be eligible but must be in adequate condition to be occupied at the time of the application.
- The façade improvement upon completion must be maintained for a three year term. The sale of the building during this term will result in a prorated amount being refunded to the City’s CDBG program by the applicant.

Below are examples of eligible work which include but are not limited to the following:

- Permanent exterior improvements, including:
- Masonry repairs and tuckpointing;
- Repair/replace/ preserve historically significant architectural details;

- Storefront reconstruction;
- Cornice repair;
- Exterior painting and stucco;
- Awnings and canopies;
- Window and door repair or replacement;
- Permanent exterior signage integrated into the storefront design;
- Permanent exterior lighting;
- Repair/replacement of gutters and down spouts;
- Visible roof repairs in conjunction with structural improvements;
- Decking and stairs;

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Dothan Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Façade Improvement Program is administered by the Planning and Development Department by direct assignment from the Dothan Board of City Commissioners. By law, the Dothan Board of City Commissioners must administer the program through assignment and adoption of this policy.

APPLICANT SELECTION

Final determination of priority for each applicant for façade improvement participation will be based on numerical assignment after initial processing has been completed, and the applicant has provided essential documentation.

POLICY PROCEDURES

Outlined below are the eligibility and procedural guidelines that will be used in the Façade Improvement Program.

A. Eligibility Requirements — In order to participate in the Façade Improvement Program an applicant must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

1. Business Owner/Building Owner — The applicant must be the owner of the building or have permission from the owner to make the improvements.
2. Taxes — All property taxes of the building must be current. There must not be any IRS tax liens attached to the property.
3. Location — The building must be within the target area. It may face the roads that are the boundaries of the target area.
4. Façade Improvement — The building must meet the definition and limitations as contained in this policy.
5. Matching Funds — Progressive payments will be made to applicants in minimum increments of \$500 (minimum paid bills submitted \$1,000) until the \$5,000 grant

limit has been reached.

- B. Applications** –Advertisements, public service announcements and other media may be utilized in making places of application acceptance known. CDBG staff personnel will assist in application preparation, as well as to answer any question an applicant might have concerning the program. Application forms will be available and each applicant must sign the form acknowledging that the information given is true to the best of his/her knowledge. All applications will be kept in strictest confidence and used only by the CDBG staff.
- C. Application Processing** — Each application accepted will be reviewed in phases in order to eliminate those applicants who are clearly not eligible for program participation for any number of stated reasons. In every case, each applicant will be notified within four weeks of application submission in writing as to the status of the application and reasons relating to that status. Phases of the application on processing follow:
1. Ownership — Each applicant must provide a copy of the deed to the property or other documentation indicating permission to improve the façade.
 2. Preliminary Review — The CDBG staff will review each completed application to determine the applicant’s ownership/permission status and the condition of the building.
 3. Plan, Estimate, Timeline – Applicants will need to submit a plan of the improvements with a cost estimate and expected timeline with the application.
 4. Historic Preservation Commission Approval— If applicable, those applicants who pass the preliminary review will need to obtain approval for the façade improvements by the Historic Preservation Commission before their application can be finalized. A copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness will then need to be submitted to CDBG staff.
 5. Final Application Approval — Based on the results of all steps above the final approval of an eligible application will be made by the Planning and Development Director of the City of Dothan on the recommendation of the CDBG staff. Applicants shall be notified by letter of approval of the grant amount.
- D. Contracting** — All contractors used for the façade improvement program must be licensed to do business in the City of Dothan.

At the time of contract award the funds for the grant will be designated for contract payment. Funds may be dispensed according to contract progress.

During construction, the CDBG staff may conduct periodic inspections to ensure general contract compliance, but does not guarantee the work of the contractor.

During construction the applicant may request progress payments based on paid invoices. The amount of 50% of paid invoices submitted will be paid to the applicant. These payments will be made in \$500 minimum increments as invoices are submitted until the maximum grant amount is paid. The final payment may be in an amount less than \$500 if applicable.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A. General

Any person who believes he has been aggrieved by;

1. determination by CDBG staff as to eligibility, or
2. a failure on the part of the CDBG staff to correctly carry out his/her responsibilities in connection with the inspection and work write-up, or eligibility verification process (excluding contractor performance which is to be conducted under contract procedures),

may file a complaint and have his case reviewed by the CDBG Administrator.

B. Methods of Presentation by Claimant

1. Oral: A person may talk over his case either alone or with the assistance of another person with the CDBG Administrator within the time limits set forth below in section C. This oral presentation does not preclude the making of a written presentation. The oral presentation will be allowed within 15 days of the making of such request.
2. Written: If the claimant does not receive satisfaction from an oral presentation, or should he desire to forego the oral presentation, a written statement of his beliefs as to what he desires may be made to the CDBG Administrator.

C. Time Limits for Making Complaints

Generally speaking, a complaint may be filed for review no later than 90 days after the date that a person is informed of ineligibility or the person alleges that the CDBG staff failed to correctly carry out responsibilities. Extensions of time limits may be granted for good cause on an individual basis.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Conflicts of Interest- *No person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, appointed official, or elected official of the City of Dothan who exercise or have exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to CDBG activities, or are in a position to participate in a decision-making process, or gain inside information with regard to such activities, may obtain a personal or financial interest or benefit, or have an interest in any program assistance, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure or for one year thereafter.*

In all cases where an apparent conflict of interest exists, HUD will make a finding regarding the eligibility of the applicant. Assistance shall not be granted unless approved by HUD. The

conflict of interest process may add, at minimum, forty five (45) days to the eligibility process.

Attachments:

Application with Certification