

MASON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MDDA)

FAÇADE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

AMENDED JULY 10, 2003; MARCH 11, 2004; NOVEMBER 11, 2004; FEBRUARY 3, 2010
AND FURTHER AMENDED OCTOBER 5, 2016

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Mason Downtown Development Authority (MDDA) Façade Assistance Program is to encourage historically-minded improvements within the MDDA District to commercial façades that are readily visible to the public.

It is the intent of the Façade Assistance Program to utilize MDDA revenues to enhance the building façades found within the MDDA District.

The appearance of buildings plays a major role in the marketing success of the MDDA District. The public perception of the MDDA District plays a significant part in the economic success of the District. Improving the physical appearance of our buildings will promote the attraction and retention of business operations in the District, will halt property value deterioration, will promote economic growth in the District, and will preserve historic District resources.

II. Assistance Amounts and Types

To be eligible for Assistance, a project must have total eligible costs of at least \$4,000.

Grant Assistance:

- Aesthetic Improvements: Up to 10% of the eligible project costs. Examples include: painting, signage, lighting, and awnings. Maximum Grant: \$5000
- Structural Improvements (Non-Historic): Up to 35% of the eligible project costs. Examples include: windows, tuck pointing, entrances, etc., that are not historic in nature. Maximum Grant: \$10,000
- Structural Improvements (Historic): Up to 50% of the eligible project costs. Examples include: windows, tuck pointing, entrances, etc., that are historic in nature. Maximum Grant: \$15,000

Tax Sharing Grant Assistance:

MDDA may also consider utilizing DDA taxes captured from the property to reimburse the property owner over time. The terms and percentage of support would be based on the project need and anticipated capture and approval by the full Board. All other eligibility requirements would apply

Assistance is available for the exterior repair or rehabilitation of the faces of the existing commercial buildings within the MDDA District. Faces included are the front, rear or side of a building if the front, and rear or side if it is readily visible from a public street or municipal parking lot.

- Owners of property within the MDDA District are eligible.
- Tenants or other occupants of property within the MDDA District are eligible but the application must include written approval and consent of the property owner.
- Land contract purchasers of property within the MDDA District are eligible but the application must include written approval and consent of the fee title owner.

III. Eligible Costs

Eligible Costs include, but are not necessarily limited to, labor and material for:

- Restoration, repair or replacement of windows, doors, exterior walls, chimneys or other architectural elements;
- Exterior painting;
- Signage, awnings, marquees and related lighting and electrical fixtures;
- Masonry repair or cleaning;
- Exterior work necessary for conversion to a retail or entertainment storefront;
- Removal of after-installed façades;
- Restoration of vintage elements; and
- Architectural fees.

The following costs are not eligible:

- Costs incurred before final assistance approval by MDDA with the exception of approved architectural fees;
- Costs paid by the applicant in merchandise or in-kind services; and
- Labor paid to the applicant or a family member of the applicant or an employee of the applicant unless the applicant, family member or employee of the applicant is a recognized contractor for the particular labor being provided to the project.

Projects that will require phases are expected to bring the ten-year plan for improvements at time of first approval. Any activities that include the same scope of work that had been previously funded for that property by the MDDA in the last ten years will not be eligible.

IV. Conditions of Eligibility

Each applicant must meet the following requirements:

- Property taxes and other City accounts must be current for all properties associated with that owner at the time of approval and funding.
- Proposed improvements or repairs must have an anticipated useful life of ten or more years.
- The applicant must, at the time of signing a Façade Assistance Agreement, identify the contractor or contractors who will perform the work and disclose if any such contractor is a family member or employee of the applicant. The contractor or contractors must be approved by MDDA.
- Properties not paying toward the MDDA are not eligible.

V. Application and Award Process

STEP 1: NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI):

The MDDA may notify each known property owner within the MDDA at least once each calendar year and ask for an NOI to assist with budgeting. Not submitting an NOI at that time does not restrict an applicant from applying during the year, but they will be required to submit a Notice of Intent prior to starting the approval process. Submitting an NOI does not ensure funds will be reserved for a project.

STEP 2: DEFINE SCOPE AND SPECS:

The MDDA will notify Revitalize Inc., an historic renovation specialist, once an NOI is received and they will work with the property owner to define the scope and specifications for the project at no charge. This discussion will include the full extension of renovations included in the next ten years.

STEP 3: SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION:

When an applicant is ready to submit, they will complete the application and deliver it with all attachments to the MDDA. An application will consist of the following:

- Application in the form approved by MDDA;
- Renderings of proposed work;
- Written description of project plans (scope of work); and
- Detailed cost estimate for all eligible costs supported by a quote from three recognized contractors or suppliers (acceptable to document efforts to unsuccessfully receive three bids). Detailed cost estimates MUST include line item costs for the work anticipated.

STEP 4: INITIAL REVIEW:

The application will be reviewed by the MDDA Secretary who will notify the applicant of:

- Whether the application is complete or requires additional information;
- Whether or not the application appears to meet the program objectives; and
- Whether it requires Historic District Commission review prior to MDDA consideration.

STEP 5A: HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION (HDC) REVIEW, IF APPLICABLE:

Most of the buildings in the MDDA district are also in the City of Mason Historic District. The City's Historic District Ordinance requires that any façade modification be approved by the HDC. The MDDA will assist the applicant in applying to the HDC for a certificate of appropriateness by providing the applicant with the necessary forms, by obtaining answers to any questions the applicant may have, and by facilitating the process wherever possible.

STEP 5B: FAÇADE REVIEW COMMITTEE (FRC) REVIEW (occurs simultaneously with 5A and will occur within two weeks of receipt of a complete application):

Each project will be reviewed by the FRC consisting of a minimum of the following members:

- Designated Historic District Commission Representative;
- Designated MDDA Representative;
- City Administrator or their designee;
- Historic Renovation Specialists approved by the MDDA; and/or
- Any other members the MDDA feels would assist with the process

Please note that the MDDA may consult with an applicant for the purpose of modifying the scope and content of the proposed work.

STEP 6: MDDA BOARD CONSIDERATION:

The FRC will make a recommendation to the MDDA Board for final consideration related to funding amounts, activities funded, and percentage of project.

STEP 7: CONTRACT:

Once approved, the applicant and the MDDA will sign the approved Façade Assistance Agreement. The applicant will be responsible for obtaining any necessary building permits from any governmental agency and the MDDA will facilitate this process wherever possible. The Façade Assistance Agreement will include a covenant by the applicant to perform the work in accordance with the plans approved by MDDA and HDC. The Façade Assistance Agreement will include consent of the applicant that pictures, renderings or descriptions of the work may be used by MDDA for any and all promotional purposes.

VI. Amendments

Any amendments in the scope of work must be approved in writing by MDDA and the HDC, where applicable, before construction of installation.

MDDA appreciates and understands that the repair and restoration of existing buildings, and particularly historical buildings, will sometimes result in costs that were unforeseen and unexpected at the time of applying for a Façade Assistance and at the time a project is commenced. Therefore, the MDDA Secretary may, without further approval of the MDDA Board, increase the amount of an approved Assistance where the Secretary finds that all the following are true:

1. Assistance has previously been approved by MDDA and a Façade Assistance Agreement has been executed in accordance with these guidelines.
2. The applicant, after commencing work on the project, for the first time encounters circumstances surrounding the actual construction, repair or restoration that, in the opinion of the Secretary, were to that point in time unforeseen and unexpected by the applicant and that will necessarily increase the cost of the project for which Assistance was approved.
3. The applicant has requested an increase in the Assistance amount and has submitted documents in support of said request that meet the documentation requirements for an initial Assistance application hereunder.
4. The applicant is not seeking to change the essential nature or scope of the project for which the Assistance was first approved.
5. The increase in the Assistance amount requested by the applicant does not exceed 20% of the Assistance first approved.
6. The adjusted total project cost and Assistance amount are still within the limits set forth in Paragraph II. of these guidelines.
7. No previous increases in the Assistance amount have been requested and approved.
8. The increase in the Assistance amount will not result in the aggregate of Assistance approvals to all applicants exceeding the MDDA budget for Assistances for the fiscal year in which the Assistance was initially approved.
9. Assistance applicant whose request for an increase has been rejected by the Secretary may appeal that decision to the full Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

VII. Completion of Work and Funding

The approved work must be completed within one (1) year from the date of the Assistance agreement between MDDA and the applicant.

Upon completion of the work, the applicant will submit to MDDA a written request for funding, certifying the work has been completed in accordance with the approvals and certifying the expenses that have been incurred.

The applicant will submit to MDDA evidence that any required building inspections have occurred and that all required approvals have been obtained.

MDDA Façade Review Committee may conduct such investigations and inspections as it deems appropriate to confirm completion of the work in accordance with the approvals and to confirm that the expenses have been incurred.

MDDA will then pay to the applicant the amount of the Assistance or the agreed upon percentage of the cost, whichever is less, upon receipt of the grantee's sworn statement containing a list of the laborers, suppliers and contractors to whom payment is due, and the itemized amount of such payments. MDDA reserves the right to issue joint checks when, in its sole discretion, it determines that joint checks are necessary.

VIII. Discretion of MDDA

Each applicant will understand that MDDA may, in its sole and absolute discretion, approve or reject any application or request modifications of the proposed project. MDDA reserves the right to change these guidelines or discontinue the program at any time.