

# Downtown Hattiesburg Association Façade Grant Program

presented in partnership with



Mississippi Power



Hattiesburg  
Landmark  
Preservation

## Rules, Guidelines, and Checklist

### GENERAL PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Downtown Hattiesburg Association (DHA) and our partners, City of Hattiesburg, Forrest County Board of Supervisors, and Mississippi Power Foundation, are committed to cultivating our Main Street district's resources, including assisting our property owners and businesses to improve their buildings and revitalize vacant and underutilized properties in the downtown district. To that end, DHA has created the Downtown Façade Grant program to encourage private investment in redevelopment, revitalization, and rehabilitation of buildings in Downtown Hattiesburg. The program seeks to provide funding for projects that will enhance the aesthetic and historical character in the Hub City Historic Downtown District (HCHDD) and assist property owners and business owners in rehabilitating and upgrading the façades and exterior features of their buildings.

The program will provide grants ranging from \$500 up to \$10,000 that can be used to reimburse up to 50% of the eligible costs of the project. These grants will be awarded on a competitive basis; not all applications will be funded. Priority will be given to applications from targeted areas highlighted on the map, where proposed projects will result in growth and development of new retail and commercial business in the district. **No expenses incurred prior to the date of grant award will be allowed.** The Façade Grant Review Committee (FGRC) has the complete authority and final decision over all awards. This program will continue as long as funds are available.

To apply, review the guidelines below and complete the attached application. You must provide all requested information to be eligible.

### Who is eligible to participate in the program?

1. Applicant properties must be located within the Hub City Downtown Historic District. **See attached map for locations.**
2. Applicants must be members of the Downtown Hattiesburg Association. Any membership or partner level membership applies.
3. Applicants must be the property owner or a tenant operating a retail business, a restaurant, a service establishment, or professional office located in the district.
4. Properties must be up-to-date on all city and county taxes (including property tax and the City's Business License) prior to participation in the grant program.
5. Properties located in the highlighted target areas of the district will be given higher priority than other applications.
6. The **entire** application must be **complete** and **legible**.
7. The DHA Façade Grant Review Committee (FGRC) has the complete discretion and authority over the merits and appropriateness of each project; therefore, this committee has final authority.

## Definition of Terms

### 1. Applicant

- a. Applicant must be property owner(s) or tenant(s) operating a business located in the Hub City Historic Downtown District (HCHDD).
- b. "Owner" is defined as the property owner of a structure located in the HCHDD.
- c. "Tenant" is defined as a for profit or non-profit business operating in a structure located in the HCHDD.
- d. To be eligible, the applying tenant/business must submit an affidavit, in a format approved by DHA, from the property owner authorizing the tenant to submit an application for façade Improvements and a copy of the tenant's lease agreement.

### 2. Property

- a. Location: Property must be located in the HCHDD as outlined in the attached map.
- b. Indebtedness: All City and County property taxes must be up to date.

### 3. Project Costs / Uses

- a. The façade defines total project costs as those cost incurred by the independent contractor(s) to make improvements and repairs to the exterior façades of the building. Façade improvements performed by the property owner or tenant can be considered an eligible cost / use under this program.
- b. Funds are available for exterior improvements and may be applied to a front, side, or rear façade, provided the façade faces a public street or parking area. Reimbursement is 50% of improvements costs up to \$5,000 for improvements to a single façade and up to \$10,000 for improvements to a front and side or front and rear façade.

## Eligible Cost and Activities

**Eligible exterior improvement cost / uses may include but are not limited to the following:**

### 1. Architectural Assistance for Exterior Design Improvements

Reimbursement will be 100% of actual architectural costs **up to \$1000** provided the applicant utilizes the architectural plans in the rehabilitation and the Façade Grant Review Committee (FGRC) approves the project.

### 2. Façade Renderings

Applicants may be required to obtain renderings of proposed improvements (depending on the extent of the project) to be submitted as part of the application process.

Renderings by design professionals must be paid for by the applicant and may be reimbursed if the Façade Grant Review Committee approves the project.

Reimbursement is not to exceed \$500 and will be subtracted from the total assistance to the project and reimbursed at the completion of the project.

### 3. Signage

50% reimbursement (up to \$1,000) of actual costs associated with repairing, replacing or adding a sign.

### 4. Murals

Up to \$4,000 reimbursement for murals. No matching funds are required provided the mural is part of a façade improvement project AND the mural is coordinated through Hattiesburg Alliance for Public Art (HAPA). If mural is the only improvement to the façade, a 50% match is required (up to \$2,000).

### 5. Exterior Restoration

Eligible exterior work to the face of a building includes removing existing façade materials and replacing them more appropriate and attractive designs and materials and other detailing which leads to a substantial enhanced appearance.

**Eligible exterior restoration includes but is not limited to:**

1. Cleaning, mortar joint repair, patching or painting of exterior surfaces.
2. Repair or replace entrances, doors, and windows.
3. Railings, ironwork, and/or cornice addition, repair or replacement.
4. Repair or install of awnings and canopies.
5. Repair or replace original architectural features
6. Repair or replace signage if sign is integral to building façade.
7. Remove, replace, or repair lighting.
8. Removal of barriers to access for people with disabilities

Other improvements may be made, if they meet the objectives of the program and have prior written approval of the Façade Grant Review Committee.

### **Ineligible Cost and Activities**

Ineligible activities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Roofing, unless such work is minor in nature and is necessitated by the specified façade improvement design
2. Inappropriate cleaning methods, repairs, replacements, or alterations.
3. Overpowering signs- (all exterior signage must comply with City sign standards)
4. Improvements that are not in scale with both the existing structure and neighboring structures.
5. Alterations which have the effect of decreasing accessibility for people with disabilities.
6. Work which has been performed or which has been placed under contract prior to approval of the application.

***All applications include an application for appropriateness that will be reviewed by the City's historic planner. If a project requires review by the Hattiesburg Historic Conservation Commission, the applicant will be notified.***

### **Financing Policies**

#### **Matching**

Matching funds will consist of funds expended by the applicant and approved costs that are directly related to the façade improvements proposed, identified in the application, and approved by the review committee.

This is a matching grant program in which building owners and businesses in the designated target area are eligible to receive a 50% match grant of the documented cost of improving the exterior of a building up to \$5,000 per façade.

#### **Reimbursements**

As a general rule, the program operates on a reimbursement basis with funds disbursed by DHA after all work is completed and the close out report has been accepted and approved by the FGRC. However, some exceptions may be made at the discretion of the FGRC. For a building with one façade, reimbursement will be 50% of the documented cost of the façade improvements, not to exceed \$5,000 on any one project. For buildings with two or more façades visible, the amount rebated will not exceed \$10,000 or 50% of the documented project costs, whichever is less.

Any rehabilitation improvements undertaken prior to the FGRC's final written authorization to begin construction is not eligible for reimbursement under the program. All façade rehabilitation work undertaken in conjunction with the program which exceed approved financial assistance shall be done by the applicant.

## Repayment

If all terms are met no repayment will be required. For grant recipients whose projects do not comply with the conditions outlined in this document, grant funds must be returned to the façade grant program at a rate of 33% per year. For example, if the recipient received a \$5000 grant and one year later violates the conditions set forth in this document, the recipient would pay DHA \$3,300.00 [(\$5000 x 33%)=\$1,650 x 2 years= \$3,300]

## Additional Information

- DHA has the right to terminate this program at any time.
- This is a 50% matching, reimbursement grant program.
- Final terms and conditions of each grant award will be specified in the grant agreement upon award.
- Grant funds will be disbursed only upon completion of the project and submission of all required documents.
- Some (if not all) improvements and rehabilitation may require a permit to be filed with the Urban Planning Department and or review by the Hattiesburg Historic Conservation Commission.
- In addition, grantees must agree to allow DHA and the City of Hattiesburg to use their information and photographs to promote the grant program and ongoing revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

All funding is discretionary. The DHA and the FGRC is not obligated to fund the maximum amount allowed and, at its discretion, may award grants in amounts less than requested in the grant application.

Incomplete applications will be rejected, and projects completed prior to submission of the grant application are ineligible. Grant recipients who have received prior grant funding will be reviewed on an individual basis for additional grants.

## Review Committee

The program administrator will schedule the application to be reviewed at an upcoming meeting of the FGRC. The review committee consists of nine (9) members composed of the representatives from each funding partner: Forrest County, the City of Hattiesburg, Mississippi Power; a local architect, a planning professional, a representative from the Mobile - Bouie Neighborhood Association, a downtown property owner, and a downtown business owner. The Director of the Downtown Hattiesburg Association will act as the program administrator.

Projects will be judged on a project-by-project basis. The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject a project or any portion(s) of a project. .

## General Requirements

All work must be done in accordance with the DHA Façade Grant Guidelines, all applicable local ordinances and codes, and state and federal codes, rules and regulations set forth in the Grant Program. The following listing is not all inclusive:

- **Code Requirements**

All work must be properly permitted through the Division of Building Codes and be performed in accordance with all applicable codes and regulations of the City of Hattiesburg.

- **Historic Preservation Requirements**

All work must be properly permitted through the City of Hattiesburg Historic Conservation Commission and the District Design Guidelines.

### 1. APPLICATIONS may be obtained from the Downtown Hattiesburg Association.

Applicant completes the application form and obtains cost proposal(s) then submits the application for review by the Façade Grant Review Committee. Grant application should be addressed as follows:

Downtown Hattiesburg Association  
PO Box 150  
Hattiesburg, MS 39403  
Attn: Façade Review Committee

### 2. PRELIMINARY APPROVAL

Upon reviewing the application, the Review Committee may ask the grant applicant to visit the site to review the application and discuss the proposed improvements (based on the complexity of the project). After a full review of the application (and possible site visit), the committee will make a preliminary decision on the status of the application. The applicant must then submit plans to the appropriate Historic Conservation Commission and Urban Planning Site Review Committee (depending on the complexity of the project). If the proposed improvements meet the requirements of this program, a Conditional Letter of Approval will be sent to the owner/tenant. The letter may require modifications or changes to the original proposal provided by the grant applicant based on the recommendation of the Site Plan review and or HHCC. If necessary, the applicant must submit final plans and drawings to appropriate City agencies and the FGRC for final determination as to whether or not the applicant's proposed improvements will be funded. The FGR Committee reserves the right to disapprove a project or portion of a project.

### 3. PRIOR TO FINAL APPROVAL

If the FGR Committee recommends an application for funding, program administrator staff will prepare the appropriate agreements. The Grant Agreement document will be executed by the DHA Executive Director and the applicant.

If a project is not approved, the applicant will receive a written explanation of the reason(s) for rejection and what, if any, further steps can be taken to receive approval. DHA will notify the applicant of its approval or denial within 15 working days of the determination.

#### 4. FINAL APPROVAL PROCESS

With an initial inspection by FGRC representative already performed, a pre-construction conference may be scheduled, depending on the scope of the project, to further explain and advise the applicant and contractors on matters relating to the local requirements that may apply.

- A. Applicants must present evidence of approval by the appropriate Historical / Urban Planning office prior to final approval.
- B. The applicant must obtain permits for the required work and notify the DHA that construction has begun.
- C. The applicant must display a sign provided by DHA on the site indicating 'Financing Provided in Part by the Downtown Hattiesburg Association Façade Improvement Grant'.
- D. Improvements must be started within ninety (90) days of the executed agreement and completed within one year (365 days). Extensions to the completion period may be granted for extenuating circumstances such as unforeseen work that needs to be done before the approved project inclement weather, or the ordering of special building materials. Extension requests must be submitted in writing to the FGRC. Requests must be received no less than thirty (30) days prior to the completion period ending date.

The FGRC and DHA staff will monitor the progress of the project. Changes in approved work specifications will be attached to the original applications dated and signed by the Program administrator or FGRC appointee authorizing the change order.

#### 5. CLOSE OUT AND FUNDING REQUEST

Upon completion of the project, the applicant will provide written notification to the FGRC Administrator that the project is complete and affirm that any and all required city inspections have been completed.

Reimbursement will be made to the applicant contingent upon verification that the work has been completed according to the application and the full amount of the contract has been paid to the contractor providing the improvements. The applicant will submit the Request for Funds Sheet / Close Out Report along with receipts, any lien wavers and other applicable supporting documentation from the contractor(s). See Exhibit E for the Close Out Report / Funds Request and supporting documents sheet.

## **EXHIBIT D**

### **Façade Grant Application Check List**

#### **Application submission checklist - Please attach the following:**

1. Proof of ownership - Warranty Deed / Title Opinion
2. Authorization to Submit - Affidavit from the property owner authorizing the applicant (tenant) to submit application for proposed improvements
3. Copy of the Lease Agreement
4. Attach beginning photos of façade / building
5. Attach renderings of work to be performed or equipment / signage to be purchased. Design renderings / drawing of proposed work must indicate elevations, materials, scale, colors
6. Property insurance Policy - evidence that a property insurance policy of proper type and amount of coverage to protect the Program investment.
7. Copy of paid city and county tax receipts - documentation that all taxes are up to date
8. Written estimate or quote from a licensed contractor or business who will be providing the work - estimates should provide a detailed description and itemization of all work to be done including material and labor costs pertaining to the proposed façade improvement. If the scope of work is permitted to be done by the applicant, a written estimate of materials cost and equipment is still required.
9. Exterior improvements must comply with City of Hattiesburg Codes and Ordinances.
10. Attach copies of all permits issued.

## **EXHIBIT E**

### **Façade Grant Close Out report and Funding request check list**

#### **Close Out Report Check List:**

1. Original application
2. Preliminary and Final approval documents, renderings, drawings, etc.
3. Preliminary cost estimates and Final breakdown summary of cost with detailed proof of expenditures, invoices, receipts, etc. for the work.
4. Signed letter from the contractor(s) indicating that all work performed has been fully paid and is free of liens.
5. Signed letter from the Building Owner, if other than the applicant, that the work is satisfactory to remain as completed.
6. All required licenses, permits, or certificates issued by the City, Historic Commission, Archives and History, etc.
7. Before and After Photos showing the project improvements.
8. Final Invoices for reimbursement from the FRGC.