

DOWNTOWN FAÇADE AND BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Sponsored by: Ewart Downtown Development Authority

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The Evert Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has adopted a Downtown Façade and Building Improvement Program that is designed to encourage economic investment and revitalization to the commercial buildings within the DDA district. The appearance of individual buildings, storefronts, signs, window displays, parking lots, and sidewalks establishes the visual character of the downtown and plays a major role in the success of the business district.

The façade and building improvement program is designed to encourage physical improvements to the commercial facades visible from the public right-of-way. It is the intent of the program to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown Evert by improving the exterior and interior physical appearances of buildings. The appearance of the downtown has a significant influence on its economic success. By improving the physical appearance, the downtown will have a much greater potential for attracting and retaining businesses.

The interior renovation portion of the program is intended to support physical improvements to the floors, walls, and/or ceilings of commercial buildings. By improving the interior condition of commercial buildings, the downtown will be better able to support current businesses and lure future businesses.

This program is also designed to encourage design improvements that preserve and promote the historical character and integrity of the buildings within the district. Priority funding will be given to projects that meet these design criteria. By coordinating improvements that preserve the historical elements within the business district, the overall image of downtown Evert will remain consistent and preserve the unique character of the community.

ALL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS MUST BE APPROVED PRIOR TO WORK COMMENCING.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY:

A property must be located within the legal boundaries of the Downtown Development District to be eligible (Main Street, US 10 from Muskegon River to Twin Creek, and portions of River and Pine Streets). For this program, the building or business is defined by either an address or an owner. This is because large buildings often house several businesses. However, if the building is not occupied and the building owner is applying for the grant, the building is limited to funds one time within the specified timeframes provided within each assistance description. An owner or tenant with multiple buildings may apply once for each building, again within the given time restrictions.

The following criteria will also apply:

1. Only retail, commercial or professional buildings are eligible.
2. Properties must be structurally sound, roof intact, and meet basic public safety codes.

3. Only facades abutting public right-of-ways are eligible projects. This includes side and rear facades.
4. Building owners or tenants are eligible. If a tenant applies for assistance, they must provide written proof that the building owner has authorized the proposed improvements. All City of Evert employees, volunteers, committee, board or council members are eligible to apply for program funds.
5. All required municipal/governmental permits must be pursued by the building owner/tenant, and must be obtained prior to the start of any construction.
6. Property taxes and other City accounts must be current.
7. All improvements are subject to reviews and approvals required by City codes and ordinances.
8. All elements of the application must be consistent with the DDA plans and policies as well as City ordinances. This includes design, color, style and placement of these improvements.
9. The Evert DDA reserves the right to award grants it deems to be in the best interest of the City of Evert, the DDA, and the Façade Improvement Program. The DDA reserves the right to nullify grants which are found to be noncompliant with the conditions of the program.
10. All grant awards are subject to available funding. Annual funding will be limited. Application does not guarantee funding.

Ineligible Improvements:

1. The DDA will not accept retroactive applications for previously completed improvements; design or permit fees, roof repair or replacement; or maintenance and repair to landscaping, signs, windows, doors, and awnings or other building and site issues (repairs to existing items are not accepted; only replacement/new projects are accepted).
2. Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or relatives of the owner/applicant unless otherwise approved.

PROJECT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS:

All applicants are required to meet with the DDA Director prior to submitting a grant application. Once the DDA Director has reviewed the application and has deemed that it is eligible under the program guidelines, the application will be placed on the next regularly scheduled Evert DDA Regular Meeting agenda. Project approvals require a majority vote of the DDA Board of Directors. It is strongly encouraged that applicants attend the DDA Board meeting when the application is reviewed.

Projects that are approved by the DDA will be reimbursed after completion, installation and receipt of proof of payment for the improvement. Lien-waivers must be secured from all contractors when appropriate and presented to the DDA prior to payment. All fixtures including signs, awnings, and other items will remain with the building for which they are purchased should the tenant/building owner change hands or vacate the premises. Only upon full reimbursement to the DDA for funds received for the project will they be allowed to be removed.

RIGHTS RESERVED:

The Evert DDA reserves the right to reject any and all applications. The specific program guidelines detailed herein are subject to revision or amendment by the DDA. The Evert DDA may discontinue this program at any time, subject to availability of program funding.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

This section will provide the individual guidelines specific to each type of project eligible for funding, including: Paint, Signs, Awnings, Windows/Doors, Landscaping, Design Assistance, Façade Renovation, and Interior Renovation.

PAINT

Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis until budgeted funds are exhausted. Grant amounts are calculated as 50% of the cost of eligible improvements from a minimum grant amount of \$100 to a maximum of \$1,000. Painting improvements with a total project cost under \$200 are not eligible for this program.

Paint color will be negotiated, with the owner and/or tenant in accord with generally recognized “historical color palettes” available from leading paint manufacturers and the Evert DDA. It is the intent of the Evert DDA to promote improvement projects that serve to compliment the character of the downtown as well as maintain the integrity of the building.

Paint assistance is awarded per building (not per building owner or tenant) and will be available per building one time every five years from the completion of previous use of façade paint assistance.

Painting projects must commence within thirty (30) days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) and be completed within sixty (60) days after the painting starts. If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts and DDA inspection, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion.

Additional requirements for paint assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided.
3. Specific color samples must be submitted with the application.
4. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
5. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

SIGNS

Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of fabricating, placing, and/or painting no more than two new outdoor signs per business or for the renovation of existing signage, which conforms to the City of Evert sign ordinance. A sign is an element that specifically identifies the business. It can be attached to the building or lettering applied to the building. Grant amounts are calculated as 50% of the cost of eligible improvements with a minimum grant amount of \$100 and maximum potential grant of \$500. Sign improvements with a total project cost under \$200 are not eligible for this program.

Signage assistance is offered per building owner or tenant (not per building). Signage assistance is limited to funding no earlier than two years following the completion of the previous signage project. Applications for signage assistance from new business owners can be requested and approved by the DDA, however reimbursement for these projects will be held until the applicant has remained in their location for a minimum of six months.

Ineligible signage projects include: Temporary signs, swing signs or movable signs, Neon signs, or decorative building accents that do not specifically identify the business. Reusable or removable signs will not be funded.

Sign projects must commence within thirty (30) days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) and be completed within sixty (60) days after the project starts. If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts and a DDA inspection, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion.

Additional requirements for sign assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided.
3. A conceptual design or schematic drawing for the proposed work, including color must be submitted with the application.

4. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
5. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

AWNINGS

Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of fabricating and installing building awnings. Awnings are defined for grant purposes as a single awning across the entire storefront at the street level, an awning over the door entrance, several street level awnings, or several awnings across second story windows. Grant amounts are calculated as 50% of the cost of eligible improvements with a minimum grant amount of \$250 and maximum potential grant of \$1,500. Awning improvements with a total project cost under \$500 are not eligible for this program.

Awning assistance is awarded per building (not per building owner and/or tenant) and will be available per building one time every five years from the completion of previous use of awning assistance. All awnings are to remain with the building and are not to be removed after a tenant has vacated or owner sold the building.

Ineligible awning projects include requests for awning repair or maintenance or for projects which include the placement of lettering and/or screen printing on current awnings.

Awning projects must commence within thirty (30) days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) and be installed within sixty (60) days. If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts and a DDA inspection, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion.

Additional requirements for awning assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided.
3. A conceptual design or schematic drawing for the proposed work, including color must be submitted with the application.
4. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
5. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

WINDOWS/DOORS

Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of replacing windows and doors. Eligible windows and doors include all windows and doors that are located on building sides that face a public right-of-way (this includes the second story and buildings sides adjacent to alleyways and public parking lots). Grant amounts are calculated as 50% of the cost of eligible improvements with a minimum grant amount of \$250 and maximum potential grant of \$2,000. Window/door improvements with a total project cost under \$500 are not eligible for this program.

Window/door assistance is awarded per building (not per building owner and/or tenant) and will be available per building ten years from the completion of previous use of window/door assistance. Additionally, all window/door projects receiving grant funds must improve the energy efficiency of the building.

Ineligible window/door projects include requests for window/door repair or maintenance or for projects that do not improve the energy efficiency of the building.

Window/door projects must commence within thirty (30) days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) and be installed within sixty (60) days. If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts and a DDA inspection, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion.

Additional requirements for awning assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided.
3. A conceptual design or schematic drawing for the proposed work, including size and energy rating of windows/doors.
4. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
5. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

LANDSCAPING

Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of installing permanent landscape materials. Landscaping is defined as trees, turf, shrubbery, flowers, planters, or ground cover arranged in a fashion to enhance the building or business. A grant for landscaping is for a collection of improvements strategically arranged to visually enhance any side visible from the public right-of-way. Grant amounts are calculated as 50% of the cost of eligible improvements with a minimum grant amount of \$150 and maximum potential grant of \$500. Landscaping projects with a total project cost under \$300 are not eligible for this program.

Landscaping assistance is awarded per building (not per building owner and/or tenant) and will be available per building one time every five years from the completion of previous use of landscaping assistance.

Ineligible landscaping projects include requests for funds to assist in the purchase of annuals, movable containers, maintenance, or replacement of current materials.

Landscaping projects must commence within thirty (30) days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) and be installed within sixty (60) days. If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts and a DDA inspection, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion.

Additional requirements for landscape assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided. Specific plant warranties must be included.
3. A conceptual design or schematic drawing for the proposed work must be submitted with the application.
4. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
5. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

DESIGN ASSISTANCE

Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of securing façade design assistance. The purpose of these grants is to provide funding for architectural design and consulting services for façade renovations. Furthermore, these funds are used to pre-determine the cost of façade improvement projects and help ensure that any renovations adhere to the historic integrity of the building and City codes and standards. Grant amounts cover 50% of design services, with a minimum grant amount of \$100 and a maximum grant amount of \$500. The owner and/or tenant must contribute 50% of total costs, to be paid prior to disbursement of DDA funds. Program funds cover exterior design work only.

Design assistance is awarded per building (not per building owner and/or tenant) and will be available per building one time every ten years from the completion of previous use of design assistance funds. The City of Evert and Evert DDA will be provided and will retain a copy of all design work completed.

Professional design services must be completed within ninety (90) days of execution of a “Remuneration Agreement.” If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation.

Additional requirements for design assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. The applicant and architect will also be required to execute a “Remuneration Agreement” to access program funds.
3. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
4. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

To utilize design assistance funds, applicants must demonstrate a bona fide commitment to implement building improvements and must certify that construction will commence within one hundred twenty (120) days of design completion. Time extensions may be granted by the Evert DDA upon request. Such requests must be in writing and presented prior to the end of the initial one hundred twenty (120) days.

Fees will be paid directly to the design firm under a “Remuneration Agreement”, executed by the applicant, architect, and the DDA and upon submission of detailed invoices to substantiate services rendered.

Projects receiving design assistance will receive priority status for consideration of funding for façade renovations. However, in no way does participating in the design assistance program guarantee approval for façade renovation funding.

FAÇADE RENOVATIONS

This program is designed to provide greater funding to encourage more extensive building restorations and historic preservation projects. Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of assisting in façade renovations. Priority consideration will be given to those projects that have utilized design assistance funds. Applicants for this funding must commit to making capital improvements or repairs on items that have a useful life of at least ten years. Only exterior improvements will be considered.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS FOR FAÇADE RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

1. Repairs or replacement of windows, doors, walls or other appropriate architectural elements (only in conjunction with other major improvements; repairs or replacement of windows and doors is not to exceed sixty percent (60%) of total project cost).
2. Exterior painting (only in conjunction with other major improvements; painting is not to exceed thirty percent (30%) of total project cost).
3. Awnings (only in conjunction with other major improvements; awnings are not to exceed thirty percent (30%) of total project cost).
4. Masonry repair or cleaning.
5. Restoration of vintage elements: a) Removal of inappropriate “modern” façade treatments. b) Removal/replacement of inappropriate signs and/or lighting (new signs or lights must be compatible with existing architecture) c) Repair or restoration of original brick, woodwork or metalwork.
6. Materials and labor for work performed in association with above-mentioned improvements.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS FOR FAÇADE RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

1. Expenses incurred prior to approval of the project.
2. Property acquisition.
3. Site plan and building permit fees.
4. Financing or loan fees.
5. New construction.
6. Consultant fees including architectural, engineering, appraisal, attorney, design or decorator fees.
7. Items taxed as personal property.
8. Reusable or removable items.

PROJECT PRIORITIES FOR FAÇADE RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

Projects which demonstrate any of the following characteristics will be given priority consideration when approving applications. This is not an all-inclusive list.

- Highly visible projects.
- Projects identified on corner lots.
- Projects containing a high ratio of private to public dollars.
- Projects designed to remove and/or replace boarded windows.
- Projects designed to resolve deteriorated, inappropriate, or unsightly conditions that have existed for many years.
- Projects designed to restore the historic condition of building façade or posterior.
- Projects in which the building is owner occupied.

FAÇADE RENOVATION AWARD

Façade renovation assistance will be awarded on a one-to-one matching basis between the applicant and the Evert DDA.

The minimum façade renovation assistance given will be \$500 (\$1,000 total project amount) and the maximum assistance given will be \$5,000 (\$10,000+ total project amount).

Recipients of façade renovation funds may not be eligible for additional façade renovation funding within ten years of the renovation grant award.

PROCESSING OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTS FOR FAÇADE RENOVATION

1. A façade improvement application may be obtained from the Evert DDA.
2. The application is completed by the property owner(s) or tenant(s) of the building with owner's consent and returned to the DDA office where it will be reviewed for accuracy and compliance.
3. The application is reviewed by the DDA Director to verify that it is located in the DDA district. The DDA Director will provide a preliminary review outlining how well the project meets the program objectives.
4. If the application meets program objectives, the applicant will be notified that his or her project has been accepted for consideration.
5. The applicant must submit a detailed site plan illustrating proposed improvements.
6. In addition to the site plan, a detailed break out of all costs, including signed estimates from two qualified contractors will be submitted by the applicant (project budget shall illustrate both private and public expenditures).
7. Once a plan is submitted, it will be taken before the DDA Board for review.
8. If approved, then project construction may commence upon written notification by the DDA. If the plan is inconsistent with program goals, it will be returned with a request for modifications.

POST-APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR FAÇADE RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

1. The Evert DDA Director, prior to any construction or installation, must approve every change to the scope of work.

2. For all approved scope-of-work changes, verification shall be attached to the original site plan in the form of a dated addendum.
3. The DDA Director and/or City staff may conduct periodic inspections to ensure compliance with the site plan and adopted eligible activities.
4. Project completion must occur within one hundred twenty (120) days of approval. Only under extenuating circumstances, a single extension of time to complete the project can be requested in writing and may be awarded by the Evert DDA.
5. Upon completion of project improvement, the grant recipient is to provide photographs of the new façade to the DDA Director to ensure that all components of the site plan were met.
6. After final project inspection, the DDA will review the complete application and consider the approval of the grant reimbursement.
7. Façade Renovation Assistance funds will be paid as a reimbursement to the grant recipient(s) at the close of the project upon receipt of proof of payment. Reimbursements will not be made if any recipient(s) grant requirements go unfulfilled.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FAÇADE RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two licensed contractor quotes or construction bids for the total project.
3. A property deed with the legal description of property.
4. Proof that all property taxes are paid and current.
5. Proof of property and liability insurance.
6. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

INTERIOR RENOVATIONS

This program is designed to provide greater funding to encourage more extensive building restorations and historic preservation projects. Interior renovations under this section only include renovations to floors, walls, and ceilings of the building. Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the purpose of assisting in interior renovations. Grant amounts are calculated as 50% of the costs of eligible improvements with a minimum grant amount of \$100 and a maximum grant amount of \$3,000. Interior renovations with a total project costs under \$200 are not eligible. Applicants for this funding must commit to making capital improvements or repairs on items that have a useful life of at least five years. Only interior improvements will be considered.

Colors used for floors, walls, and ceilings will be negotiated, with the owner and/or tenant in accord with generally recognized neutral color palettes. It is the intent of the Evert DDA to promote improvement projects that serve to compliment the character of the downtown as well as maintain the integrity of the building.

Interior renovation assistance is offered per building owner or tenant (not per building). Interior renovation assistance is limited to funding no earlier than five years following the completion of the previous interior renovation project.

Interior renovation projects must commence within thirty (30) days of approval (unless otherwise approved by the DDA Board) and be completed within ninety (90) days after the project starts. If the assistance is not used within that time, the funding commitment will revert back to the DDA for reallocation. Assistance payment, based on approved submitted receipts and a DDA inspection, will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days after completion.

Additional requirements for interior renovation assistance include:

1. The applicant must complete the program application and submit a completed application and all required attachments to the DDA office by the second Monday of the month.
2. Two written quotes for the work with labor and materials broken out into two separate amounts must be provided.
3. A conceptual design or schematic drawing for the proposed work, including color must be submitted with the application.
4. Changes to the scope of work must be approved by the DDA Director.
5. Proof that all property taxes are paid to date.
6. If a tenant is applying, a signed letter from the owner expressing approval of the project must be submitted.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS FOR INTERIOR RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

1. Replacement or refurbishment of flooring, including, but not limited to, carpet, tile, and hardwood.
2. Interior painting.
3. Wall treatments such as painting, wall papering, paneling, wainscoting, and tiling.
4. Masonry repair or cleaning.
5. Ceiling treatments such as painting and tiling.
6. Restoration of vintage elements: a) Removal of inappropriate flooring, wall, and ceiling treatments. b) Repair or restoration of original brick, woodwork, or metalwork.
7. Materials and labor for work performed in association with above-mentioned improvements.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS FOR INTERIOR RENOVATION ASSISTANCE

1. Expenses incurred prior to approval of the project.
2. Site plan and building permit fees.
3. Financing or loan fees.
4. New construction and remodeling, such as new walls and molding or interior demolition.
5. Consultant fees including architectural, engineering, appraisal, attorney, design or decorator fees.
6. Items taxed as personal property.
7. Reusable or removable items.
8. Furniture and fixtures such as ceiling fans, lighting, desks, countertops, shelving, or displays.
9. Interior decorating fees and materials such as window treatments and standing or wall art.
10. Interior renovation of apartment space or portions of buildings used for residential purposes.