



City of Manassas Department of Economic Development
9027 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110
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LOCAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM

**FAÇADE
IMPROVEMENT
GRANT**

**Program Guidelines
Application Process Information**

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I. Purpose

The Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) program is an initiative to visually improve business properties demonstrating a need for public investment to spur further investment from the private sector. The goal is to visually enhance the streetscape and increase interest in the designated area. The initiative also serves as a tool in supporting and retaining small businesses.

II. Eligibility

- Façades proposed for improvement must be visible from the public right of way
- Property must be current with City taxes and fees
- Property may not have outstanding codes violations* (exception: FIG will be used to rectify)
- Property is identified as commercial, industrial, office, or mixed-use
- Property is an existing improvement - new construction is not eligible

III. Reimbursable Costs

Allowable Improvements:

Please note:

(1.) All improvements must be allowable through the City's development guidelines and may require submission of a site plan or other documents as required by City regulations. All improvements in a Historic District must be allowable through the City's Historic District guidelines and may require approval from the Architectural Review Board.

(2.) FIG is a **reimbursement** grant based on **verifiable evidence** of reasonable expenses in the form of **canceled checks** or **receipts**.

- Contracted labor related to any eligible improvements (including project management fees)
- Decorative fencing, railings, or Juliet balconies
- Exterior lighting
- Exterior painting
- Improvements in response to code violations*
- Installation, repair or replacement of exterior signage
- Permanent hardscape improvements (i.e., cement pots or fixed planter boxes)
- Masonry repairs and tuck pointing
- Public art
- Removal/replacement of architecturally inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes and materials or signs
- Restoration of architectural details or removal of materials that cover architectural details
- Repair and/or replacement of windows and exterior doors
- Roofing (in conjunction with other improvements only)
- Screening of service and maintenance areas when visible from adjacent public areas

- Window and cornice flashing and repair
- Up to 15% contingency may be reimbursed, as based on contractor's estimates

Prohibited Improvements

- Interior improvements
- Improvements in progress or expenses incurred prior to final approval
- Landscaping
- Mechanical and HVAC systems
- New construction
- Temporary signage
- Security systems (i.e., cameras, window bars, etc.)

IV. Application Process

The FIG application is a two-step process—there is a preliminary application and a finalized application. The reason for this two-step process is because the finalized application requires documented approval from other City departments. A permit to begin work is required on all improvements, and additional approvals may be required from the Architectural Review Board, if applicable.

The pre-application is to be submitted to the Department of Economic Development for review and is not considered submitted if incomplete. The pre-application identifies all required information and attachments to be produced by the applicant. Completed applications will be presented to the Economic Development and Land Use Committee of City Council (LUC) for preliminary approval. Applicants will proceed to obtain appropriate approvals as described above. **Pre-approval is not a factor in obtaining further approvals.**

The pre-application can become the finalized application if completed with City approvals.

With a finalized and complete application approved, the applicant moves into a Grant Agreement with Historic Manassas, Inc., agreeing to accept the grant funds and not to exceed 33% of actual paid expenses.

V. Grant Funds

FIG is a matching, reimbursement program which requires the applicant to make the initial investment of the full project costs; one third of the eligible costs will be paid as a reimbursement based on verifiable evidence of payment (canceled checks and/or receipts).

The maximum FIG amount available for any approved project or property in any ten (10) year rolling period is \$25,000. The FIG maximum is connected to the subject property for the life of the program; therefore an applicant with a \$10,000-grant eligible project may

re-apply for up to \$15,000 for the same property at a future date (or any combination not to exceed \$25,000).

Funding is available until the funding pool has been exhausted on an annual basis as appropriated.

All recipients are required to enter into a FIG Agreement document. This document will establish the conditions of approval and terms of grant disbursement. Under no circumstances will funds be disbursed at a ratio higher than the matching requirements. **Proof of costs paid by the applicant will be required before grant funds are to be disbursed.** Grant payments will not be made if façade improvements deviate from those outlined in the Grant Agreement and/or have not been previously approved.

Grant funds are paid as a one-time reimbursement, not draws.

V. Process Flow Chart

- Applicant contacts the City of Manassas Department of Economic Development to express interest in the program, discuss project plans, and verify eligibility.
- Applicant completes pre-application and submits to Economic Development Staff for review.
- Pre-Application is presented to the LUC for decision.
- If approved, applicant proceeds to obtain other necessary approvals. The applicant has 90 days to receive approvals.
- With necessary approvals, applicant may add approval documentation to application for completion.
- Applicant enters into a Grant Agreement with HMI.
- From the date of the signed Grant Agreement, the applicant has 30 days to begin the project and 90 days to complete it. (Extensions for an additional 90 days may be granted.)
- Applicant contacts Economic Development staff to request reimbursement. Staff will verify completion using digital photographs and canceled checks and receipts.