

Downtown Façade Enhancement Program

-2025-

The City of Defiance and the Defiance Development and Visitors Bureau have partnered to provide a grant program for the purpose of revitalizing the exterior façades of downtown properties while preserving the historic character of downtown Defiance.

The Grant:

This grant is a 50% of total expenses directly related to qualifying building improvements of the exterior of buildings of properties within the downtown target area up to a maximum match of \$10,000. This grant is available on a first-come, first-served basis, except for any applications addressing safety concerns will receive priority. There have been no funds set-aside for any specific building projects. If, by September 1st, there are still funds available, property owners may apply for additional funds. Property owners may re-apply annually for available funds, but priority will go to first-time applicants.

Eligible Improvements:

Eligible improvements include all exterior improvements to the appearance of an eligible downtown building façade. These improvements include:

- Awnings
- Masonry work: brick cleaning, tuckpointing, replacement
- Painting - Colors to be approved by The Design Review Board
- Repair, restoration, or appropriate replacement of exterior windows and doors
- Repair or replacement of roofing system (including gutters and downspouts)
- Fire escapes or exterior upper-floor access
- Any other visible exterior improvements (ex. signage)

Ineligible Improvements:

This program will not fund interior improvements, operating funds, HVAC repair, plumbing repair, sidewalk repair, furnishings or equipment, landscaping, and any exterior improvements that do not follow the guidelines set by The Design Review Board.

Target Area: (Refer to attached map)

Clarifications:

- The general purpose of this program is to improve the appearance of downtown properties visible from City streets, right of way, and pedestrian alleys.
- A property that functions as one building, regardless of the number of tax parcel numbers assigned to the property or multiple and different owners, is eligible for only one grant per year unless additional funding is available after September 1st.

Application:

The DDVB and the City Planner will conduct the initial consultation regarding the process.

All grant applications must be submitted to the DDVB and must include:

- Downtown Façade Enhancement Application
- A project description
- Current photos of the proposed work area
- Rendering/drawing of proposed work to scale, including color scheme
- An itemized cost estimate of proposed work by a qualified third party. You will need at least two quotes to ensure competitive pricing.

Application Review Process:

- The DDVB Executive Director will review all applications with the City of Defiance Planner and the Design Review Board Chair to ensure all information is included. The application will also be reviewed for eligibility and guideline compliance.
- The City Engineer or designee and Downtown Development Coordinator will conduct a site visit of the property.

Conditions:

- **The property owner must obtain all required permits and plan approvals prior to beginning work. (The permits may include, but are not limited to, building, zoning, occupancy, etc.)**
- The property owner will be responsible for maintaining improvements provided by this grant for a **minimum of 5 years** without alteration unless a change request is submitted in writing to the City of Defiance Design Review Board for approval or further investment is approved
- If your property has any safety concerns, the request for funding **MUST** address those issues.

Awards:

- All applicants will receive notification as to the approval or denial of the grant award in the form of the certificate of appropriateness issued by the Design Review Board
- **Approval from the Design Review Board must be confirmed prior to commencing work to be eligible to receive downtown enhancement funds.**
- **To be eligible to receive the approved funds, the project must be completed as submitted. This is an approved agreement, and any changes to the project after approval are ineligible unless the applicant comes in for a second approval for proposed changes before beginning the work**
- Work must begin within six months of notification of approval.
- If a project comes in and the remaining funds are insufficient to cover the grant reimbursement, the project may be broken into two separate parts so that the applicant may apply for the remaining funds in January of the following calendar year.

Project Completion:

- Upon approval, the applicant will have until mid-November of the following calendar year to submit receipts for reimbursement. After that, the account will be closed with the City
- Applicant must provide copies of invoices marked paid or canceled checks showing payment
- Application must provide completed W9 form with contractor information
- Applicant must provide photographs of completed work
- A site visit of the property to verify the completion of the project will be done by a representative of the City of Defiance

***Application with final cost estimate must be approved by October 31st to be eligible to receive the Façade Enhancement Program funds.**

*City employees, direct family members, and government buildings are not eligible to apply for this program.