

Guidelines for Facade Improvement Grant Program

General Information

- ❖ The objective of the program is to encourage the architecturally appropriate design or renovation of commercial building facades to enhance their appearance.
- ❖ Funds from The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) will serve as an incentive to stimulate private investment in façade renovations, resulting in a more competitive and economically viable business district.
- ❖ An applicant may apply for matching funds of up to \$5,000. Grant awards may not exceed 50 percent of the total documented cost of materials and labor for the project.
- ❖ Priority will be given to projects which make a significant improvement to the building, encompassing upper-level renovations and/or multiple facades.
- ❖ Priority will be given to those projects which use energy-efficient and environmentally friendly materials (i.e Low E glass, no VOC paint, etc.) For more info, please see the Ardmore Initiative “Green Guide”.
- ❖ No applications will be accepted unless grant funding for the program is in place.
- ❖ Projects considered “deferred maintenance” by the Design Committee may not be eligible.
- ❖ Project requests will be considered as they are received by The Ardmore Initiative BDA Design Committee.
- ❖ Projects must be completed within six (6) months of approval or funds may be reallocated. The applicant may apply to the committee for extension approval.
- ❖ Projects involving the screening of dumpsters and trash/recycling containers may be eligible for reimbursement, pending committee review.
- ❖ Free standing signs on the property may be considered for reimbursement subject to committee review. Lower Merion Township Design guidelines do not address free-standing signs so reimbursement will be on a case-by-case basis.
- ❖ Building or property owners may apply for up to \$150 reimbursement to replace older model, protruding air conditioners with lower profile, energy star units.

Program Boundaries

Any property within The Ardmore Initiative Business District Authority (BDA) boundaries is eligible for this program. The East-West boundaries of The Ardmore Initiative extend from Wyoming Avenue and 333 W. Lancaster Avenue on the western end to 233 E. Lancaster and 218 E. Lancaster Avenue on the eastern end. The northern boundary follows the railroad tracks and the southern boundary proceeds along Rittenhouse Place to E. Athens Avenue, which is included in the district, and along Cricket Avenue beyond E. Athens Avenue to #123. The commercial properties along the west side of Ardmore Avenue to #26 are also part of the district.

Eligibility Requirements

- ❖ Only commercial buildings within the defined Business District Authority's target area are eligible (see program boundaries above).
- ❖ Only exterior renovations – either partial or full façade renovations – are eligible.
- ❖ These renovations may include the front façade or any side or rear façade which is accessible and/or visible from a public right-of-way or municipally-owned, metered parking lot. The committee will entertain requests for additional façades which are, in the opinion of the committee, visually significant. Removal of old signage is an allowable use of grant funds, pending DCED approval
- ❖ Both business and property owners may apply. Property owners must be the owners of record on the Lower Merion Township tax rolls. Business owners will need the signed approval of the property owner of record.
- ❖ Funding is per PROJECT, not per building or tax parcel; a business or property owner may apply more than once pending availability of funds
- ❖ Property owner must be current on all municipal taxes, including but not limited to real estate taxes, school taxes, and The Ardmore Initiative assessments.
- ❖ Façade renovations of properties located within Ardmore's Historic District of Ardmore's business district require a Certificate of Appropriateness from Lower Merion's Historical Architectural Review Board. To determine whether your property is in the Historic District, please visit Lower Merion's [HARB Website](#)
- ❖ The project application must be approved by the Design Committee prior to any demolition or construction of that part of the project for which funding is being sought. No funding will be provided for work completed before the approval process.

- ❖ Façade grant projects must follow Secretary of Interior standards for historic rehabilitation. For more information go to <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bhp/buildingrehab/>
- ❖ If the total project cost is above \$25,000, prevailing wage guidelines apply. Applicant must provide proof of compliance (payment stubs, entries, etc). Please ask at your pre-application meeting for more info.

How To Apply

- ❖ Schedule a meeting with [Christine Vilardo](#), Executive Director of the Ardmore Initiative to discuss your project BEFORE submitting an application for funding or HARB approval.
- ❖ If your project is located in historic district, we recommend that you present your plan ‘informally’ to the Township’s Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) BEFORE submitting a formal HARB application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. HARB meets on 2nd Tuesday of the month. Please contact Mike Wylie at Mwylie@lowermerion.org 2 weeks in advance
- ❖ The Ardmore Initiative BDA Design Committee will evaluate applications and award conditional approval based on fund availability and impact of the overall project. Any changes to the design plan originally approved by The Ardmore Initiative BDA Design Committee must be re-submitted for approval.
- ❖ Grant awardees will display a sign in their windows announcing that the project is supported by funds from the DCED

Facade Grant Checklists

Application Checklist

1. Signed Pre-application (see next page)
2. Brief description of proposed changes
3. "Before" photo of existing facade
4. Drawing/ sketch of proposed changes
5. Budget for entire project
6. Two (2) written bids from qualified contractors/suppliers for proposed work. Contractors must be licensed by Lower Merion Township and are responsible for obtaining all required permits
7. Proof that there are no liens. (Look up at:
<http://www.montcopa.org/taxclaim/payment/Historylookup.asp>)

Reimbursement Checklist

1. After work is completed, reimbursement of 50% of labor and material cost (up to the \$5,000 maximum) is contingent upon:
2. Adherence to the design plan and/or project which was reviewed and approved by the Ardmore Initiative BDA Design Committee
3. Submission of proof of final inspections (as required) by the Lower Merion Township Building and Planning Department
4. Copy of HARB Certificate of Appropriateness (if applicable)
5. 2 quotes from qualified contractors
6. Selected contractors' final cost estimate
7. Copies of contracts and final invoices (signed and marked paid)
8. Proof of payment (copies of cancelled checks, credit card statements, etc.)

**THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE
ARDMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

PRE-APPLICATION FOR FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Applicant's _____ Name(s):

Business _____ Name:

Business _____ Address:

Phone: _____ (W) _____

(Cell) _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

Address of Property to be Rehabilitated (if different from above) _____

Property _____ Owner: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Fax: _____

Please provide a brief narrative detailing scope of work to be performed:

*Anticipated Grant Request: _____

*Note: Anticipated grant request is necessary so that the Design Committee can best allocate funds. If the final grant request exceeds the anticipated grant request, the Design committee may require a new application.

Anticipated Start Date _____ Anticipated Completion Date

Applicant's acknowledgement of agreement to the terms and conditions of the Ardmore Façade Improvement Program as specified in the Guidelines and indicated by this agreement and its attachments.

Signature of Applicant Date

Signature of Property Owner Date

RETURN TO: *The Ardmore Initiative, 56 East Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore, PA 19003*
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Fax 610-645-0662 Christine@ardmoreinitiativ.org