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## **Grant Opportunity**

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**Facade, Sign or Awning  
Improvement**

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**Open Date:  
May 1, 2014**

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**Deadline for Submissions:  
April 30, 2015**

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# TOWN OF GEORGETOWN FACADE, SIGN AND AWNING IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

## **Introduction**

Georgetown is undertaking an ambitious downtown renewal plan in an effort to draw more people back to the East Market Street Business District. The appearance of the downtown structures will factor heavily into the success of the downtown renewal effort. Currently, the downtown has been distinguished by the charm of its buildings and pedestrian scale. Unfortunately, many of these structures have unmet maintenance needs that are hastening the decline of their facades.

The Georgetown Facade, Sign and Awning Improvement Grant Program seeks to address the maintenance and rehabilitation needs of building facades in the East Market Street Business District by offering 50/50 matching grants to interested, qualified building and business owners.



The Mayor and Town Council believe this program is in the public interest and that the Town has a responsibility to preserve and protect the unique local resources found in the historic East Market Street Business District. The Mayor and Town Council also believe that by investing public resources in the downtown, more private entities will find the downtown to be an attractive place to invest.

## **Financing Terms**

Grants may be awarded for up to 50 percent of the total cost of qualified facade rehabilitation, repair or restoration project, sign or awnings with a maximum grant award of \$500.00. The annual amount set aside for this program is \$3,000.00, funded from Real Estate Transfer Tax revenues.

The applicant must match the grant with cash. "Sweat equity" labor provided by the applicant, the owner, or any other non-skilled laborer cannot be charged against this grant.

Grants will be awarded on a reimbursement basis only after the applicant demonstrates full compliance with the grant award.

Each eligible facade, sign or awning improvement may be phased over two fiscal years in order to maximize grant assistance. Each phase shall involve facade, sign or awning improvements not included in any other phase of the project. Reimbursement may then be approved for each phase.

This grant may be treated as income subject to Federal Income Tax provisions. The Town of Georgetown is not liable for any tax implications resulting from the grant. Applicants should consult a tax advisor for clarification.

## **Eligible Improvements**

The Facade, Sign and Awning Improvement Grant Program seeks to encourage facade improvements ranging from minor projects to complete facade renovation. The Grant Program will not fund projects that constitute routine maintenance.

The following list illustrates the types of projects that may be funded by this grant program.

1. Exterior walls of building, with priority given to street-facing facades.
2. Exterior renovation, restoration, or reconstruction, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Facade washing/Brick cleaning
  - b. Removal of historically inappropriate materials from facades
  - c. Sign repair if sign is integral to building facade
  - d. New signs if the proposed sign is a high-quality representation of signs displayed in the historic era generally found along East Market Street
  - e. Lighting
  - f. Awnings/canopies
  - g. Window restoration and replacement
  - h. Painting
  - i. Door replacement
  - j. Restoration of original architectural features
  - k. Window display area remodeling
  - l. Exterior lighting
  - m. Parapet repair
3. Architectural design fees up to \$500, on a reimbursement basis, upon project completion.
4. Landscaping immediately adjacent to the building.
5. Exterior improvements must comply with Town ordinances.

Grants will not be awarded for projects that may damage to the building facade. Specifically, sandblasting of brick will not be funded under the program nor will the program participate in projects that include sandblasting of brick. In general, grant funds may not be used for improvements completed or in progress prior to notification of grant approval; however, the Town Council may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Restoration projects that accurately replicate historic architectural elements shall be given funding priority. Preference will be given to structures of architectural or historic significance as determined by the Town. Properties lacking architectural or historic significance may be deemed eligible for the program if proposed changes will create a facade typical of the architectural periods predominantly represented in downtown Georgetown.

Grant funds will be disbursed only upon completion of the project and submission of lien waivers from all laborers and material suppliers.

Exterior improvements must comply with Town of Georgetown, Town Code and with all other applicable Federal, State and County codes and regulations.

## **Eligible Participants**

Owners and tenants (with permission from the building owner) of commercial or mixed commercial-residential property located in the East Market Street District may apply for funds. Tenants must have at least a two-year lease at the location in order to qualify for the grant program.

Commercial buildings are those buildings with commercial uses on the first floor. Residential uses are allowed above the main floor.

Only structurally sound buildings with safely functioning mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems will be considered for grants. In addition, building Owner must show evidence of insurance on the property and name the Town an additional insured to the extent of any grant funds awarded.

## **Additional Grant Provisions**

The Town is not liable for damage to the building or personal injury that occurs during the project. All contractors and subcontractors used for work funded by this grant must be licensed if required by law and must be able to demonstrate qualifications.

No Town officer, employee, spouse, or dependent of the same shall be interested directly or indirectly in any facade grant.

No grant funds shall be assigned or pledged to any third party, nor be used for any purpose other than reimbursement of project costs as approved by the Planning Department.

No grant recipient may engage in unlawful discrimination nor contract with any person or entity that engages in unlawful discrimination, as defined by Delaware Code.

The successful applicant agrees to maintain the property and improvements, including, but not limited to, promptly removing graffiti, sweeping and shoveling in front of the property. The applicant agrees to return a pro-rated amount of the grant money received if the sign or awning improvement is removed within two years.

## **Grant Approval Process**

1. The applicant must submit a Facade, Sign or Awning Improvement Grant application to the Town.
2. Town staff will review the application with the applicant and will then forward the application with a recommendation regarding the grant to members of the Town Council before the next regularly scheduled meeting.
3. The Town Council will act upon the application and provide written notice of their decision within seven (7) business days of their meeting.
4. The Town Council reserves the right to deny any grant application or make changes in conditions of the Facade, Sign or Awning Improvement Program as warranted.

**Media Release**

With the submittal of an application for a Facade, Sign or Awning Improvement Grant, the applicant gives permission to notify the media regarding the award of these grants. The applicant acknowledges that representatives from the Town may provide the media with photographs of the applicant and the project completed with grant funds.

**Submit completed applications to:**

Facade, Sign or Awning Improvement Grant  
c/o Town Manager  
39 The Circle  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
(302) 856-7391