



CITY OF NEW ROCHELLE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Signage, Awnings & Façade Improvement Program

The City of New Rochelle has established a Signage, Awnings and Façade Program to help improve the aesthetic appearance of gateway commercial areas. Business and property owners can receive grants for the purchase of new signage and/or awnings or improvement of existing facades for buildings. The program is funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and managed through the Department of Development.

PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The program offers grant funds and design assistance to business and property owners for the purpose of restoring / renovating commercial storefronts and replacing deteriorated or poor quality commercial signs and awnings. A Program Committee established by the City will evaluate applications to determine eligibility and, based on a set of objectives (listed below), make grant awards to those proposed projects that are determined will have the greatest impact on enhancing the targeted area.

Specific Objectives in Targeted Area

- Enhance the appearance of the streetscape
- Reduce vacancies in storefronts in key commercial areas
- Strengthen and restore the original character of historic buildings
- Provide a catalyst for others to improve their buildings, signs and awnings.

GUIDELINES

Community Development Block Grant funds can be provided to eligible applicants to assist property and business owners in rehabilitating their storefronts through replacement of signage and/or awnings and improvements to their building's façade.

Project selection is based on the location of the building within a gateway area, potential impact of the building's improvement on the surrounding area and qualification of the applicant according to program objectives. Given limited program resources, additional consideration may be given to applications in which private investment will supplement grant funds. Grants are available for signage and awnings only, or façade improvements (which may include signage and awnings).

For more information, please contact Lisa Davis, Business Ambassador, in the
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For signage and awnings only, the grants will fund up to one half of the total cost for design and fabrication per storefront. Installation will be paid directly by the property/business owner, as reimbursement is for cost of materials only. The program does not pay for installation. In order to encourage quality design and fabrication, architectural services may also be eligible for reimbursement up to \$500.

The façade improvement grant will be a negotiated amount to cover architectural and construction costs pertaining to the enhancement of the storefront itself. A storefront includes all building sides with street frontages, porches and any entrance areas leading to the door. It also includes display windows and their components such as sidelights, transoms, display platform devices, along with lighting and signage designed to be viewed from the public right-of-way. Costs for interior renovations or sidewalk repairs are not covered by the grant. The City will oversee the design and construction for the project and will reimburse the contractors directly. The property owner will provide permission for the contracted work and will be required to approve the design for the project.

All signs, awnings and façade improvements are subject to New Rochelle Zoning Code and may be subject to approval by the Municipal Arts Commission.

ELIGIBILITY

1. The applicant must be a property and/or business owner* in one of the following designated business districts:
 - North Avenue from Main Street to Eastchester Road
 - Main Street from Echo Avenue to Weyman Avenue (including the Business Improvement District)
 - Union Avenue from Warren Street to Fifth Street
 - CDBG Target Areas
2. Property Owners with multiple storefronts must replace signage and awnings for the entire building.
3. Multiple storefronts on a single building may be eligible for multiple grants, with preference being given to replacing / renovating all storefronts on the building at the same time.
4. Any and all building code violations must be rectified prior to execution of the Signage, Awnings & Facade Program Agreement.
5. The applicant must owe no outstanding property taxes, fees, judgments or liens to the City of New Rochelle.

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6. New building construction is not eligible for this program.
7. For sign and awnings projects, business owner must have at least five years remaining in lease at location of proposed project and/or the option to renew for at least five years.

*If the applicant is not the property owner, the property owner must consent to the application.

PROCEDURES: Signage and Awnings Component

The Signage and Awnings Program guidelines will be implemented according to the steps outlined below:

1. Property/business owners interested in participating in the Program will submit a signed application with current photographs of the building along with storefront width to the Department of Development. All of the following are required:
 - a. If the applicant is not the building owner, the building owner must consent to the application.
 - b. If the applicant is not the building owner, a copy of the lease must be submitted with the application.
 - c. A copy of the property deed must be submitted with the application.
 - d. A printout from the New Rochelle Bureau of Buildings must be submitted demonstrating that no open violations or permits exist on the property.
2. Department staff will meet with the applicant to discuss the eligibility requirements, guidelines, and procedures to make the determination that the project is eligible for grant funding.
3. In order to encourage quality design and fabrication, architectural services may also be eligible for reimbursement up to \$500, under the following circumstances:
 - A licensed architect must be used, and
 - The owner must pay the architect directly and provide proof of invoice in order to be reimbursed by the City, and
 - Reimbursement will only occur after installation, when an affidavit of completion is executed by the applicant and certified by the Bureau of Buildings.
4. The property/business obtains and submits cost estimates from three sign contractors, licensed in Westchester County. The City will only reimburse up to one half of the lowest bid.

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5. The property/business owner hires one sign contractor to prepare a rendering and detailed construction specifications of the new signage and/or awning.
6. The property/business owner presents this contract along with the Sign Application to the Department of Development. Once the Department of Development has reviewed and approved the conceptual design, the sign company will be required to obtain all necessary permits from the Bureau of Buildings, the City and owner will enter into a Signs & Awnings Program Agreement for reimbursement. This is called Checkpoint 1.
7. As part of the application, the owner must submit a certificate of insurance and agreement holding the City harmless and fully indemnifying the City.
8. The City agrees to reimburse up to 50% of the design and fabrication. Installation is not reimbursable under this program with a \$500 limit for architectural services.
9. When installation is complete, the sign company must certify that all work was performed in conformance with the Signage and Awnings Program Agreement before reimbursement by the City can occur. An affidavit of completion will be executed by the applicant and confirmed by the Bureau of Buildings. The completed Certificate (s) of Occupancy / Compliance from the Bureau of Buildings must be attached to the agreement. This is called Checkpoint 2.
10. Once the Agreement is approved and verified, reimbursement will occur. The City will issue the reimbursement to the party identified on the sign contractor's contract.

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PROCEDURES: Façade Improvement Component

The Signage, Awnings and Façade Improvement Program guidelines for façade renovation will be implemented according to the steps outlined below:

1. Property/business owners interested in participating in the Program will submit a signed application with current photographs of the building along with storefront width to the Department of Development.
 - a. If the applicant is not the building owner, the building owner must consent to the application.
 - b. If the applicant is not the building owner, a copy of the lease must be submitted with the application.
 - c. A copy of the property deed must be submitted with the application.
 - d. A printout from the New Rochelle Bureau of Buildings must be submitted demonstrating that no open violations or permits exist on the property.
2. Department of Development staff will meet with the applicant to discuss the eligibility requirements, guidelines, and procedures to make the determination that the project is eligible for grant funding. Additionally, the City and property / business owner will discuss goals, preferences and limitations for storefront renovation.
3. The City has engaged the services of an architectural firm who will prepare a design for the building.
4. The Façade Improvement committee (composed of city staff from Development and Buildings, and a representative of the Business Improvement District if the property is located within the BID) will review the submitted proposal with the property/business owner. Upon agreement of the design, the City and business / property owner will enter into a Façade Improvement Program Agreement. This is called Checkpoint 1.
5. As part of the application, the owner must submit a certificate of insurance and agreement holding the City harmless and fully indemnifying the City.
6. The City will oversee the appropriate bid process for necessary architectural, engineering, construction and signage work using the required government processes.

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7. The City will enter into agreement(s) with the selected company(s) and manage the design and construction process on behalf of the property owner and City. Since the grant funds are federal monies, contractors will need to abide by federal wage rates and regulations (Davis-Bacon). A certified payroll must be submitted with each invoice. If a project is over \$50,000 the contractor should be bondable.
8. Depending on the location of the property and the design of the building, additional reviews may be required. These could include Environmental Review, Municipal Arts Commission review, historical reviews by SHPO, and / or New Rochelle Planning Board review.
9. Construction checkpoints between the City, contractors and building / property owner must be scheduled regularly to ensure satisfactory completion of the project.
10. When work is complete, the contractors must certify that all work was performed in conformance with the Façade Improvement Program Agreement before reimbursement by the City can occur. An affidavit of completion will be executed by the applicant and confirmed by the Bureau of Buildings. The completed Certificate (s) of Occupancy / Compliance from the Bureau of Buildings must be attached to the agreement. This is called Checkpoint 2.
11. The project must be completed within one year from the date the grant award is approved.
12. The property owner agrees to maintain the property to all required city codes for a period of 5 years after completion of the renovation. Failure to do so could result in the requirement for the property owner to reimburse the City for any / all costs associated with the renovation that had been paid by the grant.

The Façade Program is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant. All relevant federal regulation applies.

Please note that grant funds will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the grant award and prior to Program Committee approval of invoices.

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