

Town of Monmouth, Maine



Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program

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Program Background

The Town of Monmouth originally established this Façade Improvement Program to help strengthen the revitalization of downtown Monmouth. The Program offers grant funds to be matched by their equal or greater investment of private funds for the purpose of restoring and/or renovating commercial storefronts and replacing deteriorated or poor quality commercial signs and awnings.

A Façade Improvement Grant may be used for a variety of façade improvements including, but not limited to, painting, window or door repairs/replacements, signage, awnings, storefront restorations and other activities outlined under Eligible Activities on page 4.

The Town of Monmouth will evaluate applications to determine eligibility and, based on a set of criteria, make grant awards to those proposed projects that are determined will have the greatest impact on enhancing the targeted area.

Specific Objectives of the Façade Program:

- Encourage private investment in the visual improvement of storefronts, signs and awnings;
- Enhance the appearance of the streetscape;
- Reduce vacancies in storefronts and upper floors;
- Expand worker and shopper populations;
- Strengthen or restore the original character of historic buildings;
- Provide a catalyst for others to improve their buildings, signs and awnings.
- Remove blight and improve the appearance of distressed buildings in the downtown area and other parts of town.

Funding and Administration

The Façade Improvement Program is funded through the Town of Monmouth's Main Street Municipal Tax Increment Finance District. Grants will be available for **up to 50% of the total cost** of the improvement project (**grant funds will not to exceed \$ 12,500 per applicant**) and must be **matched at a ratio of 1:1**. Program administration will be carried out by the Town of Monmouth according to established guidelines and procedures. This annual program will run with the Town's fiscal year July 1st through June 30th. The administration, operation and use of funds of the Program shall conform to all federal, state and local codes.

Program Guidelines and Eligibility

1. Grant funds will be awarded on a competitive basis;
2. Grants are available for **up to 50% of the total cost** of the improvement project and therefore must be **matched at a ratio of 1:1 (cash or building supplies purchased for the project with accompanying receipts)**. **Total grants will not exceed \$12,500.**
3. Each applicant may only be awarded one grant per grant period (July 1 – June 30).
4. The property owner must be the grant applicant. A business owner leasing or renting space is encouraged to work with the building owner to develop an application.
5. Façade Improvement Grant may only be made to a commercial or mixed-use property (commercial and residential in one building) located in the area identified in the attached map. Please note that properties are eligible for grant funding regardless of occupancy. **NO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES ARE ELIGIBLE (including single family or multi-family).**
6. Town wide commercial applications may be accepted with a specific review and approval by the Select Board and a determination that the project advances economic development goals of the Town. All other conditions shall apply.
7. Building projects must be designed by a qualified design professional and signs must be produced by a professional sign maker;
8. Applicant must obtain all necessary approvals and/or permits from the Town of Monmouth. Furthermore, no Façade Improvement Grant shall be made unless and until the proposed improvement work has been reviewed and approved by the Monmouth Economic Development Committee.
9. The project applicant must owe no outstanding property taxes, fees, judgments, or liens to the Town of Monmouth.
10. The applicant will be reimbursed for the amount of the grant award only upon completion of the work. When 50% of the work is completed and inspected a drawdown can be completed and the remaining amount will be allowed once the project is 100% completed and inspected. **Grant monies will not be paid out until the owner has demonstrated their 50% contribution to the project has been paid.**
11. No applicant is allowed to apply for grant funding until any other previous grant awards are completed and closed out.

Eligible Activities

Eligible uses of Façade Improvement Grant funds are improvements to the exteriors (front, side and rear) of existing buildings located in the eligible areas, subject to the review and approval of the Facade Committee. Such improvements include:

- a. The repair, cleaning and/or painting of all visible surfaces of exterior walls.
- b. The repair of deteriorated architectural features where possible or replacement only if necessary.
- c. Handicapped accessibility.
- d. Removal of all extraneous elements on exterior walls such as empty electrical boxes, conduits, pipes, unused sign brackets, etc.
- e. Repair or replacement of deteriorated gutters, rain water leaders and downspouts.
- f. Replacement of any visible portion of roofs. NOTE: Not all roof surfaces will be eligible for facade funds.
- g. Removal of existing facades which are inappropriate and incompatible with the existing structure or neighboring properties and replacement of the same with such appropriate and compatible facades as may be approved by the Economic Development Committee.
- h. Repair or replacement of doors and windows where appropriate because of their deteriorated condition or to increase the efficient use of energy in the building.
- i. Repair, removal or replacement of exterior hardware and lighting fixtures.
- j. Repair or replacement of soft awnings.
- k. Removal, repair or replacement of exterior signs
- l. Removal of exterior appurtenances or accessory structures which serve no useful purpose or those in a deteriorated condition which are not economically repairable.
- m. Building permits and related fees.

If your project is not listed here, please do not assume that it is, or is not, eligible. Before proceeding with the application, please contact the Monmouth Town Manager to discuss eligibility.

Design Guidelines

1. Planned improvements should preserve the architectural integrity of the building and adhere, where possible, to the original design of the façade.
2. Only appropriate means of cleaning buildings will receive funding. For example, sandblasting of historic buildings is inappropriate due to its destructive nature. Please refer to the National Park Service Preservation Briefs for specific information on working on historic facades.
3. Vinyl and aluminum siding are inappropriate materials for covering historic structures and the use of those and similarly inappropriate façade coverings will not be funded.
4. Property and business owners undertaking façade improvement projects on historic, or potentially historic properties, should give consideration to the types of materials and design elements that would have been used in the late 1800's and early 1900's.
5. Paint colors should be harmonious with neighboring structures and/or indicative of the building's historic color. The appropriateness of a proposed color will be determined by the Economic Development Committee.
6. The size, color, shape and position of any proposed sign should complement the architecture and history of the building. Plastic, neon, and back-lit signs are generally discouraged. Signs must also comply with the Code of the Town of Monmouth. (Reference Section 6.7.16 of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance)
7. Awnings should be of canvas or acrylic material (if deemed to be appropriate to the character of the building), designed to respect the building's proportions, and in colors that complement the color of the façade as well as neighboring awnings and façades.
8. Improvements should develop compatibility within the building and with neighboring properties without sacrificing the uniqueness of Downtown Monmouth. Consider the proportions, width, height, and setbacks of the building in relation to adjoining and surrounding buildings. Maintain the alignment of facades along the sidewalk and the rhythm of windows and storefronts.

Local Requirements

1. The awardee must agree to follow the procedures and conditions of all established and applicable municipal ordinances in the rehabilitation of building exterior, completion of improvements and in future maintenance of the improved property.
2. The applicant shall secure at least two professional quotes for each specific work task requiring the services of a contractor or sub-contractor. The applicant is solely responsible to invite and accept or reject any bid proposal.
3. No member of the Monmouth Select Board or other public official who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to the Façade Improvement Program or the Monmouth Economic Development Committee shall have any interest, direct or indirect in any contract or subcontract, or the proceeds thereof, for work performed in connection with a façade grant.
4. Any contractor chosen must provide all necessary expertise, equipment, materials and insurance to satisfactorily complete the respective task. Warranty of quality workmanship and warranty of materials must be provided and identify the timeframes of such warranties and documentation is required prior to executing any contracts.
5. Bid proposals may be secured from and awarded to a member of the borrower's family if the bidder (i.e. relative):
 - a) is a bona fide and skilled tradesperson;
 - b) is not living in the same household as the borrower;
 - c) has no direct or indirect financial interest in the property to be rehabilitated; and
 - d) the relationship is disclosed in writing by the applicant at the time of bid proposal.

The applicant may assume any or all contractor responsibilities if she/he can provide all necessary expertise, equipment, and materials to complete the respective task. The applicant, however, may not receive any payment for her/his personal expertise and/or labor.

6. No member of the borrower's extended family will be reimbursed with Façade Improvement Grant funds for unskilled labor provided. In all cases, the borrower is responsible to satisfy the program's procedures to obtain grant disbursement.
7. Applicant must agree to permit reasonable inspection, during normal business hours, by representatives of the Town, to the property, exterior rehabilitation/improvement work, and all contract agreements, materials, equipment, payrolls, and conditions of employment pertaining to the work.
8. At the time of the application submission, the applicant must provide documentation of matching funds.
9. Disbursement of Façade Improvement Grant funds is contingent upon the completion of approved exterior rehabilitation/improvements according to applicable municipal codes and ordinances as verified by the inspection of the Town of Monmouth. No money will be disbursed to reimburse the applicant for exterior rehabilitation/improvements made to the property which were not approved by the Façade Committee before they were commenced.
10. Any Façade Improvement funds not expended upon completion of the original and approved exterior rehabilitation/improvement work will be forfeited.

Application Process and Timeline

1. To apply for a Façade Improvement Grant, fill out the attached form and return it to the Town of Monmouth.
2. The Economic Development Committee will review and score applications for compliance. The Committee will make recommendations to the Select Board, whose decision shall be final.
3. Successful applicants will be notified of grant awards.
4. Successful applicants may begin improvements only after receiving official written grant award notification. ***No improvements begun prior to written approvals will be eligible for reimbursement or counted as project match.***
5. The amount of grant fund reimbursement shall be up to 50% of the estimated total project cost, not to exceed the award amount. The Town will only pay its portion of the project costs once the building owner has paid its portion of the project costs.
6. Upon completion of a Façade Improvement Grant project, or at the time when a draw-down is requested, the business/property owner shall submit paid bills/invoices for the work to The Town of Monmouth. The Town will then perform an inspection to determine that the work was completed in accordance with the original grant application and cost estimates. Each project is allowed a maximum of two draw-downs. The first will be allowed when the project is 50% complete and the remaining amount will be allowed when the project is completed and the final inspection is done. **Grant monies will not be paid out until the owner has demonstrated their 50% contribution to the project has been paid.**
7. Upon a satisfactory inspection the reimbursements will be approved and processed within 30 days.

Selection Criteria

1. Applicants **MUST** submit the attached Façade Grant Application Form and required attachments. *Incomplete applications will not be scored; Applicants **MUST** agree to comply with the required Design Guidelines on page 6. Proposed improvements that do not comply with these guidelines are not eligible for grant funding.*
2. Each Façade Improvement Grant application will be scored according to the following criteria:
 - Project compliance with eligible activities (10 points)
 - Project compliance within Historic Preservation (10 points)
 - First time applicants (10 points)
 - Potential impact on the attractiveness of the building/business (20 points)
 - Priority of eligible activities (20 points) Storefront Improvements – 10 points, Signage – 5 points, Awning – 5 points
 - Potential impact on the attractiveness of the streetscape as a whole (15 points)
 - Level of personal investment in project (10 points) Meeting the minimum 1:1 match will be 1 point, between 10-25% above the minimum match will be 4 points and an amount between 26%-50% over will be 7 points and an amount over 50% of the minimum match will be 10 points.
 - Long term maintenance plan (5 points)

Funding will be awarded to approved applications until the grant funds are exhausted. ***The Town of Monmouth reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant who does not comply with the required or suggested design guidelines.***

Amendment

Program guidelines and eligibility may be amended upon final approval of the Town of Monmouth Select Board.

Eligible Areas



**Note: Town wide commercial applications may be accepted with a specific review and approval by the Select Board and a determination that the project advances economic development goals of the Town. All other conditions shall apply.*

Timeline

Within 45 days of submission	Award Notifications Expected
Within 30 days	Projects enter pre-approval phase (Finalized design, Economic Development Review, Contract and Match Confirmed)
Within 3 months	Projects Must Be Completed

Application & Attachment Checklist

- ___ Complete Application Form.

- ___ Sketches or photographs to show where proposed activities will take place and proposed design features.

- ___ Photographs of existing conditions of project, including abutting building(s).

- ___ List of proposed materials and processes to be used.

- ___ Written professional quotes from two contractors for proposed project (minimum of 2). *Identify preferred contractor.*

Documentation of source of private funding match. If the source is other than applicant's readily available funds, provide a letter of commitment or other documentation indicating availability and commitment of funds.

Monmouth Downtown Façade Improvement Grant

Application Form

PLEASE PRINT

Applicant Information (Property Owner):

1. Name of Applicant (e.g., Joe Smith):
2. Property Address: _____
3. Year Property was Built: _____
4. Mailing Address (if different from above): _____
5. Business Name (s) (if applicable): _____
6. Daytime Phone: _____ E-mail: _____
7. Have you received prior grant funding from the Town of Monmouth? Yes _____ No _____
8. If yes, please list date(s), amounts and purpose of funding?

9. Are any previous grants received completed and closed out? Yes _____ No _____

Project Information:

10. Proposed Project: Please attach a detailed description of project for each proposed activity.

For example: (1) Painting – Paint entire street façade with 3 colors, a base wall color, a trim color and an accent color. (2) Sign – Remove existing internally illuminated sign and replace with a new projecting externally illuminated sign. (3) Install a new awning at main entry.

11. Please attach a description of a long-term maintenance plan that will be in place to protect the façade improvements.

Estimated Cost of Project:

For each applicable cost (cash) in the Cost Category column, list the dollar amount for all applicable funding sources.

List the total dollar amount for each cost category in the Cost Category Total column

Cost Category <i>*Fields should align with written quote from your preferred contractor.</i>	Façade Grant	Cash Match	Cost Category Total
Demolition/Removal			
Architectural			
Engineering			
Planning			
Construction			
Materials			
Equipment			
Inspection			
Other (List)			
1.			
2.			
3.			
TOTAL COSTS			

1. Total Applicant Match: _____

2. Total Grant Amount Requested: _____

3. Preferred Contractor Information:

Full Name/Business Name _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Applicant's Signature (Property Owner)

I have read and understand the Downtown Façade Improvement Grant guidelines. I understand that I am agreeing to meet program guidelines as written. I understand that this is a matching grant program, and that money is granted on a reimbursement basis, following completion of work and payment of the cash match. I also understand that improvements not formally approved by the Town of Monmouth will not be funded.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Please return your completed application along with all documentation

to the Town Office or mail to:

Town of Monmouth

P.O. Box 270

Monmouth, ME 04259

****Note, applications must be mailed or hand delivered (email or fax will not be accepted)***

The undersigned proposes to furnish all labor and material(s) required to complete the work outlined in the specifications for the above referenced project for the sum of _____ dollars (\$_____).

Grant applicants are required to secure at least two bids on project work.

The successful bidder will be notified by the property owner; however work will not begin until after a Notice to Proceed has been issued by the Town of Monmouth.

Furthermore, I certify that:

1. All material will be free of defects and covered by manufacturer's warranties where applicable.
2. All work accomplished by the contractor and/or his representative(s) will be warranted and completed to standard trade practices.
3. Deviation from specifications involving changes in cost will be executed only upon written agreement by the owner, contractor, and Town of Monmouth personnel or Façade Committee. This will be covered by a change order to the contract and project specifications.
4. This bid proposal is good for 90 days.
5. Contractor has liability/property damage insurance and Worker's Compensation Insurance and will provide documentation prior to the commencement of work.
6. If awarded the contract I understand work will not begin until after a notice to proceed has been issued by the Town of Monmouth.
7. No member, officer or employee of the Town of Monmouth or its agents or assignees, no municipal officers of the Town, and no other member of any board or commission, elected or appointed official of Monmouth or employee of the Town of Monmouth who exercises any decision making functions or responsibilities respecting the Façade Improvement Program have or will have any direct or indirect pecuniary interest as that term is defined by 30 M.R.S.A., Section 2250 et seq. in any contract or subcontract, or the proceeds thereof for work to be performed in connection with the program assisted under this agreement.

Signature

Date