



Envision Williamston, Palmetto Business Association and Municipal Association of SC Façade Improvement Grant Program (FIGP)

Program Guidelines

Envision Williamston is responsible for administering a “Façade Improvement Grant Program,” intended to stimulate improvements to the exterior of commercial buildings within the Town of Williamston.

The funding of this program is provided through the Palmetto Business Association in partnership with the Municipal Association of South Carolina and with Envision Williamston. All activities relating to the funding of façade projects will be reported to the program’s partners.

Purpose

The Façade Improvement Grant Program (FIGP) provides financial assistance to commercial property owners and business owners within the town limits. The purpose of the FIGP is to support the revitalization of the Town’s commercial corridors by stimulating private investments in high-quality improvements that enhance the appearance of buildings and properties and eliminate blight and non-conforming design standards.

Façade Improvement Steering Committee

EW’s Economic Development Committee will appoint a five-person Façade Improvement Steering Committee (FISC), consisting of the Mayor or his/her representative, Envision Williamston Executive Director, the Town Clerk, the Palmetto Business Association (PBA) President or his/her representative, and a MASC representative. The FISC will present the selected applicants to the Envision Williamston Board of Directors.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include owners of commercial properties and owners/managers of businesses located within the Town of Williamston. Business owners/managers who are leasing a building for which improvements are proposed must submit a letter from the owner giving consent and approval of proposed project plans with their completed application. Only businesses whose existing use is allowable by the Town’s current codes and regulations are eligible for funding through the FIGP.

The FISC reserves the right to deny funding to applicants who are delinquent on payment of fines or fees.

Award Amounts

The program provides for a one-time reimbursement grant with the amount not to exceed \$2,000 with the business owner providing a match of 50%.

Example: If the project cost is \$4,000, the applicant can be awarded a grant in the amount of \$2,000, with the business owner contributing \$2,000.

Eligible Expenditures

For purposed of this program, eligible expenditures shall include expenses related solely to those exterior improvements, which are eligible for reimbursement, as outlined in the program guidelines and determined by the FISC; excludes expenditures related to interior improvements, ordinary repair and maintenance, improvements required as a result of code violations, or other expenditures deemed ineligible by the FISC.

Improvements must be consistent with recommendations set forth in master plans and long-term goals for the area in which the property is located.

All work must be completed by a licensed contractor, legally operating in the Town of Williamston. The applicants should contact the Town for assistance with permitting and business licensing.

- Eligible improvements include exterior building improvements (cosmetic and/or structural), painting, signage, windows, and awnings which are visible from the street.
 - Exterior painting or surface treatment
 - Storefront enhancements
 - Exterior wall and projecting signs
 - Window and/or door replacements or modifications
 - Decorative awnings
- Ineligible improvements include ordinary repair and maintenance, required improvements as a result of a violation notice or citation, site furnishings, amenities, non-permanent structures, and moveable equipment.
 - Ordinary repair and maintenance defined as “any work, the purpose and effect of which is to correct or prevent any deterioration or decay of, or damage to a structure, site or any part thereof, and to restore the structure or site, as nearly as may be practicable, to its condition prior to such deterioration, decay, or damage using materials which are of a design, color, and outer appearance as close to practicable to the original.”

Application Review Documentation

All completed applications must be accompanied with the following items but not limited to plans, elevations, and estimate of repairs.

1. Verification of property ownership (Title or Deed of Trust) or a letter from the property owner giving consent to perform the changes.
2. Copy of valid business license.
3. Scope of work in accordance with eligible improvements listed above under *Eligible Expenditures*.

4. Project timeline for project completion. Maximum timeline requirement is 12 consecutive months with all projects to be completed no later than August 3, 2018. A two (2) month extension may be granted with sufficient (30 day) notice and acceptance by the FISC.
5. Total estimate of project budget.
6. Two color photos showing the existing building (front and all side elevations).
7. A completed W9 form.

Application Deadline

Applications will be accepted from February 15 through May 31, 2017. Completed application packages must be delivered to Town Hall at 12 West Main Street by no later than 5:00 PM on May 31, 2017.

Application Review Criteria

1. Consistency with local zoning codes and regulations, such the sign ordinance
<http://www.williamstonsc.us/town-literature/>
2. Consistency with Envision Williamston Community Master Plan
<http://envisionwilliamston.com/resources-3/community-master-plan/>
3. Need for the project
4. Adherence to recommended design standards
5. Coherence with adjacent properties
6. Completeness of application
7. Quality of application

Application Process

Once the applications have been received the FISC will work together to review and determine the top ten (10) candidates. Leading candidates may be asked to submit additional information and/or participate in an interview with the FISC. Following this phase, the FISC will determine the final six to seven (6-7) candidates who will be recommended for approval on July 27, 2017. Thereafter, the FISC will publicly announce the winners and notify all grant recipients in writing by no later than July 31, 2017.

Key steps are as follows:

1. The Façade Improvement Grant Applications will be available on the EW website, and the PBA website, and at Town Hall.
2. Although it is not a requirement, it is recommended that you consult with an architect regarding any structural or major façade renovation activities.
3. Architectural plans, elevations, and/or perspective drawings and sketches illustrating the alterations including color samples (except painting) **must be submitted** with your Application.
4. Completed Applications must be turned in to Town Hall between February 15, 2017 and May 31, 2017.
5. Selected finalists must participate in an interview and/or submit additional information as required by the FISC in order to received final consideration.

6. All applicants will be notified of the winners of the Façade Improvement Grant by July 31, 2017.

Disbursement Process

Upon approval, formal notice of the award will be announced to the applicant. Funds will be placed in a participating bank in a secure account for authorized disbursement.

Grant monies will be distributed to the applicant upon completion of the following activities:

1. The Zoning Administrator will monitor the progress of the project. A final progress and completion report must be completed by the Applicant.
2. Any and all changes, not prior approved, from the original application must be approved by the FISC. Approved changes in work specifications must be attached to the original dated application. Any unapproved deviations from the original work specified in the application will disqualify the applicant.
3. The applicant and Zoning Administrator will conduct a final inspection and the Zoning Administrator will provide a Certificate of Approval.
4. The invoices and receipts will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the original application. A final approval and final award will be provided by the FISC.

Participating Partners

Participating partners agree to provide grant support to the program and technical assistance as follows:

Advisory assistance:

- A representative will serve on the FISC.
- Provide feedback on the plans submitted by the top five (5) ranking finalists.

Public relations:

- Participating partners will be featured as the major program sponsors at the program launch luncheon.
- Participating partners will participate at project ground breakings/grand openings.
- Major partners will be listed in all Town and program literature and website announcements.

Timeline

	Step	Date
1	Program announcement	Feb 15, 2017 –May 31, 2017
2	Deadline for applications	May 31 st 5:00 PM
3	Review and consideration of applications	June 1 - 14, 2017
4	Finalists contacted and interviewed	June 15-29, 2017
5	FISC final recommendations	July 12, 2017
6	Presentation of recommendations to EW Board	July 27, 2017
7	Announcement of grant awards	July 31, 2017
8	Project implementation period begins	August 3, 2017
9	Project implementation period ends	August 3, 2018
10	Maximum extension period (optional)	Oct 4, 2018

Façade Design Options

Please see the attached FISC approved Design Options Manual by:

1. Overall look and style
2. Color palette
3. Font styles

Clearance and Code Compliance

Applicants must comply with all sign ordinances and relevant codes of the Town of Williamston.

APPLICANTS WHO DEVIATE FROM THE APPROVED APPLICATION WILL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM THE GRANT PROGRAM.

Grant Policy

The FISC will not use race, sex, age, or religion as grounds for refusing a grant to an eligible applicant.

Grant recipients will agree to place a Façade Improvement Grant Recipient and Envision Williamston sign at the construction site, during the time of improvements and in their storefront window for 180 days after the completion of the project.



**Façade Improvement Grant Program
Application Form**

Submission Deadline: May 31, 2017, 5:00 PM

1. Applicant Name: _____

2. Contact Name: _____

3. Name of Tenant: _____

4. Name of Business: _____

5. Telephone Number: _____ 6. Cell Number: _____

7. Fax: _____ 8. Email Address: _____

9. Project Address: _____

10. Mailing Address: _____

11. Does the applicant own the project building? _____ Yes _____ No

If the answer to the above question is no, please attach a letter from the owner expressing approval of the project proposal.

12. Will you be using the services of an architect, engineer, or contractor? ___Yes___ No

13. If yes, list your architect, engineer, or contractor of preference with name and contact number of business: _____

14. Request: _____ 15. Match (50%): _____

16. Estimated Total Project Cost: _____

Attach qualified contractor bid documents and all cost breakdowns by category such as masonry repair, window replacement, etc.

17. Proposed Start Date: _____

18. Proposed Completion Date: _____

19. What is the existing use of the building? _____

20. Will this project proposal cause a change in the buildings use? ____ Yes ____ No

21. If so, please explain _____

22. Please provide a brief project description (You may include as a separate attachment; 1-page maximum.)

23. Please address how your project will address all seven (7) review criteria listed on page 3 of the FIGP guidance (You may include as a separate attachment; 2-page maximum.)

24. Attachments (Please list):

Signature of Applicant

Signature of Property Owner

APPLICANTS WHO DEVIATE FROM THE APPROVED APPLICATION WILL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM THIS GRANT PROGRAM.

**Submit completed application to:
Sonya Crandall
Envision Williamston
12 W. Main Street
Williamston, SC 29697
Email: sonyacew@gmail.com**