

Commercial Façade Improvement Program FAQ

Q: Does the grant apply to facade renovations that have already been completed?

A: No, facade renovations must be completed following the application's approval by The City of Toronto Economic Development & Culture

Q: How is the funding determined?

A: Provided that your application is complete and meets the required criteria, funding is given out on a first-come-first-serve basis and is assessed based on the lowest of the two quotes that you provide, up to the grant maximum (\$12,500 + \$2,500 for an accessibility feature for 50% of the total project cost).

Q: Do you have to use the contractor who provided you with the lowest quote?

A: No, you can use any contractor that you want to work with to ensure that the work is done properly and on time. We highly recommend contacting any contractors references prior to hiring them.

Q: Why is brick painting and stucco work not considered for funding as part of the Façade Improvement Program?

A: Painting and stuccoing brick is considered to be damaging to the underlying material and is therefore not an improvement of the commercial property.

Q: Why are window clings / decals or cafe patios not considered as a part of the Façade Improvement Program?

A: This program seeks to help businesses and property owners implement long-term, permanent improvements to a building. Window clings/decals & the construction of a cafe patio are considered to be temporary under the grant, and therefore ineligible.

Q: I am having trouble finding a contractor to provide a quote for this work. Any Recommendations?

A: The Beach Village BIA cannot recommend any specific contractors as we cannot speak to their qualifications, professionalism or quality of workmanship.

A great resource that you can use to find contractors are databases such as HomeStars or the Toronto Construction Association website. We also recommend walking around the area to look for nice facades. When you see one you like, ask the business owner who did the work – most of the time they will happily provide you with the contract and other valuable information.

Q: How long does it take for an application to get approved?

A: Provided that the submitted application package is complete, it takes about five weeks (and often less) to receive comments from various city divisions on your proposal. The City will send you a letter confirming approval with conditions or non-approval. If it is an approval letter, you must sign and return a copy of the letter to the city. After signing the letter, your contractors can commence work on the approved façade improvements.

Q: How long do I have to complete the work once the application is approved?

A: Typically, you have until about the end of October to complete the facade improvement work (see agreement from the city for details). In some cases, the deadline can be extended slightly on a per-request basis.

Q: Do I have to get permits to do the work once the grant is approved?

A: Yes, the necessary permits are still required for all construction once the facade grant has been approved.

Q: Do I need to submit professional drawings in the application forms?

A: The drawings in the application do not have to be produced by a professional, but they must be clear and legible in order to adequately show what facade work will be completed through the program. One simple trick is to print a photo of the building out and draw the proposed building façade improvements outlined with a marker on to the photo.

Q: Is my property considered a heritage property?

A: To find out you can use the City of Toronto's Heritage Registry online search tool.

Q: When is the deadline?

A: The deadline for 2019 will be in late April to early May, however, the funding is given out on a first-come-first-serve basis, so funding is often gone prior to the deadline. We recommend that you apply well in advance in order to ensure that you will receive funding from this program.

Q: Is this program intended for commercial landlords or business tenants?

A: This program is intended for both commercial landlords and tenants. The best facade renovations tend to happen when the landlord and tenant work together to improve the condition of the building, making it both more visually attractive and functional. Ultimately all renovations require written the permission of the landlord.

Q: Does the program cover the cost of replacements & clean up?

A: The façade improvement grant program is not a maintenance program to fix broken windows or signs, remove or clean-up a pigeon problem, replace pavers etc. The intent of the program is to change the look of the front of the building for commercial properties.

Q: I own multiple commercial properties; can I apply for the Facade Improvement Program for both?

A: You may make multiple applications for multiple commercial properties that you own, provided that those properties are not located directly beside each other. In the case that the commercial properties are located directly beside each other, they are considered a single property under provincial law and would only qualify for a single application, unless the properties have been severed by obtaining a part lot control exemption.

Q: I only have 1 (one) improvement that I want to make, do I qualify for this grant?

A: No. The grant is intended to help business owners do significant renovations to their storefront, applicants must complete at least 3 (three) or more facade renovations in order to qualify to get the grant.

Q: Who provides this program?

A: This program is offered to small businesses located within established Business Improvement Areas (BIA's) by The City of Toronto.