

# FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

## Sharon and Hermitage, PA

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Façade Improvement Program is a financial incentive program to encourage the rehabilitation of commercial buildings in Sharon and Hermitage, PA.

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**Partners:** the City of Sharon, the Sharon Community Development Corporation, and the City of Hermitage

**This project is financed through:** a Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Keystone Communities Grant to the Sharon Community Development Corporation, a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to the City of Sharon, and a donation from First National Bank.

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### **Program Overview**

This program allows qualified for-profit and non-profit commercial property owners and tenants in Sharon and Hermitage to be reimbursed for eligible sign, paint, design, and other storefront façade projects.

The Façade Improvement Program of Sharon and Hermitage is administered by the Sharon Community Development Corporation (SCDC) and the City of Sharon, in partnership with the City of Hermitage.

Funds available include a \$50,000 grant from DCED, which will be split evenly between the businesses in the City of Sharon (\$25,000) and businesses in the City of Hermitage (\$25,000). These funds are restricted for projects located in the target areas identified in the DCED grant (noted below in 'Target Area'). However, the SCDC reserves the right to adjust this allocation in order to disburse all program funds and to accomplish the purpose of the program.

In addition to DCED funds, the City of Sharon has allocated \$25,000 of CDBG funds to businesses within the City of Sharon and First National Bank has donated \$3,750 to businesses within the City of Sharon. Thus, total funds available to businesses in the City of Sharon through this program include \$53,750.

### **Maximum Reimbursement**

The maximum reimbursement under the program is **\$5,000 per property (per tax ID parcel number)**. Applications may be submitted for less than the maximum reimbursement amount and smaller projects are encouraged to apply.

### **Match Requirements**

A minimum **dollar-for-dollar match** is required. Therefore, a project seeking the maximum reimbursement of \$5,000 must include a match of at least \$5,000 by the applicant. The cost of labor performed by the applicant or building owner may not be considered as part of the match requirement.

## **Target Area**

Projects shall be located in the target area, including:

- the Route 62/State Street corridor from Irvine Avenue in Sharon, to Keel Ridge Road in Hermitage
- the Route 18/Hermitage Road corridor from Lamor Road to Longview Road,
- in downtown Sharon
- or in the City limits of Sharon

## **Eligible/Ineligible Projects**

**Eligible** projects must be exterior improvements that are visible to the street and permanently attached or adhered to the property. These include the following:

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|----------------------|--|--|
| 1) signage           | 5) exterior cleaning and painting                    | 7) restoration of original architectural features. |
| 2) awnings/canopies  | 6) masonry, woodwork, metals, architectural finishes |  |
| 3) windows and doors |  |  |
| 4) exterior lighting |  |  |

**Ineligible** projects for this program include:

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|---|---|---|
| 1) any interior work                    | 3) landscaping  | 5) projects begun or completed prior to award notification. |
| 2) work on outbuildings on the property | 4) general site improvements to sidewalks and paved areas |   |

## **Eligible Applicants**

Applicants may be building owners or building tenants. However, in the case of building tenants, a letter in support of the project, in acceptable form, must be provided by the building owner as part of the application.

Applicants and building owners must be current on all taxes and fees levied by the applicable municipalities and taxing bodies, or have entered into approved payment plans for the same.

## **Contractors**

Contractors to be used by applicants must be duly licensed by the municipality where the work is to be performed. Additionally, contractors must adhere to all requirements of the DCED Keystone Communities Program and/or CDBG funds, must follow all state and federal laws, and must not be subject to state or federal debarment.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

The overall goal of the program is to improve commercial real estate property aesthetics, create unified character and drive visitation and business through curb appeal. The overall purpose of the program is to encourage the establishment, growth, and retention of businesses; create or retain employment opportunities; and encourage business investment and commercial building improvement. It is with these objectives in mind that the following evaluation criteria are established:

- The degree to which the project will improve the applicant's building façade and/or correct physical deterioration of the structure;
- The degree to which the project will encourage reuse of an underutilized structure or retain an existing business;
- The degree to which the project preserves and enhances unique architectural features of the building while appropriately fitting within the features of neighboring buildings;
- The location of the property with a larger emphasis on highly visible locations;
- For larger projects, the use of an acceptable design professional.

### **Design Standards**

All projects must be in compliance with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code and must be in conformance with the zoning ordinance for the City of Sharon, for projects located in Sharon, or for the City of Hermitage, for projects located in Hermitage. Further, projects must meet design guidelines and standards developed by the SCDC Design Review Committee.

Additionally, projects shall conform to the U.S. Department of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" as summarized in Attachment "A" to this document.

### **Applications**

Applications will be accepted on, and reviewed/approved on a regular, rolling basis, until all funds have been expended. As such, applications will be accepted on April 30 and by the last day of each quarter (April 30, June 30, and September 30) and will be reviewed/approved by the last day of the following month, until all funds are disbursed. Nevertheless, SCDC reserves the right to extend the time for review/approval as it deems necessary. Completed applications shall be submitted to:

**Sharon Municipal Building**  
Community Development Department  
155 W. Connelly Blvd.  
Sharon, PA 16146

### **A Complete Application Packet Includes:**

- One copy of the 'Application Form'
- One copy of Applicant's 'Certification & Release' form
- Three required independent written estimates from licensed contractors for work secured by the applicant
- One set of color photos of existing conditions, including both building façade and project area
- One set of acceptable sketches or drawings of proposed improvements, if appropriate to project
- One copy of the 'Property Deed Cover Page' showing legal name of owner(s), if owner is the applicant
- One copy of the 'Property Owner Support Letter', if tenant is the applicant
- One copy of the 'Certificate of Occupancy'
- One copy of the 'Certificate of Completed Fire Inspection'
- Any additional information that you feel would be helpful in the evaluation process

## **Contracting and Inspection**

Upon project approval, the SCDC shall issue an 'Award Letter' to the applicant and within 14 days the applicant shall return an executed 'Reimbursement Agreement'. Thereafter, the SCDC shall issue a 'Notice to Proceed' upon which the applicant may contract for work on the project. Proper construction permits must be obtained, as applicable, and required inspections must take place. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the reimbursement grant.

The City of Sharon encourages applicants to receive bids from minority or women-owned businesses.

## **Payment**

Payment is made on a reimbursement basis to the commercial property owner or tenant. It is made only after satisfactory and timely completion of the project, which should occur within one (1) year of application approval, barring extenuating circumstances.

The following documentation is required for a payment request within 30 days after the project is complete:

- One copy of all paid receipts for eligible work
- One signed copy of 'Confirmation of Payment' form signed by the contractor
- One set of color photos of completed project

Work performed by the contractor or subcontractor and the cost of materials purchased for the project will be eligible for reimbursement in most cases, subject to the maximum reimbursement of \$5,000. If the applicant or building owner performs the work, only the cost of materials purchased for the project is eligible for reimbursement, and the value of the labor performed will not be considered part of the project cost or the match requirement.

Project funds are limited and may not be reserved for an applicant's project beyond one (1) year from the application approval date, unless an extension has been expressly granted by the SCDC.

The SCDC reserves the right to request additional documentation and/or deny reimbursement if the project is not completed in a satisfactory and timely manner, as determined by the SCDC.

*\*The City of Sharon's low-interest Revolving Loan Fund may be available to business owners who would like to finance this project. Contact Suzanne Kepple at 724-983-3231.*

*\*The City of Hermitage has a low-interest loan program that may be available to business owners who would like to finance this project. Contact Mark Longeitti at 724-981-0800 x1130*

## **Conflict of Interest**

The non-Federal entity must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. The written code of conduct must apply to all employees, officers, agents of the grantee, members of their immediate family, and partners. The code shall prevent financial interest or other benefits earned for any of these persons due to a CDBG-related procurement action. These persons may not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or other items of monetary

value from contractors. Grantees are allowed to establish minimum thresholds which the financial interest is not substantial or is of nominal value.

### **Media Outreach**

The awardee will permit the SCDC and the City to conduct media outreach and to highlight the project in publications.

### **Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number: (Sharon owned businesses)**

Any entity receiving federal funds needs to have a UEI number. This is part of the application for Sharon based businesses. The UEI number has replaced the DUNS numbers in April 2022. This is free to register and you need to have SAM account (which is also free). You will need: Legal business name, physical address (no PO Box or virtual office), state year/year of incorporation, and country or state of incorporation.

### **Review**

Applications are reviewed by the ‘Design Review Committee’ of the SCDC. The applicant and the project user shall not discriminate against any employee or against any person seeking employment by reason of race, gender, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or in violation of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, handicap or disability, or in violation of any applicable federal laws.

### **Application Materials Delivered or Mailed to:**

**Sharon Municipal Building**  
Community Development Department  
155 W. Connelly Boulevard  
Sharon, PA 16146

### **Program Questions?**

Contact Person: Angie Urban  
Telephone Number: 724-698-2466  
Email address: [Angie@SharonCDC.org](mailto:Angie@SharonCDC.org)

## **Attachment “A”**

### **U.S. Department of the Interior’s “Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings”**

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.