

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT GUIDE



DISCLAIMER

- The information contained in this Guide is not a direct statement or requirement of the Oak Forest Code of Ordinances or Zoning Ordinance (Code) unless otherwise cited.
- The information contained in this Guide is intended to assist Oak Forest property owners, businesses, and their representatives with applying for the Facade Improvement Grant.
- Exact compliance with these guidelines or the Code does not under any circumstance imply or guarantee approval of any such application.

PURPOSE OF THE FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Facade Improvement Grant Program was enacted in 2006 as a mechanism to assist Oak Forest property owners and businesses with needed design improvements and deferred maintenance to their properties and buildings. It is intended to “promote the continued use and maintenance of commercial buildings in the city” [§32.449(A)].

HOW MUCH IS THE GRANT?

The maximum grant amount that may be awarded is no more than thirty-three (33) percent of the total project cost, dependent on fund availability. For projects that include the replacement of a pole sign with a ground sign, the maximum grant amount may be no more than fifty (50) percent of the total project cost. [§32.449(A)(2)]

IS MY PROJECT ELIGIBLE?

To be considered eligible for a grant, the building or property must be used for commercial or industrial purposes. The proposed improvements must cost a minimum of \$20,000, and fit within one or more of the items listed as eligible costs [listed below, §32.449(A)(1,3)].

- a) Installation, repair and replacement of exterior exit doors to provide public access, meet current building and fire codes, and/or improve the overall appearance of the building
- b) Painting of the exterior of the building
- c) Repair, replacement or addition of exterior shutters and awnings, except for backlit and/or plastic awnings
- d) Repair and replacement of signs
- e) Repair, replacement and installation of exterior stairs, porches, railings and exit facilities
- f) Repair and rebuilding of exterior walls, including cleaning, sealing, tuck-pointing, painting and the like
- g) Tuck-pointing, other repair and cleaning of exterior bricks
- h) Repair of windows, frames, sills, glazing, replacement of glass, and installation of new windows
- i) Repair or construction of cornices in order to replicate the building’s original facade
- j) Repair, installation, replacement or addition of any other improvement the City Administrator deems appropriate
- k) Landscaping and streetscape improvements including, but not limited to brick pavers, lighting and furnishings.

WHAT IF MY PROJECT IS NOT LISTED?

If the project you have in mind is not listed above, it may still be considered an eligible grant project. The city is open to unique projects on a case-by-case basis if the purpose of the grant is met. However, certain items or costs which may not be included as part of any grant request and are ineligible for the reimbursement are listed below:

- a) Building permit fees and related costs
- b) Extermination of insects, rodents, vermin and other pests
- c) Title reports and legal fees
- d) Acquisition of land or buildings
- e) Air conditioning and heating facilities

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS?

- 1) Meet with the Community Development Department staff to discuss your project.
- 2) To apply, first complete the **Facade Improvement Grant Application** in its entirety.
- 3) Gather all Required Submittal Materials as listed on the Application.
- 4) Consult with staff to determine if your proposed improvements are considered a Minor Design Review Permit or a Major Design Review Permit. Minor Design Review Permits, or projects of a minor scope of work, are reviewed and require approval at a staff level. Major Design Review Permits, or projects with more substantive improvements, require Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) approval.
- 5) If a Design Review Permit is required, request your architect or contractor to prepare materials as required for these Permits. Refer to the **Design Review Guide** for details and examples of acceptable documents.
- 6) Submit all Materials to the Community Development Department.
- 7) Coordinate with staff to complete public review by the PZC, EAC, and Council as required.
- 8) Upon final grant approval by Council, commence work.
- 9) Upon completion of the project, submit required documentation for reimbursement.



If your project meets the eligibility requirements listed above, first file a complete **Facade Improvement Grant Application** with all of the required submittal materials listed on the Application. Once the application is considered complete by staff, Design Review by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) may be required. If so, the project is reviewed by the PZC for compliance with the city's design review standards and may propose changes to the project. The PZC meets every first and third Wednesday of the month.

After any PZC requested changes are made to the project, the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) reviews the project, the scope of work, and the bids, and then makes a recommendation to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. The EAC meets the first Wednesday of every month. After the EAC makes a recommendation, a draft resolution, grant agreement, and restrictive covenant are forwarded to the City Council for a final determination. If approved, the grant agreement and restrictive covenant must be recorded by you as the applicant with Cook County. Permits may also then be filed with the Building Department to begin work.

WHEN DO I GET MY REIMBURSEMENT?

A reimbursement check is issued to the applicant upon the following being completed:

- 1) The recorded and signed grant agreement and restrictive covenant are returned to the Community Development Department [§32.449(D)(1)].
- 2) The work requiring permits has passed all inspections by the Building Department
- 3) A proof of payment to the contractor has been submitted to the Community Development Department.

WHAT IS THE RESTRICTIVE COVENANT?

In the event that the owner of the building sells, transfers or conveys the property within five years after the date upon which any funds have been released from the facade improvement grant, the owner, or his or her successor, shall reimburse the city for the funds then released, to the date of sale, transfer or conveyance, from the facade improvement grant in accordance with the following sliding scale [§32.449(D)(5)].

Year of Sale	Sliding Recapture Scale
Up to one year	100%
Up to two years	80%
Up to three years	60%
Up to four years	40%
Up to five years	20%

[§32.449(D)(5)]