

application parameters

ELIGIBLE COMMUNITIES AND CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS:

Ashland—Centre Street from 1st to 13th, 3rd/Hoffman Blvd. from Chestnut to Walnut

Frackville—Lehigh Avenue from Catawissa to Spruce; Oak from Middle to Balliet

Girardville—Main Street from Richard to 3rd; North Second From Main to Mahanoy Avenue

Mahanoy City—Centre Street from B to 4th; Main Street from Railroad to Maple

Ringtown—Main Street from 4th to 12th (Ringtown Mill)

Shenandoah—Main Street from Washington to Laurel; Centre

The total reimbursement, per applicant, will not exceed 50% of the total project cost up to a maximum of \$5,000 per storefront or as otherwise noted. The grant cannot be used to pay for work that is currently in progress or completed. Up to 10% of the grant dollars may be used for professional design renderings and assistance. (See page 20 of design guidelines.) Eligible projects and their reimbursable dollar amounts are as follows:

SIGNS AND AWNINGS

Maximum reimbursement of \$3,500

This category is for the maintenance and repair of, or removal and replacement of existing signage and awnings, as well as the installation of new signage and awnings. This category includes lighting fixtures that provide direct lighting on signage or provide area lighting under awnings.

MURALS

Maximum reimbursement of \$3,000

This category is for new historic depictions or repairs and renovations to any pre-existing, historic murals and artwork. The design and artwork of new murals must be rendered by a professional artist or studio.

EXTERIOR PAINTING AND RESTORATION

Maximum reimbursement of \$5,000

This category refers to the repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, restoration, or replacement of exterior woodwork, architectural sheet metals and cast iron elements. This category includes exterior masonry repairs, restoration, re-pointing, repainting (only if originally painted), or low-pressure water or steam cleaning.

ADDITIONS AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Maximum reimbursement of \$5,000

This category refers to the construction of new additions. With respect to existing structures, the repair, replacement, installation, painting or restoration of windows (including display, ornamental and upper-story windows), shutters and exterior doors as part of storefront entrance ways is also included. This category includes repair, replacement, installation, painting or restoration of cornices, parapets or roofs when part of a façade.

CORNER, STAND ALONE, OR END OF ROW BUILDINGS

Maximum reimbursement of up to \$10,000 per building per five years.

Work may be performed on a storefront and, in the case of a stand-alone or corner building, one highly visible side façade. An applicant **must** renovate the primary storefront in order to be eligible for a side façade grant. Should one building have one or more storefronts, each storefront qualifies for up to the maximum of \$5,000, but in no case will the maximum amount of \$10,000 per building per five year period be exceeded.

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Maximum reimbursement of \$1,000

This category is for the maintenance and repair of, or addition of exterior lighting to building sites. Exterior lighting may include building mounted fixtures, lamp posts on the sidewalk and parking area lighting.

The Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act (43 P.S. 165-1 et seq.; 34 Pa. Code 9.101 et seq.) may be applicable to this project if total project cost exceeds \$25,000. If applicable, the grant recipient is responsible for including prevailing wage rates in all bid documents, specifications, and construction contracts pertaining to the Project. The Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) has final authority to make all prevailing wage applicability determinations.

VISIBLE ROOFS

Maximum reimbursement of \$3,500

Façade program funds are intended to increase the aesthetic quality of a business district where the façade program is operating. As roof repair is not normally an aesthetic issue, the use of Design Challenge Grant Funds for roof repair is generally **not** permitted. The use of Design Challenge Grant Funds for roof repair may only be used in those cases where the roof in question is clearly visible to a pedestrian from street level. In such cases, reimbursement may be made for **that portion of the roof that is visible**, not the entire roof. In such cases where the roof is visible from the street level, the award of grant funds may be allowed by the regional program.

- “Visible roofs” are included as an eligible activity in the façade program design guidelines;
- The roof repair must be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the architectural style of the building, including sensitivity to historic preservation issues.

This roof is visible



These roofs are not visible



application and approval process

Applicants are required to meet with the Design Committee of their local downtown organization to discuss their project prior to completing the application process. The local Design Committee and Board of Directors reserve the right to recommend projects that make the most impact in their downtown areas and recommend those projects for design assistance. Consideration will be given to the number of properties that can be assisted. For maximum impact, the central business district boundaries can be reduced by the local Board of Directors and Design Committee to include a portion of the Main Street target area.

Generally, only commercial properties are eligible. However, if single family owner occupied units within the target area are deemed important to the overall Main Street program the local board and Design Committee can decide to include them as eligible for grants with only external improvements eligible. For example, landscaping and site improvements such as sidewalk and paving, though important aspects of revitalization programs, are ineligible expenditures for Main Street Design Challenge Grant assistance.

Applications will be accepted for review at any time throughout the year. The awarding of grants is dependent on funding from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and is based on the allocation of funds for the Upper Schuylkill Design Challenge Grant from DCED. There is no certainty that funds will be available at any given time.

The Design Challenge Grant application form is provided in the Design Guidelines

packet or can be obtained from the Upper Schuylkill Office and the local Downtown Design Committee.

A Façade Grant Application requires the following to be considered:

- Applicant identification
- Property owner identification
- Location/address of the property
- Copy of paid Real Estate Tax Receipt
- Three(3) complete copies of the following:
 - ⇒ Written project description
 - ⇒ Design plan(s), drawings
 - ⇒ Paint color samples and finishing material samples
 - ⇒ Schematic(s), photographs for each eligible project
 - ⇒ Contractor and material cost estimates for each eligible project
 - ⇒ Matching fund verification, proof of financial responsibility
 - ⇒ Signatures of the applicant and property owner

Grants will be awarded based upon the level of improvement(s), the accuracy of historic preservation and the vitality and significant impact the project will make to the downtown environment. Only complete applications will be accepted for processing. The grant application will be reviewed by the Local Design Committee of the Downtown Organization for the completeness of information and supporting documents.

After the grant application is reviewed and recommendation has been made by the local organization, it will be submitted to Upper Schuylkill Executive Director for review and final approval. If the Upper Schuylkill guidelines are being used by the local downtown organization for their own Design Challenge Program then all

applications and approvals will go through the local organization for processing.

Applicants are required to meet all codes and ordinances of their Borough and real estate taxes must be paid current. Applicants are also required to secure any necessary permit (s) from the Borough before work can commence.

The approved applicant must pay the project cost above and beyond the grant amount. The balance of the project is then paid by Upper Schuylkill. All checks paid by Upper Schuylkill will be made out to both the property owner and the contractor. The property owner must endorse the check to the contractor. Project applicant/contractor(s) requires the following:

1. Adherence to the design plan and/or project as submitted, reviewed and approved by the local downtown organization and Upper Schuylkill Downtowns;
2. Pre-approval by the local Design Committee and Upper Schuylkill of any changes of work-in-progress, and;
3. The completion of final inspections, if required by the Borough. There will be no reimbursement if Borough code or ordinance violations exist.

Important: only approved work will be eligible for the Design Challenge Grant. Project work may not commence until the applicant/property owner receives a notice to proceed from the Upper Schuylkill Executive Director. Once the project has been completed in a timely fashion, the applicant and/or contractor will send a letter of project satisfaction and all invoices to the Upper Schuylkill Director. Once work is completed and reviewed by Upper Schuylkill and the Local Design Committee, the funds will be released.