

LA GRANGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The City of La Grange's Office of Community Development offers a Façade Grant Program which is designed to encourage, through the use of matching grants, the renovation and restoration of the exterior façade and property of existing commercial structures within the City limits of La Grange.

The Façade Grant Program is funded by the La Grange Economic Development Corporation (EDC). To receive assistance under this program, qualified applicants must complete the application packet and conduct their project according to all applicable City of La Grange codes and ordinances.

The purpose of the Program is:

1. To support the implementation of the adopted 2078-2038 Comprehensive Plan for the City of La Grange.
2. To enhance the aesthetics, character, quality, and vitality of existing commercial properties, by providing technical and financial assistance for desired exterior improvements.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Applicants who qualify may receive a grant of up to 50% of the total project cost with a maximum reimbursement of \$10,000. To qualify for grant funds, the applicant must **match the grant amount by an equal or greater investment of private funds** for the renovation of a qualifying commercial space exterior.

In the event of a special unforeseen project that positively exceeds the expectations of this program, the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development reserves the right to increase the grant amount as it deems appropriate. In addition, depending on available funds or the credibility of a proposed project, the applicant may be awarded a lesser grant amount than requested.

APPLICANTS

- Must be property owners. Proof of ownership may be required of applicants operating a business in an applicant owned facility.
- Property owners must not be delinquent on property or business taxes, must not be engaged in a lawsuit with the City of La Grange, and must otherwise be in good standing with the City of La Grange.
- Business facilities/property must be zoned for commercial use.
- Businesses in the La Grange city limits are eligible to participate in the grant program. Commercial properties must be 20 years or older.
- Commercial properties must comply with state and local code requirements.
- All improvements must comply with the La Grange Historic District Design Guidelines and the City of La Grange Code of Ordinances.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvements may be *eligible* for Program assistance:

- Removal of elements which cover original architectural details
- Repair of original architectural details
- New storefront construction within existing buildings
- Window repair with new materials and window framing visible from the street
- Removal of handicapped barriers
- Restoration or replication of existing signage (New signage must comply with the La Grange Design Guidelines and the City of La Grange Code of Ordinances.)

- Exterior painting and repairs to walls
- Awnings
- Exterior property beautification including parking lot improvements, porches, walkways, sidewalks, exterior lighting, and signage
- Other exterior improvements or projects may be submitted for consideration, but must demonstrate that the grant funds will be used for a purpose in the public interest which supports the implementation of the 2078-2038 Comprehensive Plan for the City of La Grange, meets the intent of this program, and is not in conflict with local or state regulations or statutes.

INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The following are *ineligible* for assistance:

- Improvements that are underway or started prior to an application being submitted for consideration
- Interior improvements
- Roof repair, not visible from the street
- Removal of original or architecturally important features
- Any structure not part of the original building, attached or detached, and/or any structure that can be removed
- Planters, landscaping or lighting for either
- General building maintenance
- Design fees
- Refinancing existing debts
- Business operating expenses
- Advertising and/or marketing costs

Eligible improvements must be consistent with the City's 2078-2038 Comprehensive Plan and Code of Ordinances as well as any other applicable local and state codes.

CHANGES TO THE PROJECT SPACE AFTER COMPLETION

Participants must agree not to change or alter the improved project space without prior written approval for five (5) years from the date of funding.

Grant recipients agree not to alter, modify or remove the improvements made without first securing the written permission of the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development. Alterations, modifications, or removal of the improvements may be permitted when it is determined that granting permission would not undermine the goals, objectives and policies of this program.

The grant recipient agrees to maintain the improvements in accordance with the City of La Grange Code of Ordinances and any other applicable codes.

CONSULTATION ASSISTANCE

The City of La Grange's Office of Community Development, through its association with the Texas Main Street organization, provides access to specific design services for properties within the designated Historic District to assist with basic restoration and rehabilitation information. These services include: building examination for evidence of historic materials; assistance in determining the historic character of a building and making historically sensitive design decisions; renderings prepared to indicate how a building might look if restored; consultation to select colors; consultation as to federal and state tax credits and consultation as to Americans with Disabilities Act and Texas Accessibility Standards.

GRANT GUIDELINES

- Grants will be administered on a first come, first served basis dependent upon the availability of funds.
- Building owners must apply and be approved for the grant before work can begin.

No grant will be awarded for work that has already been initiated or completed.

- Only those projects that meet appropriate design standards can be funded. Main Street Advisory Board decisions are guided by the Texas Main Street Guidelines, Secretary of Interior's Design Standards, City of La Grange Historic District Design Guidelines, and City of La Grange Historic Preservation District Ordinances.
- Applicants are required to take advantage of the free design service offered by the Texas Main Street Program through the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development and Tourism. The La Grange Main Street Advisory Board will make the final decision on distribution of funds, as available.
- An application must be submitted with a detailed description of the intended work (sketch, plans, color samples, etc.) which will assist the La Grange Main Street Advisory Board in the decision-making process.
- The Applicant is required to use local contractors located within Fayette County for all exterior improvements. If the applicant is unable to locate a contractor within Fayette County to complete the project, the applicant can request an exemption but may be subject to a 70% decrease in the amount of funding for which he/she is eligible.
- The funding cycle is from October 1st to September 30th of a given year. The EDC shall be under no obligation to utilize all designated funds during a funding cycle. Upon depletion of the designated funds the EDC may, at its sole discretion and without any obligation to do so, elect to fund additional grants during a given funding cycle. The EDC may elect, but is not obligated, to hold over any pending applications; however, the EDC is under no obligation to establish future funding cycles.
- This grant program will be administered as a reimbursement once the project has been completed as agreed upon and receipts are shown for all work. Building owner will be reimbursed for materials only when labor is completed by the owner.
- Grant funding will be limited to one grant to anyone building during a grant-funding cycle.
- Approved projects must be completed within one (7) year of approval and applicants must turn in all receipts for approval and reimbursement. If the applicant is unable to complete the work within this timeframe, the applicant must make a written request for an extension. Extensions will be limited to two (2) - sixty (60) day periods.

- Preference will be given to those buildings located within the designated Downtown Historic District. The Main Street Design Committee has discretion to approve funds for buildings located outside of the Historic District.
- Any deviation from the original project plan approved by the La Grange Main Street Advisory Board must be re-approved by the Board. Failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of grant funding.
- Projects not completed according to the application will be denied funding.

GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS/CHECKLIST

1. Applicants must schedule an appointment with the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development staff prior to submitting an application. The office is located in the Historic Casino Hall at 254 N. Jefferson Street, La Grange, TX 78945. To schedule an appointment, contact staff at 979-968-3017. Applications will be received on an ongoing basis.
2. Applicants must submit, as part of the application, the following attachments:
 - a. Quotes/Estimates for Eligible Improvements
 - b. Exterior Photo of Building
 - c. Architect Drawing/ Design Plans/ Renderings of Proposed Façade
 - d. Color Samples of Paint & Material Selections
3. Staff will review the application for completeness, which includes all required attachments and requested data. A post-application submittal conference will be held with the applicant to discuss any issues or deficiencies with the application.
4. Incomplete applications will not be considered submitted until all required documentation has been submitted to the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development. Submittal of an application does not guarantee a grant award.
5. The Applicant may be required to obtain multiple quotes/estimates from reputable contractors/design professionals for eligible improvements and submit said quotes/estimates to the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development staff for review prior to the commencement of any work proposed for funding under this program. All construction/design contracts will be between the applicant and the contractor/design professional.
6. Once the application is determined to be complete by the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development staff, the application will be reviewed by the Design Committee.
7. When the project is approved by the Design Committee, the application will be scheduled for consideration at the next available La Grange Main Street Board meeting. The Board will determine whether an application is approved, with or without conditions, or denied.

FAÇADE GRANT APPLICATION

Date: _____

Name of Applicant(s): _____

Name of Building Owner: _____

Name of Business: _____

Project Physical Address: _____

Project Mailing Address: _____

Mailing Address of Building Owner: _____

Day Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Project description, scope of work to be performed, floor plans and specifications detailing the scope of work (provide attachment if needed). Applicant understands that depending on the project, certain City Departments may require additional documentation, plans, etc. in order to properly review and approve the proposed project described in this application.

Describe existing uses and conditions of the property (include photographs as attachments)

Estimated Project Start Date: _____

Estimated Project Completion Date: _____

Labor will be:

- ☐ Hired
- ☐ Myself
- ☐ Volunteer

Estimated Total Cost of Proposed Improvements: \$ _____

Attach the following documents to complete this application:

- ☐ Quotes/Estimates from reputable contractors/design professionals for eligible improvements. Documents must include address and phone number of the contractor.
- ☐ Photos of the existing exterior condition of the property
- ☐ Design plans/renderings of the proposed project
- ☐ Color pictures/sketches/samples of elements that will be added during the project, including, but not limited to, paint colors, doors, windows, and awning materials

APPLICATION AGREEMENT FORM

I have met with the Community and Economic Development Manager and I fully understand the procedures established by the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development and Tourism and intend to use this grant for the aforementioned exterior renovation project which supports the La Grange Community Development program of activity.

I understand that if I am granted a Façade Grant by the Main Street Advisory Board, any deviation from this agreement may result in the withdrawal of the grant funding.

I understand that the Façade Grant will be administered as a reimbursement once the project has been completed as agreed upon. Receipts will be shown for the work completed, a photo will be provided showing the completed project, and a walk through with staff and the City of La Grange building inspector will be performed.

I certify that I am not delinquent on property or business taxes, not engaged in a lawsuit with the City of La Grange, and am otherwise in good standing with the City of La Grange.

I agree to hold harmless, indemnify and defend the La Grange Main Street Advisory Board, the City, and their officers, agents and employees from and against any claims for injuries or property damage caused by myself and my agents or employees during the course of this agreement.

I understand that the Façade Grants will be administered on a first come, first served basis as long as the funds are available. Any disputed decisions of the Main Street Advisory Board are subject to an appeals process.

I understand that all projects must comply with the City of La Grange ordinances and building codes and I am responsible for obtaining any required permits for this project.

Applicant Signature

Date

FAÇADE GRANT APPROVAL AGREEMENT FORM

I have read the Façade Grant Application procedures including the Façade Grant Guidelines. I understand that if I am awarded a Façade Grant, any deviation from the approved project may result in the partial or total withdrawal of the Façade Grant. I agree to complete the approved project within one (7) year of the date of approval of the project. I agree not to alter or change the façade improved with the grant funds without the prior written approval within five (5) years from the date of issuance of the Occupancy Permit by the City of La Grange. If the façade is altered for any reason within one (7) year from the completion of construction, I may be required to reimburse the City of La Grange immediately for the full amount of the Façade Grant. I certify that I am not delinquent on property or business taxes, not engaged in a lawsuit with the City of La Grange, and am otherwise in good standing with the City of La Grange.

Business Name

Applicant's Signature

Date

Building Owner's Signature

Date

Community & Economic Development Manager's Signature

Date

Chair of the La Grange Main Street Design Committee

Date