

**CITY OF LESLIE – DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.**  
**107 E. Bellevue Street, P.O. Box 496 – Leslie, Michigan 49251-0496 – (517) 589-8236**

DDA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES – REVISED 2002 and 2007

In 1997, the City of Leslie Downtown Development Authority (DDA) established the Façade Improvement Program (FIP) to stimulate appropriate improvements to the exterior of downtown commercial buildings. Program Guidelines were then revised, August of 2002 and again in June of 2007.

The DDA finds that the creation and maintenance of an attractive downtown is a public purpose which can be achieved in part through improvements to building facades. Downtown Leslie is pivotal to the economic health of the community because its condition, whether perceived or actual, plays such a large part in the impression that people have of the area. Downtown Leslie is the focal point of the community and any neglect will create an image of a deteriorating economic base. As a result, potential businesses may be discouraged from locating in downtown Leslie and existing property owners may defer maintenance and reinvestment in the real estate.

The intent of the FIP is to strengthen the economic viability of downtown Leslie by providing financial incentives for improving the exterior appearance of its buildings. The FIP provides an opportunity to preserve the architectural heritage of downtown Leslie and enhance the unique atmosphere that downtown Leslie provides to the community. It is important to the aesthetic enhancement of downtown that building design treatments be compatible with each other. The DDA believes the best approach is through the preservation of a building's original architectural features.

**Program Description:** Subject to funding availability and project approval, the DDA may reimburse up to **50%** of the cost of improvements to the exterior building façade. Except as otherwise noted in these guidelines, the total reimbursement for a Standard Façade Improvement Grant may not exceed **\$20,000.00 per building** per project or the cost of exterior face improvements, whichever is less, every 5 years.

**Standard Façade Improvement Grant:** This type of grant (reimbursement) is given for work which is consistent with the DDA Façade Improvement Program Guidelines yet the work is not carried out under strict adherence to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings.

Subject to funding availability and based on a separate vote of approval by the Board of Directors, the reimbursement may be increased by 20 % above that awarded for the Standard Façade Improvement Grant, if restoration of the front façade is carried out under strict adherence to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, (See Historic Restoration Project Bonus).

**Who is an Eligible Applicant?** Owners, tenants with owners approval, or both who have property located within the Downtown Development Authority District may apply for FIP funds. See attached map of DDA District. Public agencies are also eligible to apply for FIP funds.

**What is an Eligible Building or Property?** Any existing commercial building located within the DDA District which is owned or used by an eligible applicant is considered eligible for FIP funds. Also eligible is landscaping adjacent to such a structure. Newly constructed buildings and additions to existing structures are also eligible subject to funding availability and the limitation listed under Eligible Exterior/Façade Improvements below. All taxes and special assessments must be current to be eligible for façade grant improvement funds (Proposed Addition: at the time of grant approval and disbursement of funds).

Where a building under one ownership is divided into more than one unit for purposes of commercial tenancy, each separate unit which has an individual storefront façade and an independent ground floor entry shall be eligible to receive FIP funds; provided however, that FIP funds shall not exceed **(\$20,000.00)** for the entire building, subject to funding availability, for a Standard Façade Improvement Grant.

If the owner or principal tenant of a building which has and uses storefront façade frontage of more than sixty (60) feet applies for FIP funding, the DDA at its discretion may award additional funds as it determines reasonable but not more than a total of **(\$20,000.00)** for any one project.

**Historic Restoration Project Bonus:** If sufficient funds are available, and based upon a separate vote of approval by the Board of Directors, a rebate may be increased to **20%** above that awarded for the Standard Façade Improvement Grant, if restoration of the front façade is carried out under strict adherence to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

**Program Financing:** The Leslie DDA will reimburse **50%** (up to \$20,000.00) of total eligible FIP expenses, or **70%** (up to \$20,000.00) for all historic restoration projects once approved by the board.

**Design Guidelines:** Projects approved for Façade Improvement Program funds must comply with the U.S. Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and/or all applicable City of Leslie ordinances and building codes. Most projects will need a building permit and some may require site plan approval by the City of Leslie Planning Commission and City Council.

**Eligible Exterior/Façade Improvements:** Materials and wages for improvements to the front, rear and side facades of eligible buildings, when completed in conjunction with a significant renovation project, such as, but not limited to the following items;

- \*carpentry
- \*doors/entryways
- \*signs
- the business)
- \*masonry cleaning
- \*storefront constructions
- \*landscaping adjacent to structure
- \*asphalting of customer/public parking area
- \*removal/demolition
- \*painting
- \*sidewalks (from the public sidewalk to
- \*awnings
- \*lighting

**Ineligible Expenses:** Anything not specifically stated under eligible expenses such as but not limited to the following items:

- \*expenses incurred *within 60 days* prior to the DDA’s review and approval of an FIP application
- \*property acquisition
- \*mortgage or land contract refinancing
- \*loan fees

- \*City of Leslie site plan, building and sign permit fees
- \*construction of new building additions except for façade portion
- \*(Sealing of parking lots)
- \*(Murals)
- \*appraiser, attorney, interior decorator fees
- \*wages paid to the applicant or relatives of the applicant unless licensed to perform such work
- \*furnishing, trade fixtures, display cases, counters or other items taxed as “personal property”
- \*reusable or removable items
- \*site improvements done in conjunction with a City of Leslie Special Assessment District
- \*any portion of expenses for which applicant pays contractor in merchandise or service

**Timetable:** Unless otherwise agreed in writing when the project is approved for FIP funding, in the event the actual physical construction on a project has not commenced within 90 days and been completed within six months of the DDA funding commitment, the DDA will re-evaluate the status of the project. At its discretion, the DDA reserves the right to cancel or extend the funding commitment.

**Other Program Guidelines**

1. The DDA will give priority to commercial/income producing buildings over those owned or used by public agencies.
2. A Within a 5 year period, a property owner and/or tenant with property owner’s approval may apply for FIP funds to renovate a building façade.
2. B The total amount rebated to a property owner and/or tenant for the same building during a 5 year period may not exceed \$20,000.00.
3. At the DDA’s discretion and with a majority vote of the Board, an exception to any FIP guideline may be granted due to special conditions or situations which were not apparent at earlier date.

**Application, Approval, and Payment Procedures.**

1. Contact the Leslie City Office for Façade Improvement Program information and application packet between 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
2. Review proposed façade improvement design with the City Manager or DDA Chairperson.
3. Submit completed application, design plans, cost estimates to the DDA via Leslie City Offices, 106 E. Bellevue St., P.O. Box 496, Leslie MI. 49251. The DDA accepts applications throughout the year.
4. **CONSTRUCTION WORK BEGUN BEFORE ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT (IF REQUIRED) AND PRIOR TO THE DDA’S REVIEW AND APPROVAL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE FOR MATCHING GRANT MONEY.**
5. Each application shall be reviewed by the City Manager and a written recommendation for approval, modification or rejection shall be prepared for consideration by the DDA at their

next regular meeting.

6. Applicant must show proof of payment (cancelled check) and completed work must be signed off by the building inspector if building permit was required.

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FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
APPLICATION

1. Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Project Address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Building Owner: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Owner Address: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Provide Costs breakdowns by major categories such as architectural fees, engineering fees, signs, awning, painting, repair, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, etc. as an attachment to this application.
8. Proposed project start date: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Proposed project completion date: \_\_\_\_\_
10. The project will involve the building's:  
\_\_\_\_ Facade (Front)      \_\_\_\_ Exterior Side      \_\_\_\_ Exterior rear
11. Please attach one (1) copy of the project design.
12. Please attach one (1) photograph of the existing facade(s).
13. Estimated total dollar amount of improvement project: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Estimated grant amount being requested: \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned applicant(s) affirms that:

- A. The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge.
- B. I (we) have read and understand the conditions of the DDA Facade Improvement Program  
and agree to abide by its conditions and guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name