



# **Façade Improvement Grant Program**

**Administered by:**

**Cotulla Main Street**

**Revised January 2023**

## **Summary and Program Description**

The purpose of the Façade Improvement Grant Program is to provide grant monies to existing business and/or tenant/business owners to encourage renovation and rehabilitation of the exterior of buildings in the City of Cotulla and its Main Street District. Funding for the program is provided by the City of Cotulla. This program aims to improve the aesthetics within the City of Cotulla as attractive building façades positively impact the marketability and perception of the city. Thus, the Façade Grant Program consists of a one-dollar to one-dollar match of up to \$15,000.00 for approved improvements per applicant. Incentives will be awarded for facade improvements that restore, rehabilitate, enhance or beautify a structure.

The program will be administered by the City Administrator. An application form is to be submitted with a description of the work to be completed. Applications will be reviewed by a Review Committee consisting of Main Street Advisory board members.

## **Program Goals**

- Revitalize and improve the appearance of Cotulla buildings to positively impact the aesthetics, marketability, and perception of the City of Cotulla and its Main Street District.
- Serve as a catalyst for continued private sector investment through visible improvements
- Offer the private sector an grant program to invest in Cotulla buildings

## **Eligible Applicants**

Property owners of businesses and tenant/business owners of properties located within the City of Cotulla and its Main Street District area are eligible to participate in the program. Business owners/tenants must have been at the location for at least 12 months or submit a written Business Plan and have the property owner's express consent for the proposed improvements. To participate in the program, applicants must complete and submit the program application form provided by the Main Street Department along with the required attachments. Retroactive applications for improvement work that has already been completed will not be accepted. Property taxes must be current, and participants must represent that, to the best of their knowledge, they have no debts in arrears to the city when a commitment letter is issued. Further, the applicant must certify that there are no current code enforcement actions pending against the property that would not be mitigated by the project.

## Eligible Costs

The Facade Improvement Program is a matching funds program, which means that matching funds must be matched dollar for dollar (1:1 ratio) by the applicant for qualified expenditures. The maximum grant amount under the program is \$15,000.00 for approved improvements per project. Grant funds are disbursed on a grant basis only. Labor, design, and material costs are eligible costs. Further, permit fees associated with the proposed renovation/rehabilitation and fees for architectural design and engineering for the project are eligible program costs. In-kind, donated, “sweat equity” or similar no-cost to the applicant improvements, services, or materials *will not* be matched and are ineligible costs under the program. Costs incurred for alterations or improvements completed prior to receipt of formal written approval by the Program’s Review Committee and issuance of the “Notice to Proceed with Improvements” are not eligible for the grant.

## Eligible Improvements

Subject to application approval and funding availability, incentives will be awarded for façade improvements that restore, rehabilitate, enhance or beautify a structure.

Eligible improvements include:

- Signs (new, repairs, replacement, removal)
- Sidewalk Repair
- Awnings
- Lighting
- Paint
- Removal/replacement of inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes or materials
- Recessing/reconfiguring entrances
- Removal of extraneous elements
- Door/window replacement or repair
- Exterior cleaning
- Exterior historical architectural elements

## Design Requirements

Applicants are ***encouraged to promote historic preservation***, energy efficiency, and accessibility standards in designing improvements, to the extent that they are financially feasible or required by law. All improvements must conform to applicable city building codes, zoning ordinances, local and state laws.

## **Funding Availability**

Funding is limited and grant awards will be subject to funding availability; Project Applicants will be prioritized on a first-come, first-serve basis. A commitment letter allocating the project funds for a particular approved project will be issued and a commitment period established so that if funds are not used within that period, program funds can be reallocated for other eligible projects.

## **Application Process:**

An application with the following information, at a minimum, is to be submitted for consideration:

- Property address
- Applicant and property owner name(s), address(es) and signature(s)
- Proof of ownership or if tenant, copy of lease or other property agreement and written consent of Property owner to complete the proposed improvement
- Verification that property taxes on the property are paid and current
- Project Scope description, to include a detailed plan and sketch
- Hard copy and digital photograph of existing building façade
- Project budget (detailed estimated costs by materials, labor, services and fees)

The required application forms are available online at [www.cotullamainstreet.org](http://www.cotullamainstreet.org) or at Cotulla City Hall. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant without consideration. The Review Committee for the program will review and score applications and select grant recipients on a first-come, first served basis. The Review Committee will be comprised of Cotulla Main Street Advisory board members.

The Cotulla Main Street will be primary staff for processing applications and for facilitating the Review Committee process. Specifically, Cotulla Main Street staff will conduct an initial review of the submitted application to determine whether the application is complete and will meet with applicants as necessary. Applicants may be invited to present their applications before the Review Committee.

The Review Committee will evaluate applications based on the following Review Criteria and

## **Funding Priorities:**

- Awards shall be based on a point system. Complete evaluation form is at the end of this document.
  - Appropriateness of Project
  - Creativity
  - Timeliness
  - Community Impact

- Permanent, Tangible Improvements
  - Economic Impact
  - Preservation
  - Rehabilitation
  - Location and Visibility
- Preference is given to commercial buildings with operating businesses.
  - Substantial visible improvement to the appearance of the building, as determined by the Review Committee
  - Projects that have significant architectural and/or historical elements must preserve or restore these elements to be eligible for funding through this program.

Applicants will be notified in writing as to whether his/her application has been rejected or approved by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Cotulla via a commitment letter issuance that allocates funds to the project if approved. Upon approval, the applicant must enter into a grant agreement with the MDD regarding the terms and conditions of his/her participation in the program and receipt of the grant funds, to include the following:

- Project scope and property location and attachment(s) identifying the specific improvements to be undertaken;
- Maximum amount of the allowed grant incentive;
- Work commencement date;
- Submission of building permit(s) and other applicable permits or approvals;
- Acknowledgment of the grant claim procedure and requisite supporting documentation for grant processing to the MDD (W-9 and/or Vendor List required);
- Monitoring and right of final inspection by Review Committee and Mayor and City Council;
- Acknowledgment of change order procedures;
- Compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws;
- Promotional Rights to the City of Cotulla and Main Street Coordinator ;
- Maintenance Requirements and Repayment Penalty for Removal of Improvements within two years and;
- The City's and the Cotulla Main Street's standard contract terms and provisions (e.g., liability, indemnification, termination, and insurance requirements)

The project must begin within 45 consecutive business work days from the date of the approval by the MDD Board and must be completed within 180 consecutive business work days, except where the MDD Board of Directors have granted in writing the applicant's written request for an extension stating a reasonable cause for the delay. As appropriate, Cotulla Main Street staff and/or authorized city personnel will monitor the construction process. The Mayor and City Council must approve in writing any change orders to the proposed improvement work.

Requests for grant will only be processed before the rehabilitation/improvement work is completed and approved following a final field inspection by Cotulla Main Street staff and/or review committee members in order to verify compliance with the project scope. All expenses must be paid by check or Credit/Debit Card. Grant claims must be accompanied by the following supporting documents: proof of payments (e.g., cancelled checks, paid invoices/receipts of eligible expenses), statements from architects, contractors and/or subcontractors acknowledging that all payments have been received, notarized final lien waivers from all contractors and/or subcontractors, if applicable, proof of final City inspections and a hard copy and/or digital "after" photograph of the facade improvements. Applicant must complete, sign and submit a request for grant in order for disbursement of funds per the Cotulla Main Street guidelines. A photocopy of all Credit/Debit Card receipts and/or the front and back of all cancelled checks must be submitted for grant approval along with an invoice marked "paid." All invoices must clearly indicate the work that was performed, the amount of the invoice as well as the corresponding Credit/Debit Card receipt(s) and/or check number(s). All payments are subject to the review and approval of the City of Cotulla. Please allow up to 10 business days for receipt of the grant check.

### **Maintenance Requirements**

By accepting Grant funds, the applicant commits to properly maintain all facade improvements, clean and free of graffiti for a minimum of 2 years at the applicant's own cost and expense. Any damage to the facade is to be repaired immediately by the applicant so that the property remains in good condition and positively contributes to the City of Cotulla and its Main Street District. Applicant will be strongly encouraged to touch up painted areas and perform any other repairs needed on an ongoing basis and to maintain building appearance including the cleaning of any awnings at least once a year

### **Promotional Rights**

By accepting Grant funds, Applicant authorizes the Cotulla Main Street to promote the project and property including, but not limited to, displaying a sign at the site during and after construction indicating participation in the Program, and using photographs and descriptions of the project and property in the Cotulla Main Street printed promotional materials, press releases, and websites.

**City of Cotulla - Cotulla Main Street**  
**COTULLA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**  
 202 S. MAIN STREET  
 COTULLA, TX 78014

**Applicant Information**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

|   |  |
|---|--|
| A. Applicant's Name                         |  |
| Address                                     |  |
| Phone Number                                |  |
| Email Address                               |  |
| B. Business Name                            |  |
| Address                                     |  |
| Phone Number                                |  |
| Email Address                               |  |
| C. Address of Project Site                  |  |
| D. Applicant's Tax ID #                     |  |
| E. Name of Property Owner                   |  |
| F. Type of Entity Applying for Award        | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual(s)<br><input type="checkbox"/> General Partnership<br><input type="checkbox"/> Limited Partnership<br><input type="checkbox"/> Corporation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| G. Type of Business (Retail, Service, etc.) |  |
|   |  |
|   |  |





- Letter of consent from property owner if the applicant is a tenant
- Photograph(s) of existing building
- Rendering from architect, contractor, or sign designer depicting the exterior of the building after completion of proposed project
- Paint samples (if applicable)

**Conditions and Acknowledgements:**

This Façade Improvement Grant Program is subject to change or cancellation at any time by a vote of the Main Street Advisory and Mayor and City Council. In addition, any policy or procedure described herein may be waived by official action of this same committee. The City of Cotulla reserves the right to reject any and/or all applications.

*If I am successful in obtaining Cotulla Facade Improvement Grant from the City of Cotulla, I am obligated to maintain the funded improvements for a minimum of 2 years from the time I receive grant monies. If the improvements are removed or changed prior to the 2 year timeline without prior approval, I agree to reimburse the City of Cotulla for the entire amount of the Grant, this will be guaranteed through a promissory note.*

*I have read, understand and will comply with the criteria described in this application, as well as the timeline, and I certify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I am current with all local, state and federal taxes and business fees. I hereby acknowledge my application for a Grant, and do authorize the City of Cotulla to obtain verifications from any source named in this application.*

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approvals (MDD use only)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by MDD: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by MDD: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice to Proceed: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Completion: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please indicate any of the following attachments:***

Drawing, Rendering, Sketch

Cost estimates

Letter of consent from Landlord

Photos and paint samples

Any additional information provided by the applicant

## **SCORE SHEET**

### **\_\_\_Appropriateness of Project (1-10)**

Does construction, renovation or exterior changes compliment the nature of the street/block where the property is located? Is the proposed new construction or improvements complimentary to the neighborhood or the historic era of the building? Does the applicant show that he or she worked with neighboring businesses or community organizations when formulating the project plans?

### **\_\_\_Creativity (1-5)**

Was the environment considered for the new or renovated improvements? Are eco-friendly materials proposed? Do the aesthetic enhancements chosen demonstrate cooperation with the neighborhood or City at large?

### **\_\_\_Timeliness (1-5)**

Are the appropriate professionals (engineers, architects, etc...) ready to do the proposed work? Is there a timeframe submitted with the project?

### **\_\_\_Community Impact (1-10)**

Did the applicant create an improvement plan which benefits the overall neighborhood? Does the project benefit the community as a whole? Will the applicant hire local (Cotulla / La Salle County) contractors?

### **\_\_\_Permanent, Tangible Improvements (1-10)**

Is the proposed construction or improvements permanent, in that they will increase the value of the property? Will the proposed construction or improvements become affixed to the property in a way that if the property is sold, will remain with the property or structure? Do the enhancements to the property demonstrate significant return on investment?

### **\_\_\_Economic Impact (1-10)**

Will this project result in any economic growth (i.e. support existing business, add local employment, increase number of local customers or frequency of patronage, encourage commercial occupancy of a vacant space, increase in building value, etc.).

### **\_\_\_Preservation (1-10)**

Does this new construction or existing building reside within a designated historic district (National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Trails System or National Register of Historic Places)? If it is an existing building is the individual building recognized as a contributing historic structure by the National Register of Historic Places? Does the Cotulla community at large recognize this structure as having historical significance to the community? Is this building older than 50 years?

**\_\_\_Rehabilitation (1-15)**

Does the condition of this property inhibit its use as a contributing commercial structure? Does this property have a history of vacancy? Is there a history of frequent tenant turnover? Is this property adjacent to distressed properties?

**\_\_\_Location & Visibility (1-25)**

Is this property positioned in a high-traffic or highly-visible part of Cotulla and clearly not meet the building standards of the area?

**\_\_\_Total Score**

Utilizing the Cotulla Facade Improvement Grant Scorecard, projects will be considered under the following rating system.

0 – 59 Poor      60 – 69 Fair      70 – 79 Average      80 – 89 Good      90 – 100 Excellent

\*\* The Cotulla Main Street Advisory Board of Directors retains the right whether or not to support any project regardless of rating.