



Development Authority Main Street Facade Improvement Program

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Updated **NOV 2024**

Overview and Purpose

The Pooler Development Authority has developed a façade improvement program for the City's Main Street to encourage businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings, storefronts, and signage. This program offers up to \$10,000 in direct funds to eligible participants to finance exterior improvements to a commercial building. The program is designed to retain and attract businesses, strengthen the aesthetics of the corridor, increase utilization of existing businesses, and enhance economic vitality along Pooler's Main Street.

Funding

The program provides for a one-time maximum funding of \$10,000 of Development Authority investment per location. Awards do require a match of at least 50%. This requires the applicant to provide a minimum dollar-per-dollar investment. As an example, if the total improvements cost \$7,500, the maximum award amount from the Development Authority would be \$3,750 and the applicant is responsible for the other \$3,750. The applicant can exceed the 50% match requirement.

Payment will be issued to the applicant after approval of the funding and all award documents have been completed. Program funds shall not be eligible for expenses incurred for prior work, nor can funds be applied to costs accrued as part of the application process. Invoices and receipts of the work completed shall be required upon completion of the project. Any misuse of funds shall be repaid back to the Development Authority and shall preclude the applicant from future award opportunities.

The awardee shall have one (1) year from the issuance of the check to utilize award funding. In the event the closeout and reporting process has not occurred within a year of issuance of funding, the Development Authority may approve up to three extensions, not to exceed a total of 120 days. In the event of extenuating circumstances beyond the awardees control causing the delay in expending of funds, the Development Authority may provide an additional timeframe for closeout.

Applicant Eligibility and Requirements

Eligibility for the program shall only include commercial businesses located within the City of Pooler's Main Street Overlay District. Residential properties shall not be eligible for the program. All applicants must be up-to-date with all City taxes, licenses, fees, etc., and have no active or pending code violations for the property.

Applicants must either be the owner or tenant of a commercial, retail, or other business/property with an existing occupied structure; or, for a vacant structure, when a business plan or proposal to fill the vacant structure is provided. Applicants of multiple properties/businesses within the Main Street Overlay District may receive funding for more than one building/business, though separate applications shall be required for each.

If the property is a single-tenant property, the owner or tenant may be the applicant. If the property is a multi-tenant property, only the owner may serve as the applicant. For a tenant applicant, a copy of the lease providing authorization to make exterior improvements shall be required, otherwise a letter of agency from the owner authorizing improvements must be provided.

Local- and regional-chain businesses shall be eligible. For national-chain businesses, franchisees may apply by providing an affidavit demonstrating that funding is not provided for eligible exterior projects under this program. All awardees will be assessed for compliance with the program conditions for a five-year period. The awardees will be required to maintain a current business license, keep all taxes and fees non-delinquent, and when applicable, have



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filled the vacant structure. Awardees must undertake proper maintenance of their site/business and are not to receive any type of code violation or citation during the compliance period, which are not corrected.

In order to protect its investment in Main Street properties, the Development Authority reserves the right to request immediate repayment of the funded amount, or any portion thereof, deemed fit from the awardee who defaults on the program requirements within the five-year compliance period.

Projects

Eligible activities for funding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Exterior replacement of existing signage
- Installation of new signage (site or building)
- Exterior façade modifications, replacements, or repairs, including painting
- Landscaping and plantings
- Outdoor lighting upgrade or installation
- Other activities as determined by the Development Authority to be eligible

Ineligible activities that shall not be eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- General maintenance
- Any interior building work
- Demolition of existing structures
- New construction/building additions to existing property
- Parking lot striping, resurfacing, or other similar work
- Equipment and/or furnishings
- Vinyl letter signage (windows)
- Portable signs or A-frame signs, or other such signage
- Any non-program related expense
- Other activities as determined by the Development Authority to be ineligible

Design Guidelines

All improvements shall comply with the regulations of the Main Street Overlay District (Sec. 27 of Art. IV, App. A of the Pooler Code of Ordinances), as applicable, including the Architectural Design Standards and Materials.

Application Process

The program shall be open for submittal during the application process as determined by the Pooler Development Authority. Applicants will submit a completed application and any other relevant forms or documents as available or required by the Development Authority. Completed applications shall be returned to the Pooler Development Authority via email. Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis per the deadlines below, or until funds are expended, whichever occurs first. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis within the deadline periods. Applications missing any required documentation shall be incomplete until all required information is received.

The Development Authority shall review submitted applications, and interviews to obtain clarification or



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additional information may be scheduled. Following the review, the applicant will be notified of approval, conditional approval, conditional denial, or denial. If the applicant has been given conditional approval or

denial, the applicant will need to submit any additional materials as requested by the Authority to move forward with a decision. Conditional approval or denial does not guarantee approval and awarding of funding. Once the applicant has been notified of their award status, the applicant will receive award documentation that will need to be completed prior to issuance of funds.

Once award documentation has been completed, the applicant will be issued the funding for the award amount. Upon completion of any activities, the applicant will provide the award close-out and reporting documentation to the Development Authority.

Required Application Documentation

The façade improvement program application shall include, but is not limited to, the following items for a complete submittal:

- Completed Main Street Façade Improvement Program application
- A detailed project narrative of the proposed improvement activities
 - Include any plans, drawings, concepts, sketches, or other visual renderings
 - Include a proposed timeline to execute and complete the improvements
 - Include cost estimates for the proposed improvements, including quotes, scope of work, contractor, etc.
 - Include detailed description of the impact of the project in relation to Main Street and the Main Street Master Plan (address the review criteria)
- Matching funds certification, including source of funds and proof of funding availability
- At least five (5) photographs of the current property conditions (these must be related directly to the proposed improvements)
- Detailed business plan or proposal for property re-use, as applicable
- Copy of affidavit certifying non-receipt of national-brand funding for improvements, as applicable
- Copy of the deed for the property demonstrating current ownership
- Copy of any lease authorizing the tenant to make exterior improvements or letter from the property owner authorizing the improvements to be made (Tenant only)
- All other documents as required by the Main Street Façade Improvement Program application

Submittal and Review Dates

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis by quarters, or until all funds are awarded. Submittal periods shall be from the first day of the first month of the quarter until the last day of the last month of the quarter. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis at the first meeting of the first month in the quarter following the end of the preceding quarter. An announcement with the confirmed schedule for submittal and review period dates shall be provided on the City's webpage offering more details at such time.

Scoring Criteria

The Development Authority shall review the applications based upon the information provided. Funding requests shall be reviewed using a 75-point scale with an opportunity to earn up to 25 bonus points. The criteria shall include Impact and Business Need, Project Scope and Proposal, Funding Contributions and Budget Reasonableness, and bonus category of Main Street Master Plan advancement. A score of at least 60 points will allow for a possible approval. Any applications receiving less than 60 points shall receive a conditional approval or denial, and thereby provided the opportunity to obtain additional points through submission of additional documentation addressing any questions or



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concerns from the Development Authority related to the application; otherwise, an application shall receive a denial.

Closeout Procedures and Reporting

Once the activities have been completed and awarded funds expended, the awardee shall provide a closeout report detailing compliance with the program. The closeout report shall be completed within 45 days of completion of all improvements awarded funding. The closeout report shall include:

- Description of the project (same as provided in the application)
- Project expense report, including activities awarded and the name, date paid, amount paid, and description of the work performed by any and all vendors or contractors
- Receipts and invoices with evidence of payment for the project expense report
- At least five [5] photographs of the completed improvements

The Development Authority shall review and approve the closeout report, after determination of compliance with program guidelines. Upon approval of the closeout report, the five-year compliance period shall begin. The Development Authority may, at its discretion, request a narrative detailing and certifying the awardee remains in compliance with the program requirements.

Contact Information

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