



Façade Assistance Program

Downtown Village of Skokie

The Façade Assistance Program is an integral part of the comprehensive plan for the physical and economic revitalization of the Downtown commercial area of the Village of Skokie.

Financial assistance is provided for storefront rehabilitation activities, including the following: complete façade renovation, wall repair, window and door replacement, new signs, awnings, electrical, and other site work when appropriate.

The Program offers financial assistance of up to fifty percent (50%) of the cost of façade improvements listed above. All improvement plans are subject to the design review and approval of the Village of Skokie.

Your interest, support, and cooperation regarding the Façade Assistance Program are appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact the Village of Skokie Community Development Department at (847)933-8446.

Address all correspondence to:

Community Development Dept.
Planning Division
Attn: Façade Assistance Program
Village of Skokie
5127 Oakton Street
Skokie, Illinois 60077

INTRODUCTION

The Façade Assistance Program is designed to promote the revitalization of the Downtown area by providing financial assistance to owners and tenants of commercial property for facade and other related rehabilitation. Financial assistance is provided in recognition of the significant impact that exterior building improvements have on the appearance and marketing of commercial areas. The financial assistance is provided by the Village of Skokie as part of the Downtown Redevelopment Program. This pamphlet provides an explanation of the Façade Assistance Program, including eligible expenditures and improvements, selection of applicants, procedural steps, design guidelines, and an application form.

LOCATION

The Façade Assistance Program is applicable to properties located in the Downtown Business District.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Expenditures and improvements under the Façade Assistance Program may include: complete façade renovations, new signs, and awnings fronting on a public street. Other site improvements may also be eligible if undertaken as part of a comprehensive façade improvement project and when visible from a street. All proposed improvements and rehabilitation work will be subject to the design review and approval of the Village of Skokie.

Eligible projects must be in conformance with the following general criteria:

1. The project is appropriate and supportive of the goals of the program;
2. The project is deemed as necessary renovation work; and,
3. The project is consistent with the Village's goals and master planning concepts for the redevelopment of the Downtown.

All improvements must conform to all Village Zoning and Building Code requirements and any other applicable codes and ordinances of the Village of Skokie.

INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES AND IMPROVEMENTS

New building construction and work performed on the sides or backs of buildings not fronting on public streets are not eligible for assistance. The following building components are also not eligible under the program, unless required because of other improvements being made under this program:

1. Roofs;
2. Mechanical equipment;
3. Building façades that **do not front** on public streets;
4. Non-visible portions of applicable façades;
5. Parking lot improvements involving resurfacing and water detention;
6. An entry façade not available to the general public; and
7. Other components reviewed on an individual project basis.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Owners of commercial property located in the Downtown Business District are eligible participants in the Program. Those merchants that are tenants/lessees of commercial buildings in the project area are also eligible for financial assistance if the building owner's consent is provided in writing.

Free-standing chain drive-in businesses and chain stores must be approved by the Village before being able to participate in the Program. Chain stores which follow a company design policy may apply on a case-by-case basis. If proposed improvements for such stores are found compatible with the surrounding area by the Village, they may be eligible for the Program.

Financial assistance is available on a "one-time" basis. Applicants will not be eligible for additional assistance once an approved project has been completed or in subsequent years.

SCHEDULE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The following financial assistance is available to applicants under the Facade Assistance Program based on the type and extent of proposed improvements.

FIFTEEN PERCENT (15%) REBATE

Property owners and tenants wishing to undertake limited eligible improvements, but do not wish to or cannot afford a comprehensive renovation program, may be eligible for a 15% rebate. Such eligible improvements may include new signs and awnings.

A determination must be made by the Village that the work will significantly improve the appearance of the building. The building owner/tenant must agree to make any building repairs necessary to prepare the building façade for the sign and/or awning.

When an individual tenant, within a multiple tenant building, brings his/her individual signage into compliance with the Sign Ordinance, but does not undertake a comprehensive façade improvement project with adjoining stores, the maximum rebate shall be fifteen percent (15%) of the cost of the project. The owner of the building must agree to a sign criteria for the building, that would allow the proposed tenant sign. All other signs on the building must be brought into compliance with the Sign Code and building sign criteria as they lose their legal non-conforming status.

Individual tenants, in a multiple-tenant building, are not eligible for a rebate for awnings, unless all ground floor tenants in the building install the same awning.

FIFTY PERCENT (50%) REBATE/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Property owners and tenants undertaking comprehensive façade improvement projects are eligible for a rebate or financial assistance up to fifty percent (50%) of a project cost. Any building face fronting on a public street shall be considered an applicable façade. All applicable facades on a building must be incorporated into a comprehensive façade renovation program for that building. All signs must be brought into compliance with the Village Sign Ordinance. Individual tenants, in a multiple tenant building, are not eligible for this level of financial assistance unless all tenants in the building participate in the program and undertake a comprehensive renovation of the complete building façade.

The maximum financial assistance the Village will provide for a building with a single façade is \$50,000 for work totaling \$100,000 or more. If a building has two prominent sides fronting public streets, the maximum public participation may be increased to \$100,000 for a project costing \$200,000 or more.

DESIGN CRITERIA

All façade improvements must be approved by the Village of Skokie Appearance Commission and conform to all applicable Village Codes and Ordinances.

PROGRAM PROCEDURAL STEPS

- Step 1 Merchant or property owner fills out application and sends it to the Village of Skokie Community Development Department.
- Step 2 A Site visit is scheduled with Village staff to discuss façade improvements and decide whether applicant is eligible for program participation.
- Step 3 A meeting is scheduled to review preliminary concepts.
- Step 4 A meeting is scheduled to review and approve preliminary plan and cost estimates.
- Step 5 Applicant presents plan to Village Appearance Commission for approval.
- Step 6 Staff presents plan and cost estimate to Village Board of Trustees for approval of façade assistance.
- Step 7 Final plans, specifications, and detailed cost estimates are submitted to the Village. If all proposed improvements follow guidelines and staff recommendations, an approval letter indicating estimated amount of Village financial assistance is sent to applicant.

(Note: Partial completion of improvements will void all agreements, and all change orders must be approved by the Village).

- Step 8 Applicant executes a legally binding agreement to be recorded by the Village to ensure continuation of the approved façade and related design plan.
- Step 9 Actual construction of the job is started after the issuance of any necessary building permits by the Village's Community Development Department.
- Step 10 After completion of the job, the applicant's cancelled checks and bills, all contractors' waivers of lien, and any lender's disbursement statement are sent to the Village's Community Development Department.
- Step 11 Village staff examines the completed work for compliance with the approved façade design and any change orders.
- Step 12 If in compliance, the Village approves the payout of funds.

CONFORMANCE WITH PLANS

It is anticipated that once completed, projects will remain unaltered, requiring only minimal maintenance and repair. The Village will not issue a permit to alter or to demolish a structure which has previously benefited from the Façade Assistance Program unless:

1. The Village Manager, or his designee, upon the recommendation of the Appearance Commission, approves the alteration as consistent with the Façade Assistance Program guidelines; or,
2. The property owner pays to the Village the following amount prior to the receipt of any additional permits:
 - a. The sum of the façade financial assistance less 20% for each year which has elapsed between the completion of the façade rehabilitation project and the proposed alteration or demolition, for projects receiving \$50,000 or less from the Village; or,
 - b. The sum of the financial assistance less 10% for each year which has elapsed between the completion of the façade rehabilitation project and the proposed alteration or demolition, for projects receiving more than \$50,000 from the Village.

Downtown Façade Assistance Program

APPLICATION FORM

Community Development Department
Planning Division
5127 Oakton Street • Skokie, IL 60077
Phone (847)933-8447 • Fax (847) 673-0525

Office Use Only

Case Number: _____ Planner: _____

FF: _____ RF: _____ LAF: _____

ALL ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETE TO PROCESS APPLICATION

Applicant's Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Business Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____ Fax Number: _____

Store Address: _____

Total Number of storefronts: _____

Addresses of individual storefronts: _____

Name(s) of Store(s): _____

Names(s) of Owner(s): _____

Name(s) of Tenant(s): _____

Best Person to contact: _____ Phone: _____

Please Describe Proposed Improvements: _____

The applicant, _____, agrees to comply with the design guidelines in the Façade Assistance Program and the specific design recommendations of the Village of Skokie. Any changes in the approved plans or specifications must be presented to the Village of Skokie for approval.

I further understand that I must submit detailed cost documentation, including cancelled checks, bills, copies of building permits, and all contractors' waivers of lien, upon completion of the Façade Assistance Program improvements, and execute a facade agreement with the Village of Skokie, if required, to ensure property maintenance and the continuation of the approved facade and related design plans.

Submit to: Village of Skokie
Community Development Department
5127 Oakton Street
Skokie, Illinois 60077
(847) 933-8446

Signature of Owner: _____

Date: _____