



Downtown Kenosha Inc. Façade Improvement Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Façade Improvement Program?

The program offers up to \$10,000 in matching funds to businesses and building owners in the Downtown Kenosha program area in order to improve the appearance of individual buildings, as well as the overall look of Kenosha's downtown. Improvements must occur to areas visible from the public way. The goal of this program is to leverage private improvements while making revitalization efforts affordable, creative and community-based. A primary focus of this program is economic development and revitalization through financing improvements for small business. Downtown Kenosha Inc. and the DKI Façade Program Committee administer the Façade Improvement Program.

Who can apply for funding?

Any building owner or store proprietor/tenant with lease authority or authorization from the owner can apply for funding. All grants are subject to available funding. The project site must be located in the downtown district as noted in the Downtown Strategic Development Plan, bounded by 45th Street to the north, 65th Street to the south, Lake Michigan to the east and 13th Avenue to the west.

What types of improvements are eligible for funding?

Signs (new, repairs, replacements, removal)
Exterior lighting (new, repairs, replacements)
Awnings (new, repairs, replacements)
Façade Repair
Painting
Replacement of entry doors, windows, storefront
Cornice, woodwork, and trims
Masonry Repair and new construction
Concrete Repair
Decorative Wrought Iron

Are there any design guidelines?

Yes. Design Guidelines were created in tandem with the Wisconsin Main Street. Applicants are responsible for conforming to all relevant local and state codes and ordinances.

How are the projects selected for funding?

Projects that are selected are expected to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment, maintain the character of Downtown Kenosha, respect the scale of Kenosha's downtown, and to maintain the urban

nature of the community. Applications go through the approval process of our Downtown Kenosha Inc. Façade Program Committee, which consists of experts in the field of architecture, economic development, finance, and banking. Each application goes through our “Façade Scoring Matrix” (available at www.downtownkenosha.org/business/facade-improvement-program) to ensure that project goals/requirements are being met and that all applications are scored on an even-playing field.

How is the money awarded?

This is up to a 1:1 matching grant program, which means that the applicant pays a portion of the improvement and Downtown Kenosha Inc. pays a portion. The amount of the match must be at least 1:1 - that is, the applicant pays \$1 and Downtown Kenosha Inc. pays \$1. However, there is a maximum grant contribution by Downtown Kenosha Inc. of \$10,000 per project and all grants are subject to available funding. Work completed prior to the letter of commitment is not eligible for funding.

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and cannot be issued until the proposed project has been completed. Before reimbursement is made, applicants will need to submit proof of payment for completed work. In addition, before payment will be issued, Downtown Kenosha Inc.’s Façade Program Committee must review the completed project to determine that the actual work performed was the work approved.

How does the application process work?

The application process for the Façade Grant Program opens on an annual basis in the beginning of January and closes at the middle of March. A completed application should be submitted to Downtown Kenosha Inc. staff, which will be shared with the Downtown Kenosha Inc. Façade Program Committee. When the Façade Program Committee has reviewed and scored the application, a determination will be made.

If the Façade Program Committee approves the application, the applicant will receive a letter of commitment from Downtown Kenosha Inc. for the specified amount with information on any other requirements. The applicant can then proceed with necessary permitting and city review processes. Funds will be released to the applicant upon completion of project, inspection of project, and documentation of matching funds.

If the Façade Program Committee denies the application, the applicant will receive a letter explaining the reasons for its denial. An application may be denied for many reasons ranging from incompatibility with the Downtown historic design to lack of funding. Due to the limited funding available for this program, many good proposals may not be funded in the first year they apply.

Annually selected projects should have façade work completed by November; the Façade Program Committee works with applicants to ensure deadlines are made.