

BOROUGH OF SOMERSET

Facade Grant Program

General Information and Guidelines

Program Description

The Borough of Somerset has established a grant fund to provide partial funding for commercial property improvements in uptown Somerset. Grants will be made in accordance with design criteria established by the Borough of Somerset. Applications are available from the Borough of Somerset, 340 West Union Street, Somerset, PA 15501 (814 443-2661).

Eligible Applicants

Any person(s) or other legal entity owning property in the Somerset Borough designated Main Street Central Business District Zone is eligible to apply. Grants are made only in connection with a qualifying structure and for eligible activities that conform to Borough of Somerset, and Somerset Inc. design standards.

Qualifying Structures

Qualifying commercial properties include single-purpose retail and office buildings and mixed-use buildings containing combinations of retail, office, and residential apartments. Single-purpose apartment buildings are generally not eligible for program grant funds. However, Somerset Inc. and Borough of Somerset will consider individual proposals on a case-by-case basis. Grants for single-purpose apartment buildings may be considered eligible if the applicant can demonstrate significant benefits to the preservation of historic structures, conservation, and improvement of neighborhoods or community and economic development.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities include major maintenance, repair, general rehabilitation and restoration of storefronts and commercial facades. Site improvements and the removal and replacement of commercial signs are also eligible in connection with other significant improvements. The program is for improvements to existing structures only. Property acquisition and refinancing of existing debt are not eligible.

This includes but is not limited to, the following types of activities:

1. Brick and Stone Masonry

Structural repairs, cleaning, repointing and painting. Also repair and replacement of missing areas of masonry.

2. Architectural Metals

Repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, duplication, and restoration of exterior building components, e.g., cast iron, pressed tin.

3. Doors and Upper-story Windows

Maintenance, repairs, replacement, and restoration of window sash, exterior doors, and installation of storm windows in conjunction with other significant façade improvements.

4. Exterior Woodwork

Maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and restoration of sills, window and doorframes, bulkheads, storefront and roof cornices, window hoods, decorative moldings.

5. Storefronts

Removal of inappropriate coverings and additions, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and restoration of display and transom windows, lighting.

6. Signage

Maintenance, repair, removal and replacement.

7. Painting

Surface preparation, cleaning, painting.

8. Awnings

Installation, repair and maintenance of fabric awnings.

9. Interior Finish

Preservation, repair, and refinishing of architectural features, e.g., flooring, plaster, ornamental plaster work, paneling, wainscoting, decorative woodwork as it pertains to areas attached to the immediate storefront/façade undergoing renovations .

10. Floor and Wall Coverings

Repair, removal and replacement as it pertains to areas attached to the immediate storefront/façade undergoing renovations.

11. Mechanical Systems

Removal, replacement, and installation of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems and fixtures as it pertains to areas attached to the immediate storefront/façade undergoing renovations.

12. Plumbing and Electrical Systems

Removal, replacement, and installation of electrical service, wiring, fixtures, plumbing systems and fixtures as it pertains to areas attached to the immediate storefront/façade undergoing renovations.

13. Site Improvements

Parking, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

Other activities may be proposed and approved for grant processing, provided such activities are in conformance with the goals and general standards of the Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. Facade Program. To be eligible for assistance, proposed activities must be executed in accordance with Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. standards. Completed projects are not eligible for retroactive funding. Proposed improvements must comply with all applicable state and local regulations.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Project activities must conform to Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. guidelines for renovating uptown buildings, specifically, the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. The standards for rehabilitation are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its retail or business associated purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structure, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

To facilitate applicant compliance with design standards, Borough of Somerset, and Somerset Inc. have adopted general guidelines pertaining to the preservation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of building components such as masonry, wood, architectural metals, windows, entrances, and storefronts. These guidelines include “Keeping up Appearances Storefront Guidelines” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. provides design assistance to aid the applicant in meeting design standards and guidelines. Guidelines may be obtained through the Borough of Somerset, or Somerset Inc.

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Eligible applicant
2. Project located in CBD Zone / Designated Main Street Area
3. Eligible Activities
4. Conformance to Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. design standards and guidelines;

Within the above framework of criteria, grants will be issued on a first come-first served basis.

APPLICATION FORM

An application form is attached to this statement of terms and conditions.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Part I – Application

To obtain a grant application, prospective applicants must contact the office of Borough of Somerset, located at 340 West Union Street, Somerset (814) 443-2661.

The applicant must complete the Application which includes basic data pertaining to the applicant, the property, property ownership, and a general description of the proposed project.

Upon receipt of the Application, and after insuring its completeness, the Borough will refer the application to the Design Committee of Somerset Inc. The Design Committee will contact the applicant to review the proposed project and program requirements and to arrange for an initial design consultation.

2. Design Review and Approval

Borough of Somerset and Somerset Inc. require adherence to specific design standards and general guidelines as a condition for grant approval. The Borough of Somerset and Somerset Inc. will provide limited design and technical assistance at no cost to the applicant.

Design assistance will involve an initial on-site meeting between Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. and the applicant to prepare a preliminary work write-up.

Upon completion of design plans and acceptance by the applicant, the Borough of Somerset, will present plans to the Somerset Inc. Design Committee for review and approval.

Alternatively, applicants may engage their own architect, contractor, or designer at personal expense. Such plans shall be provided to the Borough of Somerset for transmittal to the Somerset Inc. Design Committee for review and approval.

All applicants may be requested to participate in the formal design review to clarify scope of work, resolve conflicts, etc. Borough of Somerset and Somerset Inc. shall make every effort to expedite design reviews and respond to applicant needs in a prompt and businesslike fashion.

3. Part II - Application

Upon Design Committee approval, the applicant shall complete the Part II Application which includes design plans, written cost estimates, and the amount of the grant request. A completed Part II Application should be submitted to Borough of Somerset for review and execution.

4. Project Implementation

After grant application approval, work can proceed on the project. Rehabilitation work must begin within 45 days of final grant approval.

The Design Committee or its representative will arrange an on-site, pre-construction meeting with the project contractor to review the project design and program stipulations. The Design Committee will be available for on-site consultation with the project contractor while work is in progress. Applicant agrees to permit periodic inspections of work in progress by the Borough of Somerset, Somerset Inc. Design Committee.

It is anticipated that unforeseen circumstances in rehabilitation may require changes in the project work write-up. Such changes must be approved by Borough of Somerset, and the Somerset Inc. Design Committee, or the applicant may jeopardize receipt of grant funds.

Applicant agrees to display a Borough of Somerset Facade Grant Program sign during project construction. Borough of Somerset will provide the sign. The sign acknowledges involvement in the Borough of Somerset Facade Grant Program. Applicant agrees to limit additional construction signs only to those of the involved project contractors.

5. Distribution of Grant Funds

Grant funds will be released by the Borough of Somerset in a lump sum upon satisfactory completion of approved design work with written notification of approval from Somerset Inc.

6. Projects Exceeding \$25,000

Projects exceeding \$25,000 are subject to the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Rates.

PART 1

1. APPLICANT DATA

Date: _____

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Daytime Phone: _____

2. PROPERTY DATA

Building or Business Name: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

3. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

If applicant is not property owner, please provide the following information:

Owner's Name: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone: _____

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe proposed use of loan funds:

**BOROUGH OF SOMERSET
FACADE GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION
PART II**

5. DESIGN PLANS

Please attach design sketches, photos, final work write-up, and specifications.

6. COST ESTIMATES

Please attach a written cost estimate for the final work write-up. Additional cost estimates may be required. Cost estimates shall be by bona fide trades people, contractors, or suppliers.

7. GRANT REQUEST

Enter grant request for this project: \$_____

8. DISCLAIMER

I hereby acknowledge that I understand the terms and conditions of the BOROUGH OF SOMERSET FACADE GRANT PROGRAM, and this signature so indicates my intent to meet the specified terms if this application is approved.

I understand that, upon approval, this project is approved for payment only in strict accordance with the approved design plans which are attached to this application and hereby made part of this agreement.

I further understand that change orders on work in progress require advance approval by the Borough of Somerset and Somerset Inc Design Committee, and that failure to comply with this agreement may jeopardize receipt of grant funds.

Applicant Signature

Date)

9. **DESIGN APPROVAL**

This application has been reviewed by the Somerset Inc. Design Committee and conforms to applicable design standards and guidelines. This application is hereby authorized for grant processing.

Chairman, Somerset Inc. Design Committee

(Date)

MAIN ST. AREA

BOROUGH

