

# Façade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines

2022



City of Newport News  
Department of Development  
2400 Washington Avenue  
Newport News, VA 23607

**I. What is the purpose of the Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) program?**

The objective of the Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) program is to restore, sustain, and improve commercial properties located within the City of Newport News. This program provides matching grant funds for property owners in Newport News to aesthetically enhance their properties in an effort to revitalize and strengthen business communities, and encourage private investment throughout the City.

**II. Who is eligible to apply for a FIG?**

Property owners citywide are eligible to apply for a FIG if the following *minimum* requirements are satisfied:

- Property is for commercial, industrial, office or mixed-use (mixed-use must have a commercial component)
- Property is taxable and structure is at least 15 years old
- Property and applicant are current on all City of Newport News taxes and fees (property, BPOL, machinery & tools, stormwater, etc.)

Properties ineligible for this program include:

- Stand-alone retail chains, national franchises, places of worship or residential buildings/complexes
- Ownership is by a City of Newport News employee, IDA/EDA Board member, other city official or their spouse

**III. What types of improvements can the FIG be used for?**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Contracted labor related to any eligible improvements</li> <li>✓ Canopy or awning installation and/or repair, where appropriate</li> <li>✓ Certified green/sustainable exterior improvements</li> <li>✓ Decorative fencing, where appropriate (not chain-link)</li> <li>✓ Accessibility ADA compliant projects (ramps, thresholds, removal of barriers)</li> <li>✓ Exterior lighting (Dark Sky recommended)</li> <li>✓ Exterior painting or re-siding, including prep work</li> <li>✓ Screening of areas such as dumpsters, propane tanks, etc.</li> <li>✓ Hardscape improvements (benches, brick sidewalks, bicycle racks, fountains, etc.)</li> <li>✓ Masonry repairs and tuck pointing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Landscaping Improvements (when in conjunction with other improvements)</li> <li>✓ Removal/replacement of architecturally inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes and materials</li> <li>✓ Restoration of architectural details or removal of materials that cover architectural details</li> <li>✓ Repair and/or replacement of windows and exterior doors</li> <li>✓ Roofing (in conjunction with other improvements)</li> <li>✓ Upgrades to parking surface areas (with other improvements)</li> <li>✓ Undergrounding of overhead utility lines</li> <li>✓ Window and cornice flashing and repair (with other improvements)</li> </ul> |
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**IV. What types of improvements can the FIG *not* be used for?**

- ✗ Billboards
- ✗ Chain-link fencing
- ✗ Current code violations
- ✗ Interior work or improvements
- ✗ Improvements in progress or completed prior to preliminary approval
- ✗ Mechanical and HVAC systems
- ✗ Installation, repair or replacement of exterior signage
- ✗ New construction
- ✗ Pylon or temporary signs
- ✗ Religious symbols
- ✗ Security systems (metal roll down gates, window bars, cameras, etc.)

**V. How much money can I receive from a FIG?**

The City of Newport News FIG program is a matching grant program. A grant match is *required* in order to receive grant funds. **The maximum FIG amount available for any approved application is \$20,000.** Grant funds are generally available for up to 50% of eligible improvement costs, a 1:1 match. In other words, every grant dollar an applicant puts into a project, the City will match by one dollar, up to the maximum of \$20,000.

Properties located within Virginia Enterprise Zone (VEZ) #31, Enterprise Zone #3, Historic properties designated by National Register of Historic Places, and properties located within a locally-designated Historic district or on the Virginia Landmarks Register are eligible to receive grant funds for up to 75% of eligible improvement costs, a 1:3 match, provided the improvements meet the Secretary of the Interior standards. In these areas, each dollar an applicant puts into the project will be matched by three dollars from the City, up to the maximum of \$20,000. For more information on Virginia Enterprise Zone, or to verify that your property is in a VEZ, please visit [investnewportnewsenterprisezone.com](http://investnewportnewsenterprisezone.com). Examples of grant matches can be found in the table that follows.

Grant Match Ratio	50% (1:1) Match	75% (1:3) Match for Designated Areas
<b><i>Example 1: Sample price breakdown for projects showing same project cost</i></b>		
<i>Cost of Eligible Improvements</i>	\$25,000	\$25,000
Amount Applicant Pays	\$12,500	\$6,250
Amount Authorized for FIG	\$12,500	\$18,750
<b><i>Example 2: Sample price breakdown for projects showing MAXIMUM grant amount</i></b>		
<i>Cost of Eligible Improvements</i>	\$40,000	\$30,000
Amount Applicant Pays	\$20,000	\$10,000
Amount Authorized for FIG	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b><i>Example 3: Sample price breakdown for projects showing large project cost</i></b>		
<i>Cost of Eligible Improvements</i>	\$100,000	\$100,000
Amount Applicant Pays	\$80,000	\$80,000
Amount Authorized for FIG	\$20,000	\$20,000

**VI. Are there any restrictions?**

Funding is available on a first come, first served basis until program funds are depleted. Grants are awarded to applicants who have provided a complete application package and have received approval by the FIG Team, the Revolving Loan Fund Committee (RLF) and the Newport News Economic Development Authority (EDA).

All recipients of a FIG are required to sign a Grant Agreement. This document will establish the conditions of approval and terms of grant disbursement. In no event will funds be disbursed in a ratio higher than the matching requirements. Proof of costs paid by the applicant will be required before grant funds are to be disbursed. Grants do not require repayment *unless* a project is not completed according to the terms established in the Grant Agreement. Grant payments *will not* be made if façade improvements deviate from those outlined in the Grant Agreement and/or have not been previously approved.

Grants are for use on a single property. Property owners seeking to improve multiple properties must submit an application for each property separately. If awarded a FIG, recipients must have the eligible façade improvements completed within one calendar year (365 days) of the date on the signed Grant Agreement. Properties improved using these grant monies are not eligible for an additional FIG until a 36-month period has elapsed from the date of final check disbursement.

In no event will a grant be awarded solely for repairs or improvements if there are already cited code violations at the property requiring corrective actions. In no event will a grant be awarded to only meet the required improvements associated with the proffers of a Conditional Rezoning, the conditions of a Conditional Use Permit, or the requirements of a Special Exception.

**VII. What do I need to apply for a FIG?**

To be considered for a FIG, applicants must submit all of the following documents to the Newport News Department of Development:

1. Completed application form
2. Valid applicant identification
3. Color photographs of current façade (must show façade/areas to be improved)
4. Written project description of intended façade improvements
5. Renderings, drawings, pictures and/or other material samples to show intended façade improvements
6. At least two (2) bids from Commonwealth of Virginia “Class A” licensed contractors (DPOR number required)\*
7. Evidence of financial ability to meet matching requirements (bank statement, loan commitment letter, etc.)
8. Schedule of completion
9. \$25.00 application fee

\*Please note that the City retains the option to obtain its own cost estimates for any project.

Applications for the FIG program and other business incentives are made available on the Department of Development website at <http://www.nnva.gov/development>. Applications are valid for a one-year term from the date of submission.

**VIII. How do I apply for a FIG and what happens after I turn in my application?**

1. *Before* applying, you should discuss your project with Department of Development staff, and arrange for a preliminary review with the FIG team.
2. After discussing your project, gather your application documentation and materials and submit them with a completed application form to the Department of Development.
3. Once your application has been received, FIG Team reviews your application to ensure the project meets the minimum requirements.
4. When all requirements have been met, after review and recommendation for approval from the FIG Team, your application is presented to the RLF for their recommendation and to the Economic Development Authority for approval. Department of Development staff will normally notify you by mail the decision result within 30 days of receipt of your completed application.
5. If your application is approved, you will coordinate with Department of Development staff to establish the terms of your Grant Agreement. If your application is denied, you have the option to request an appearance before the RLF to discuss, at which time the RLF may uphold or reverse their decision.
6. Once you have agreed to and signed the Grant Agreement, you may begin your façade improvement project. Cost reimbursement commences upon execution of the Grant Agreement. The date on the signed Grant Agreement serves as the project's commencement date. All site work for the project must be completed within 365 days of this date. When your project is complete, you must notify the Department of Development. A FIG team representative will inspect the project to ensure compliance with the Grant Agreement and approved application. You will then receive a letter of completion.
7. Grant payments will not be authorized until you submit color digital images of the new façades, as well as documentation showing all applicable paid invoices, receipts, etc. All payments to contractors for work completed must be documented and verifiable in order to receive grant payments. Documentation for costs paid in cash will be subject to review and approval by Development staff. You should receive payment within 14 days of receipt of your completed documentation.

Applications are received on a rolling basis. FIG applications will be reviewed by the FIG Team and the RLF for recommendation of approval and by EDA board for final approval. Inability to submit complete documentation will result in delayed processing and/or ineligibility for grant funds. Final approval authority rests with the Newport News Economic Development Authority.

**IX. Who can I contact if I have more questions?**

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Questions will be referred to appropriate FIG Team members.