

City of Foley Downtown Facade Improvement Grant Program (Pilot)

Purpose

The Foley Downtown Facade Improvement Grant Program provides incentives to stimulate external, visible investment in Downtown businesses that will boost the vitality of Foley businesses and improve local economic conditions. Property owners and business owners are encouraged to consider improvements that incorporate the surrounding community including but not limited to aesthetics, environment, cultural and historic elements, and architecture. These improvements should create a cohesive, attractive environment with surrounding properties. The program provides a 1:1 matching grant for actual design and construction costs up to \$5,000 per property on a pay-for-performance basis. Qualifying projects will require design approval by the EDA and will be applied for by commercial property owners and/or business tenants (with property owner approval). Approvable projects include exterior building and landscape improvements visible from a public right-of-way.

Eligibility

Property must be within the Downtown Foley Corridor (map attached).

All work must be done on the property/building exterior and result in a publicly visible improvement, as determined by the EDA. Interior work is not eligible.

All work must be done in accordance with City of Foley ordinances and building codes. All required permits must be obtained. Work must include the correction of any known exterior building code violations.

Work already in progress or performed prior to project approval will not be eligible for funding.

Funds may be used for design of exterior building improvements, awnings, windows, doors (including front/back door accessibility) and/or site landscaping resulting in a publicly visible improvement and for actual construction costs related to an approved improvement. Other uses may also be eligible if prior approval is granted by the City of Foley Economic Development Authority. Signs are eligible for funding.

Ineligible properties include Tax delinquent, Special Assessment delinquent, property in litigation, property in condemnation or receivership, exclusively residential buildings, industrial zoned properties, new construction projects on previously undeveloped sites, and properties not in compliance with city, state, or federal regulations

Project Approval Guidelines

City staff will first review all applications for completeness and project feasibility. The City of Foley Economic Development Authority (EDA) is responsible for program oversight and grant approval. Grants will be approved based on the guidelines below:

1. Only fully completed applications will be reviewed.
2. Owners of multiple properties must submit separate applications for each project.
3. Business owners under a lease submitting applications must include written consent of

the property owner.

Preference will be given to projects which:

1. Positively contribute to downtown revitalization efforts.
2. Result that will result in visible improvement that would not otherwise be made.
3. Demonstrate a ratio of private to public investment greater than 1:1
4. Projects must be completed in a timely manner from the date of approval.
 - a. Project must be completed within 18 months.
 - b. Extensions of six months are granted on a case-by-case basis.
 - c. As indicated by the pay- for-performance model, funds will be distributed after the project's completion and reimbursement is requested by applicant.

Grant Disbursement

Awarded funds will be dispersed to the applicant upon submittal of the Downtown Facade Improvement Program Grant Agreement, submittal of receipts and/or invoices for supplies purchased and inspection which certifies the work completed is in accordance with the City of Foley Economic Development Authority approval, and other city ordinances, along with other applicable information that may be requested.

Property Owner Requirements

Upon the approval of submitted application, the Applicant enters a partnership which includes city staff and the City of Foley Economic Development Authority. City Staff will review plans depending on the scope of the project: Those required to review the plans and/or grant application will review design drawings, proposed work specifications, and the architectural materials.

Items required as a part of completing potential projects include:

1. Property owners' attendance at various meetings, reviews, etc. with representatives of either the City or EDA to expedite various stages of the project.
2. The applicant agrees with the city that, pursuant to the terms of the grant agreement, they will continue operations in the City for at least five years after the project is completed.

All work completed shall be the sole responsibility of the property owner. The City of Foley EDA administers the grant program herein and the City/EDA is not responsible for any work undertaken as a result of the grant. The owner hereby holds the City and EDA harmless for any and all liability commencing out of any work constructed and paid for the facade improvement grant herein. Further, this shall not be considered a waiver of liability limitations provided in Minnesota Statute § 466.

Procedural Guidelines:

The EDA is a governmental entity and as such must provide public access to the public data it receives. Data deemed by Applicant to be nonpublic data under State law should be so designated or marked by Applicant. See Minn. Stat. Sections 13.59, Subd. 1, respectively.

1. The applicant shall meet with city staff to obtain information about the grant program, discuss the project, and obtain application forms.
2. The applicant shall complete an application, drawings/renderings if applicable and supporting information and submit it to the city.
3. The applicant must provide evidence of their ability to meet the 50% match.
4. The city staff will review the application to determine if it conforms to all city policies and

ordinances and to consider the following:

- a. The availability of program dollars to fund the request.
- b. Whether the proposed project will result in conformance with building and zoning codes.
- c. Whether it is desirable and in the best interests of the public to provide funding for the project.

The EDA will evaluate the project application in terms of the following:

1. Project Design - Evaluation of project design will include review of proposed activities, timelines, and a capacity to implement the project.
2. Financial Feasibility - Availability of funds, private involvement, financial packaging, and cost effectiveness.
3. Appropriate ratio of private funds to grant funds.
4. Letter of Commitment from applicant pledging to complete the project during proposed project duration if the grant application is approved.
5. A recommendation from the Economic Development Authority will be forwarded to the City Council for approval, denial or request a resubmission.