



Façade & Infrastructure Improvement Program

Grant Application Packet

- **Program description and rules**
- **Design guidelines**
- **Application forms and documents**

**Stephenville Economic Development Authority
322 South Belknap
Stephenville, Texas 76401
(254) 459-4921**

Amendments approved as of February 2024

FAÇADE & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FOR STEPHENVILLE

The purpose of this program is to improve the visual appearance and economic vitality of the Stephenville by encouraging the exterior improvement of commercial/retail/office structures. The goal is to strengthen this area, improve safety, and make it more aesthetically appealing to community residents and visitors to the area. The improvements by existing businesses may act as a catalyst for widespread revitalization throughout the community. The SEDA Board will earmark \$100,000 towards this program per fiscal year.

Listed below is a detailed description of the program, including information on project eligibility, application and approval process, review standards, and necessary applications and other forms.

For additional questions regarding this program, please contact the Stephenville Economic Development Authority office at (254) 459-4921.

Eligibility

In order to be considered for funding, applications must meet all of the following eligibility requirements.

Eligible areas

Only properties within the corporate city limits of Stephenville are eligible. An address within this area may submit only one application in a three-year period.

Eligible applicants

Commercial property and/or business owners located within the eligible project area may apply for funding. Tenants who do not own the property must have a signed lease agreement and must submit a completed Letter of Property Owner Approval with their project application. In a multi - tenant building, each applicant must have a separate point of entry.

Eligible projects

Only existing commercial/retail/office properties are eligible under this program. Mixed-use properties are eligible to apply for and receive grants. Residential structures or new construction cannot be considered for funding.

Eligible improvements

The program is limited to funding only certain improvements to the commercial properties. While property and business owners are encouraged to make significant improvements to their entire property, only certain improvements are eligible for matching funds.

Improvements eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- Complete façade rehabilitation
- Replacement of broken window panes, window frames, broken store front glass, and doors
- Scraping, priming, and painting of window frames, doors, cornice, and store front
- Exterior treatments, such as brick, tile, stucco, stone, wood, or siding
- Removal of slipcovers or other covers to expose original materials
- Cleaning of exterior by appropriate methods, such as power washing or tile cleaning
- Exterior lighting fixtures (attached to structure)
- Canopies or window awnings
- Attached gutters or down spouts
- Restoration of historic or significant architectural features
- Visible roof repair (when in conjunction with other improvements)

Professional fees (design, legal, or engineering services) are not eligible for reimbursement.

The following improvements are not eligible for funding:

- New commercial construction
- Interior remodeling or renovation
- Fencing
- Burglar bars
- Visible roof repair (by itself) or non-visible roof repair
- **Construction that has been performed or placed under contract prior to approval of the project application**

In-kind services cannot be considered as part of the project budget

Funding

Eligible applicants may apply for grants between and up to a certain amount depending on the project. The applicant must match the grant amount dollar-for-dollar. While some projects may exceed \$20,000 in total cost, the maximum grant from the Stephenville Economic Development Authority is **\$10,000**.

Program funds are a portion of the Stephenville Economic Development Authority Type B sales tax funds.

Program Process

To be considered for funding under this program, an eligible applicant must submit a complete application to the Stephenville EDA at 322 S. Belknap, Stephenville, Texas 74601. Applications will be reviewed by the Stephenville Economic Development Authority's Board of Directors for conformance to all guidelines and criteria. Those projects selected for funding must then receive all necessary permits, complete the approved work, and request an inspection to verify conformance with the terms of approval. If the terms are met, the Stephenville Economic Development Authority will make payment for the approved amount. Details on this process are listed below.

Application

Only complete and accurate applications will be accepted. The following documents are required at time of initial application:

- Project application
- Project budget
- Estimates for repairs
At least one local bid/ estimate must be provided
- Photos of the Project
- Commitment to maintenance
- Letter of property owner approval (if applicant is not the property owner)

Project review

The Board of Directors, along with the staff (ED Director, ED Specialist, Fire Marshal & Code Enforcement Officer) will review all complete applications for conformance with the stated review criteria and select projects for funding. Staff may contact and/or meet with the applicant to request additional information, alterations to the project, or discuss other details related to the proposal.

Approval

Applicants whose projects are selected for funding by the Board will be notified in writing of their project approval. Before any construction can be started, the applicant must execute the grant agreements and receive all necessary permits. Grant process can take up to 90 days.

Implementation

After a project is approved, applicants will take part in a pre-construction meeting with Staff in order to coordinate the permitting procedure, complete the required grant acceptance documentation, and answer any questions the applicant or applicant's contractor may have about the process. Applicants are required to conform to all zoning regulations and building codes and must apply for and receive all necessary building, sign, and site permits.

All approved construction must commence no later than 60 days after obtaining the necessary permit or project approval (if no permits required). Work must be completed within 90 days of that date. Applicants requesting an extension must do so in writing to SEDA staff prior to the expiration of the 90-day completion period, for the consideration of said request.

When all approved improvements are completed, the applicant must submit the Notice of Project Completion form to the Board. This letter serves as a request for inspection and a request for payment. With this letter, the applicant must submit all invoices, receipts, and/or canceled checks related to the improvements. Invoices, receipts, and/or canceled checks received after the letter is submitted will not be considered for payment.

Inspection

When the Board receives the Notice of Project Completion, Staff and will make an inspection to determine if improvements were made in conformance with approved application. Inspections of permitted activity will occur throughout the project depending on the policies and procedures of the department issuing the permit. The City of Stephenville reserves the right to make periodic inspections during construction and after completion to ensure that the terms of approval are met.

Payment

If the terms of approval are fully met, payment of approved costs and fees can commence.

Review Standards

Project review committee

The Stephenville Type B Economic Development Authority Board of Directors is charged with the review of all applications. The Board will work with Staff and the applicant to evaluate each proposal for conformance with the review criteria.

Review criteria

The Board of Directors based on the following criteria will evaluate project applications.

- *Completion and accuracy of application.* The applicant must submit all required documentation related to the application.
- *Visual impact.* The improvements should make a significant, positive visual impact to the property itself and the corridor complement the existing structure and must be compatible to the surrounding properties and corridor as a whole. The alterations to the structure must conform to the program design guidelines.
- *Economic impact.* Improvements should increase the property's appeal and suitability for attracting quality businesses and customers. Projects should enhance the appearance of the property and serve as a catalyst for additional investments in the property and throughout the corridor.
- *Non-funded improvements.* Projects that are part of an overall improvement plan are encouraged. Although interior renovation and certain other site improvements are not eligible for funding, these improvements can contribute to the overall revitalization of a commercial property. Should the applicant have improvement plans beyond those eligible for funding under the program, the Board may look favorably on such projects.
- *Conformance with applicable regulations.* The project must conform to all applicable city, state, and Federal regulations and permitting procedures. Projects that appear to perpetuate existing maintenance code violations will be judged less favorably.
- *Reasonableness of costs.* The costs associated with the project are reviewed for reasonableness and accuracy.
- *Matching funds and timeline.* The applicant will provide a description of matching funds and evidence that the improvements can be completed in a timely manner.
- *Commitment to maintenance.* The applicant must provide a commitment to maintaining the proposed improvements a minimum of one (1) year.
- *Use of local vendors.* The use of local vendors for façade and infrastructure improvements are encouraged when available.

Maintenance of Improvements

Recipients of grant money are required to maintain the funded improvements for a period of no less than one (1) year from date of completion. The improvements are to be kept in good repair and in compliance with all applicable codes. The City of Stephenville will make inspections throughout the compliance period to monitor compliance with the terms of the grant approval.

Additional Program Rules and Information

Compliance with City, State, and Federal requirements

All projects that require permits are required to receive necessary permits and conform to all applicable city, state, and Federal requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, conformance with applicable zoning regulations and building codes. The applicant must also apply for and receive any necessary building, electrical, sign, or other city permits.

General conditions

The Stephenville Economic Development Authority (SEDA) is not responsible for cost overruns. All cost overruns are the responsibility of the applicant. Should the costs paid on the project be less than the originally approved grant amount, only that qualifying amount paid out on the project will be reimbursed.

Any changes from the approved design or costs must be submitted in writing to the SEDA Board of Directors. The Board must review and approve the requested changes prior to construction.

All construction management is the responsibility of the applicant. SEDA is not responsible for the work completed, damage done, or any other action by any contractor on construction projects partially funded by this program.

The SEDA reserves the right to make changes and modifications to this program as warranted with no notice required.

