



## **FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Fernandina Beach's Façade Improvement Program was designed as an effort to improve and enhance the overall look and experience of the Main Street district.

The program is intended to assist commercial property or business owners within the Fernandina Beach Main Street district in beautifying and rehabilitating property fronts for the purposes of attracting both customers and prospective business owners and serving as a tool for maintaining the vitality of the district.

Property or business owners who choose to participate in this program are eligible to receive a matching grant up to 50% of the project cost, not to exceed **\$10,000.00**, for eligible projects and revitalization efforts. Business tenants are also eligible with property owner permission. Improvements become property of the building owner.

The program is managed by Fernandina Beach Main Street with insight and guidance provided by the City of Fernandina Beach and the Fernandina Beach Historic District Council (HDC), if applicable. The mission of the HDC is to preserve and protect the architectural heritage of the City of Fernandina Beach as set forth in the City's Charter and Land Development Code.

### **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

Property owners who own commercial properties within the boundaries of the Main Street District are eligible to apply for the program. Business owners who occupy a property within the Main Street District are eligible to apply with permission of the property owner. [Click here](#) for a map of the Main Street District.

### **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

All projects accepted for the program must reflect "true to age" improvements.

All improvements must be consistent with Design Review Standards established by the HDC, if a property is located within the Historic District, as well as the Codified Ordinances of the City of Fernandina Beach. Only exterior, street-facing improvements are eligible to receive financial assistance.

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

- Awnings appropriate for the façade improvement and architecture;
- Exterior painting consistent with other downtown buildings and accepted as recognized historical coloring;
- Non-illuminating signs that are compatible with other buildings on the block and that conform to Historic District Guidelines and the Codified Ordinances of the City of Fernandina Beach;
- Exterior masonry repair;
- Repair to exterior facades that face the street or corners in which one side faces the street;
- Sign removal, replacement, or repair that follows Historic District Guidelines and the Codified Ordinances of the City of Fernandina Beach;
- Repair or replacement to cornices, windows, decorative detail, doors, or awnings;
- Exterior lighting on the street-facing side of the building;
- Addition or modification to entryways that allow for greater access for people with disabilities;
- Reconstruction of features that were part of the original structure and can be documented;
- Removal of historically inappropriate elements or features.

### **INELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

New construction projects, government properties, and national franchise properties are not eligible to participate in the Façade Improvement Program.



## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

To be considered for a Façade Improvement Program matching grant, the applicant shall complete the following tasks:

1. Review the COFB Design Review Standards, including eligible and ineligible projects.
2. Complete and submit the COFB Certificate of Appropriateness Application and Façade Improvement Program Application. Application and supporting documentation should be submitted as a single PDF file to [info@fernandinamainstreet.com](mailto:info@fernandinamainstreet.com).
3. Submit before and after sketches, photographs, or other illustrations and a written, detailed description of the project to be considered for the matching grant.

If the application and request is approved, the following will be required:

4. Apply for and obtain all necessary COFB permits prior to starting project.
5. Submit receipts/invoices to Fernandina Beach Main Street once the project is complete.

Grant Application Timeline: Spring applications accepted starting February 1 through March 31 with announcement of award in May. Fall applications accepted starting September 1 through November 30 with announcement of award in January.

## **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Proposals, estimates, sketches/photographs, and project descriptions will be reviewed by Fernandina Beach Main Street and a determination will be made as to acceptance into the program. In addition to previously listed requirements, all properties must be paid to date on all municipal taxes.

## **APPROVAL PROCEDURES**

Upon receipt of application and required materials for consideration, each application will be reviewed and the property will be deemed eligible or ineligible for grant funding by Fernandina Beach Main Street, based on compliance of the project with the Fernandina Beach Historic District Guidelines, the Codified Ordinances of the City of Fernandina Beach, and character of the project as compared with existing properties in the surrounding area. Preference will be given to projects making the greatest positive impact on the Main Street district aesthetics.

Members of the Façade Grant Review Committee are expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity and impartiality in the performance of their duties. To ensure transparency and prevent any potential conflicts of interest, all committee members are required to disclose any personal, financial, or professional relationships that may influence their decision-making process regarding grant applications. Committee members with disclosed conflicts of interest may be recused from participating in the evaluation and decision-making process for specific grant applications.

If approved for grant funding, Fernandina Beach Main Street will contact the applicant, a Grant Approval Agreement will be signed by the property owner, and the applicant may begin his/her matching portion of the project. Fernandina Beach Main Street may also provide recommendations for modifications that could be made for the project to receive consideration for approval at a later date.

## **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

All property owners who apply for the Façade Improvement Program will be fully responsible for managing construction of projects, including, but not limited to, obtaining bids, selecting contractors, obtaining approvals, permits, and insurance, overseeing construction work, and paying all invoices for work, materials, and supplies.



Fernandina Beach Main Street encourages employment and business opportunities for local residents and businesses. Participants shall seek to solicit bids and proposals, materials, and labor from qualified local residents and businesses whenever possible.

Property owners may not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, origin, sexual orientation, marital status, creed, age, or disability in the solicitation of contractors, subcontractors, workers, and suppliers.

Fernandina Beach Main Street makes no guarantees on quality and soundness of construction or other repairs, additions, or removals. Any contractor or subcontractor working on the project must be licensed and insured. In addition, any contractor or subcontractor must have a valid business license issued by the City of Fernandina Beach. The property owner or tenant is responsible for ensuring that all contractors and subcontractors meet these requirements.

#### **PAYMENT OF MATCHING FUNDS**

Construction may begin only after the application has been approved by Fernandina Beach Main Street, an agreement has been signed, all required permits have been obtained, and formal approval to begin the project has been given to the applicant in writing. ***Any work completed prior to formal written approval will not be eligible for funding.***

#### **FACADE IMPROVEMENT**

Grant funds will be issued after the applicant's portion of the project has been completed and Fernandina Beach Main Street has received receipts detailing the completed work. Upon completion, Fernandina Beach Main Street must be contacted for a site inspection. If the project meets all standards, Fernandina Beach Main Street shall provide funding for no more than 50% of the total cost of the project, not to exceed \$10,000.00.

Upon completion of the project, the applicant will provide an accounting of all project costs and a copy of all paid invoices. Projects must be completed within twelve (12) months after formal approval has been granted.

Questions about the program may be directed to Fernandina Beach Main Street at (904)624-7147 or [info@fernandinastreet.com](mailto:info@fernandinastreet.com).