

CITY WIDE FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

A business development grant program to promote the development and expansion of business enterprises within the City of Willis, Texas by increasing the aesthetic and architectural value of the city's façades. Based on a business's visibility from sections of FM 1097 and SH 75 an eligible business can receive a reimbursement of 25% to 50% of costs not including necessary government approvals, building permits, and taxes.



WILLIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

200 Bell St, Willis, TX 77378

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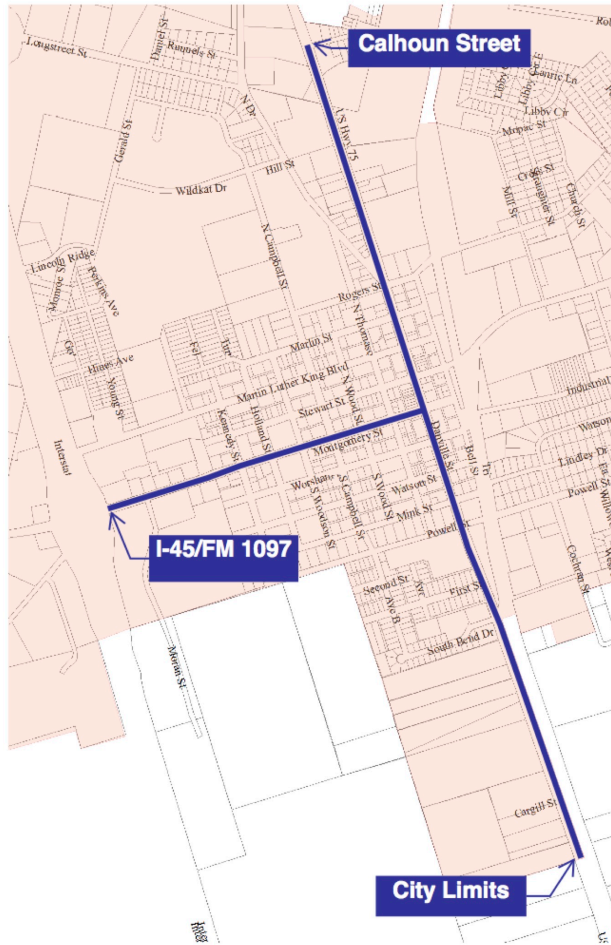
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Façade Grant Program: PURPOSE AND MAP

The purpose of this program is to promote the development and expansion of new and existing business enterprises within the City of Willis, Texas (the “City”), and enhance the economic welfare of the citizens of the City, by securing and retaining business enterprises and maintaining a higher level of employment, economic activity, and stability.

The mechanism that will secure and retain business enterprises expressly benefited in this program is the aesthetic and architectural value of the businesses, façade especially, within the City and prescribed in the area on the map. By improving these aspects of local businesses the resulting increase in economic activity benefits members of the community.



A business is eligible for a 50% match reimbursement if the side being worked on is visible from the highlighted sections of FM 1097 and SH 75. All other businesses are eligible for a 25% match reimbursement. All reimbursement amounts are subject to approval by the Façade Grant Committee.



The **Façade Grant Committee** shall be made up of the following individuals appointed by the City Manager and the City of Willis Economic Development Corporation:

Economic Development Director

EDC Appointee #1

EDC Appointee #2

EDC Appointee #3

The **City Manager** will also serve on the Façade Grant Committee in an advisory capacity.



Eligibility Requirements

Please check each box to indicate acceptance of the eligibility requirement. Work that does not comply with the eligibility requirements is subject to reduction or retraction of award.

- Façade Grant funds cannot be used to correct outstanding code violations for property damaged by collision, acts of nature or occurrences covered by insurance.**
- All work must be done on a street-facing side of an existing building and be visible from a public right-of-way.
- All work must be done on the exterior of the building and result in a publicly visible improvement. Work on the rear or roof of the building is not eligible for a façade grant.
- Only work begun *after* approval by the Façade Grant Committee will be eligible for a grant.
- All work must comply with the city-wide Façade Grant Program’s design guidelines.
- Project cost must exceed \$2,000 to be considered for a façade grant.
- Routine Maintenance such as painting, masonry, fencing and lighting has to be part of a larger renovation project.
- New construction projects are eligible to apply for the following items: Fencing, signage, awnings and landscaping.
- All projects must comply with applicable city codes, rules, and regulations and permits must be obtained independently.

Properties that are not Eligible

The following types of property are not eligible for the City-Wide Façade Grant Program:

- Tax delinquent property**
- Property whose owner has any other tax delinquent property**
- Property in Litigation**
- Property in condemnation or receivership**
- Property owned by religious groups**
- Properties on which taxes are being paid, but have nonprofit use, such as schools, charities, clubs, organizations, etc.**
- Exclusively residential buildings**
- Properties purchased from the city are viewed on a case by case basis**
- Daycare centers**
- National franchises or retail chain stores**
- Funeral Homes**

The façade committee reserves the right to make an exception to the eligibility rules.



Award Reimbursement

Reimbursement shall be limited to no more than 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements, not to exceed \$5000 per storefront. Larger buildings with more than one storefront and/or more than one side visible (on a corner) may be considered for a larger grant on a case-by-case basis by the Façade Grant Committee.

All necessary government approvals, building permits and taxes are not eligible items for reimbursement.

The Façade Grant Committee reserves the right to refuse reimbursements in whole or in part for work that:

- **Do not conform to the proposals submitted with your application and authorized by the Façade Grant Committee.**
- Does not conform to the program design standards.
- Are not commensurate with the workmanship and cost customary to the industry.
- Are not completed within 9 months. Since the Façade Grant Committee cannot reserve funds indefinitely, your grant may be subject to cancellation if not completed or significant progress hasn't been made by the completion date. **Request for extensions will be considered only if made in writing and if progress towards completion has been demonstrated.**

Staff will inspect work to ensure that it complies with the approved plans. **Any changes to the approved plan will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the Façade Grant Committee in order to retain the façade grant.**

Required Materials for Reimbursement

Reimbursement can be expected in approximately three (3) to six (6) weeks after all of the following documentation has been submitted and the Façade Grant Committee has had the opportunity to inspect the property and ensure that the work has been done according to the agreement.

- Copies of all paid invoices, canceled checks (bank statements) and lien waiver for all of the façade work covered by grant. These must equal at least the required matching amount. All project expenditures must be paid by check, money order or credit card. The invoices must be marked paid, signed, and dated by the contractors. Cash payments are not accepted. **Lien waivers cannot be substituted for canceled checks or bank statements.**
- Color photographs of completed project.



The City of Willis Façade design guidelines outline the standards that must be followed when renovating a building using a façade grant. These design guidelines take into consideration a building's historic significance in determining appropriate treatment.

General Guidelines

- I. **Façade** – The façade is the entire exposed exterior surface of a building that fronts a public street and contains the building's principle entrance. Any elevation not containing the main entrance but fronting a public street exposed to public view will be considered a secondary elevation. Secondary elevations may also be eligible for façade grants.
- II. **Storefronts** – It is the intent of these guidelines that most buildings should have storefront-type materials other than metal facing the street. When alterations are made to the metal exterior on buildings the façade grant program will typically require that storefronts cover metal exteriors with stone or masonry material *that could accommodate retail uses in the future*.
- III. **Masonry** – Previously painted masonry may be painted. Repair or replace deteriorated masonry with new masonry that duplicates the old material as closely as possible.

Design Guidelines for Signage

- I. Signboards – new signs and or renovation of existing signs
- II. Awning signs – awning signs have lettering on the edge flap or skirting of the awning that remains visible when the awning is either retracted or open. If storefront awnings are to be used, they should be of traditional tent style.
- III. Hanging signs – Hanging signs are signs that project from a building wall and are supported by metal brackets. These signs can come in and shapes and sizes and are sometimes made in the likeness of objects or symbols associated with an actual type of business. These signs should project no more than four feet from the face of the building and should not obscure the signage of nearby businesses.
- IV. Display Window Lettering – Display window lettering is painted on or etched into the interior side of display windows. These should consist of lettering and /or a logo, should not cover more than one fifth of the total area of the glass panel, and should not obscure the display area.
- V. Yard and Sidewalk Signs – When appropriate, permanent and portable sidewalk signs displayed during business hours can be used. However, sign posts in yards should not be more than 8 feet in height.

Design Guidelines for Property Improvement

- I. Property Improvement – Items such as, but not limited to landscaping, parking lot, resurfacing, striping, driveway improvement and lighting.
- II. Exterior Lighting – spot or flood to highlight the architectural detailing of a building should be inconspicuous and blend with the wall on which it is mounted. No lights should move, flash, or make noise.
- III. Landscaping and Fencing- In some projects landscaping and fencing will be considered. Simply installing fencing around a parking lot or portion of parking lot will generally not qualify for a façade grant. If fencing is part of a larger renovation project, it will be considered only if fence has extraordinary architectural character such as wrought iron fence with masonry piers. Common fences such as stockade, bound on board, picket and chain link would not be eligible for a façade grant. Planters or retaining walls should be built of materials of adjacent buildings. Generally, brick or other suitable masonry units would be considered while certain types of interlocking concrete block, landscaping timbers would not be eligible.



Application Review

Staff will determine if the application package that is submitted is sufficiently complete to review and will draft a recommendation to the Façade Grant Committee.

The Façade Grant Committee meets once a month or as needed. Application packages will be reviewed within one month of receipt.

The Application package will be reviewed by the Façade Grant Committee to determine whether the project should receive a grant and determine the amount of the award. In making the determination, the committee will consider the following factors and may give priority to projects that meet the following criteria:

1. **Will the project positively contribute to the city’s assisted redevelopment effort?**
2. **Will the project ameliorate a blighting influence?**
3. **Will the project substantially leverage more investments than the required matching amount of the grant?**
4. **Will the grant result in an improvement that would not be made otherwise?**
5. **Does the project comply with the City Wide Façade Grant Program’s Design Guidelines?**

Required Materials for Application

Application packages must include enough documentation to illustrate the visual impact of the project and its costs. Failure to provide required information will delay the review process. The items submitted should include:

- A completed application form**
- Written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct façade improvements.**
- Color photographs of existing conditions**
- Samples of materials and colors to be used**
- Any other documentation necessary to illustrate the visual impact of the proposed project completion schedule.
- Two competitive proposals from licensed and bonded contractors.** These proposals should give detailed information about the work to be done, the costs, and the project completion schedule. Any contractor that has submitted a competitive detailed estimate may be used.

CONTRACTOR NOTES:

- **Contractors cannot be changed unless new proposals have been submitted and approved by the Façade Grant Committee.**
- Owners or merchants who are in contracting business and intend to work on their own properties or businesses must furnish at least one proposal other than their own to be done.
- Owners and merchants may also perform work on their own buildings; however, they will not be reimbursed for time while acting as contractor and/or installing material.

City Wide Façade Grant Program



APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:
Phone:
Referred by:
DUNS Number: (http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Application Date:	
Approval Date:	Amount:
Tax ID number:	

Property Owner Information

Name:	Years Owned:
Address:	Phone:
City: State:	Zip:
Type of Ownership:	Owner's Signature-Improvements Approved:

BUSINESS AND/OR PROJECT INFORMATION

Name of Business:	Business/Project Owner's Name:
Address:	Phone:
City: State:	Zip:
Type of Business:	Upper floor use:

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Storefront Improvements:	
Upper Façade Improvements:	
Other Improvements:	Estimated Cost of Improvements:

PROJECT SCOPE (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Building Façade Improvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Elements
<input type="checkbox"/> Signage
<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting
<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Check Appropriately:

I own the property in consideration. I lease the property in consideration.

I have read the City Wide Façade Grant Program and Design Guidelines. I understand that if the proposal is approved, I will make the above improvements to the property within the specified time allowed.

Applicant's Signature:



Date:

BID/ESTIMATE SUMMARY SHEET

Note: Please attach all bids/estimates to this application. This form is a summary sheet only and may not serve as a substitute for actual preliminary cost estimate documentation. The bids should be itemized for each portion of the improvement project (signage, exterior painting, window repair, etc.).

Address of property to be improved:

Itemized Description of Work:

Bid #1 Submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Bid #2 submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Itemized Description of Work:

Bid #1 Submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Bid #2 submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Itemized Description of Work:

Bid #1 Submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Bid #2 submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Itemized Description of Work:

Bid #1 Submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Bid #2 submitted by:	Amount: \$
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Please CIRCLE which bid you prefer for each description of work listed above.

Note: Proof of payment (invoices and receipts) and at least one “after” picture are required for reimbursement after project completion.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT
OF GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA
FOR
CITY WIDE FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM
BY
THE WILLIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Applicant: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____

Building Information

Current Building Use
Proposed Building Use
Project Architect or Contractors
Name of Contractor
Phone Number
E-mail

Property Owner/Landlord: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____

****The acknowledgement page must be signed and returned to the Executive Director of the Economic Development Corporation. Please retain the guidelines and criteria for your records. ****