



2022 Knox County Facade Improvement Grant Program (FIG)

Program Overview

The Knox County Commissioners and City of Mount Vernon have created a first-ever program in Knox County. The Facade Improvement Grant (FIG) program encourages Knox County residents and visitors to spend more time outside in commercial areas among its variety of business establishments. The program will also directly stimulate business development by encouraging building improvements around Knox County to encourage small business and downtown growth by investing in the permanent improvement of fixed assets in Knox County's commercial areas. Improvements that are consistent with historic preservation standards, design guides, and existing plans adopted by the municipality will be given priority.

Who Can Apply?

Buildings in Knox County zoned for commercial, office/ institutional or industrial uses, including for-profit and nonprofit entities are eligible. Applicants must be property owners or tenants. Tenants must have written approval from the property owner to participate in the program. Applicants must be current on all taxes, utility bills, maintenance and building codes.

Funding

Grants are available to cover up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, not to exceed \$20,000. Grantees will be reimbursed at the conclusion of the project, after certification of project costs and verification of compliance with local approval processes.

How to Apply?

Application window opens April 11, 2022 and closes December 31, 2023

Completed applications will be considered on a first-come first-served basis until allocated funds have been exhausted, or until the program closure date. Applications must be complete before they will be considered.

Project Administration

The program will be administered by the Area Development Foundation, through the Knox County Revolving Loan Fund, utilizing funds from the Knox County Commissioners and City of Mount Vernon ARPA allocations.

Improvements must be completed within 12 months of award date. Project extensions can be granted if extenuating circumstances apply. Written requests for extension should be submitted to the email address below.

Eligible Improvements

- Uncovering and restoration of historical facades.
- Replacement or repair of cornice, parapets, shutters and other architectural features.
- Removal of historically inappropriate façade materials.
- Addition of appropriate detailing which leads to a substantially enhanced appearance.
- Window repair or replacement
- Door repair or replacement
- Tuck pointing
- Exterior painting
- Awning installation or replacement
- Installation and improvement of business signs
- Installation of decorative lighting and upgrading of existing fixtures on external facades
- Installation, expansion or rehabilitation of outdoor patios designed for public usage (not visible from the street)
- Storefront restoration or renovation
- Projects that increase accessibility
- Projects that are visible from a public street
- Projects that comply with local zoning, building, signage and property maintenance codes, including permitting.
- Projects completed within 12 months of approval

Ineligible Improvements

- New construction (except patios, decks and outdoor customer-centered areas)
- Outdoor storage facilities
- Roofing
- Projects not visible from a public street
- Fees - study, design, legal, etc.
- Improvements that begin before final approval is granted
- Improvements that begin prior to all necessary permit approvals
- Projects for properties zoned residential
- Projects for buildings that will be sold within 2 years of award date
- Improvements not intended to be permanent

Application Scoring Bonus Points

- Project complies with standards described in the Mount Vernon Downtown Plan, Village Strategic Plans or Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Property is located in a downtown area or a high traffic concentration area
- Project is a blighted or vacant property, where the project is likely to result in occupancy.