



Small Business Facade Improvement Program Guidelines 2024

The Small Business Facade Improvement Program provides grants to small business owners who intend to improve the street-facing exteriors of their structures. The goal of the facade program is to encourage small business owners to enhance the front-facing exterior of their storefronts to attract new customers and beautify the area, thereby encouraging economic growth and revitalization.

Norwescap invites interested small business owners in the NJ NRTC (Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit) redevelopment area (Main Street corridor) to apply for Storefront Facade Improvement grants. Funding available totals \$15,000. The maximum amount to be awarded to any individual business applicant is \$2,500. The application process is open as of May 1, 2024. Funding will be allocated until exhausted, through December 31, 2025. Applicants are encouraged to apply for the Facade Improvement Program grant as soon as possible.

Eligible Applicants	Any small business owner in the NJ NRTC redevelopment area (Main Street corridor) is eligible to apply. All applications from building tenants require the signature and approval of the building owner. Exterior improvements must be initiated within 30 days of Notice of Award (NOA). Approved improvement projects must be completed within 90 days of initiation. A one-time 30-day extension may be requested by awardee but is not guaranteed.
Eligible Boundary	Main Street, running North from the intersection of Warren to Union Square, and from the west along the New Jersey state line to the eastern boundary denoted by rail line from Union Square to Walters Park. Businesses located outside this set of boundaries or at addresses other than on Main Street are ineligible due to NRTC grant guidelines.
Eligible Improvements	<p>Eligible improvements (costs to be reimbursed by grant) must be improvements to the front street-facing exterior (facade) of small business retail or mixed-use properties.</p> <p><u>Improvements encompass projects related to painting, attached signage, building entrances, doors, lighting, windows, awnings, surface-level damage, artwork, brick, stone, tuck-pointing, or other building surfaces material. This includes addressing reasonable concerns of the business owner such as items related to accessibility issues. Other common but unlisted features of revitalizing the outward appearance of a street-facing storefront exterior and proposed by the business owner will be considered on an individual basis.</u></p> <p>Permitting fees for this work, when required, are also eligible.</p>
Ineligible Improvements	Ineligible improvements include any items not explicitly related to facade improvements, such as interior store repairs or enhancements, exterior work on the sides or rear of the building, roof repairs, parking lots, paving, sidewalks, benches, raised planters and planting areas, street trees, detached signage, fencing and railings, or any other item not listed here that is deemed to be unrelated to facade improvements.

Proposals Will Include:

1. Business Information and Applicant Signature
2. A business plan or profile and/or letter of incorporation.
3. A description of the proposed project to be funded:
 - a. A general category of the project.
 - b. A detailed description of the project. Be as specific as possible.
 - c. A proposed budget and timeline for the project. Be as specific as possible.
 - i. The maximum award Norwescap will provide is \$2,500.
 - ii. Applicants may choose to provide a budget estimate of any amount over \$2,500, however, details of how the applicant intends to finance the additional amount, or complete the project without additional funding, must be included.
 - iii. Cost estimates and quotes secured for supplies and/or labor.
4. Please note our procurement policy, which requires certain types of quotes for expenses at varying costs:
 - a. Items costing \$499 or less do not require a quote, only receipts.
 - b. Items costing from \$500 - \$999 shall be supported by three verbal quotations.
 - c. Items costing from \$1,000 - \$28,999 shall be supported by three written quotations.

Grant Program Timeline:

1. Applications may be submitted as soon as May 1, 2025.
 - a. Applications must be submitted electronically to communitydev@norwescap.org
2. After receipt, the committee will review applications and make award decisions over a period of 2-4 weeks.
3. After the review period, applicants will be notified if their project was awarded, grant amount, and grant deadline. If the application is declined, the applicant will also be notified.
 - a. Please note, with limited funding not all applicants will be awarded.
4. Grant recipients will be required to sign an award letter and grant agreement which will include relevant details, deadline, and expectations.
5. Grant recipients are expected to initiate the project within 30 days of NOA and to complete the project within 90 days of initiation.
 - a. A one-time 30-day extension may be requested.
 - b. Initiation date must be communicated with Norwescap.
 - c. Awardees will update Norwescap monthly on project progress.
6. After the project is completed, the grant recipient will provide copies of receipts, invoices, proof of payment (copy of checks or bank statements), as well as before and after photographs of completed work.

Project Evaluation Criteria:

1. Feasibility (is the project manageable?)
2. Simplicity (is the project unlikely to face unexpected issues?)
3. Timeline (can this project be completed within the proposed timeframe?)
4. Neighborhood Benefit (how will the project improve the "look and feel" of Main Street?)
5. Economic Benefit (how will the project attract new visitors and customers to the community?)

Grant Award Note: The Small Business Facade Improvement Program will reimburse up to \$2,500 of the total project costs. \$15,000 total is available. Funds will be allocated until exhausted, starting May 1, 2026.

The committee looks forward to reviewing your proposal. All eligible applicants will be offered the opportunity for technical assistance with their application. For more information or questions, you may reach out to Community Development Project Manager, by emailing communitydev@norwescap.org or calling 908.454.7000.