



CORNWALL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM III

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE - The creation and maintenance of attractive building facades by town businesses is important to the economic health of the Town of Cornwall. First impressions are important. The condition, image and appearance of business buildings play a large part in the impression which businesses, residents, and visitors have of the town.

The intent of the Cornwall Facade Improvement Program (CFIP) is to strengthen the economic viability of the town's businesses through a comprehensive façade improvement program. By providing a financial incentive for improving the exterior appearance of business buildings, we hope to stimulate reinvestment in those buildings and facilitate local economic development.

FINANCING DESCRIPTION - The CFIP will provide incentive financing to stimulate façade improvements and reinvestment to commercially owned real estate and eligible non-profit organizations in town.

A \$120,000 grant from the Small Town Economic Assistance Program has been awarded to the town to facilitate program implementation. Of this amount, 25% is reserved as an incentive for new business start-ups in Cornwall and the remaining 75% is available on a first-come first serve basis.

The CFIP will rebate 50% of the cost of approved exterior building façade and site improvements for the first \$10,000 of improvement. The rebates apply to the expense of materials and wages for a renovation project and do not pertain to the cost of borrowing.

A CFIP rebate will be paid to the applicant after the project is approved by the Cornwall FIP Committee, construction is successfully completed, and verification has been provided that the contractor has been paid.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES - The focus of the CFIP is to improve and enhance the exterior visual appearance of existing commercial buildings, including barns actively used for farming. Funding priority will be given to commercial buildings that are historically and/or architecturally significant.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS - Owners or tenants of existing commercial structures or barns actively used for agricultural production, located within Cornwall, are eligible to apply for funding under the Façade Improvement Program.

Private, non-profit organizations (such as arts/cultural organizations or historical societies) which own or use property within Cornwall are also eligible if the facility is open to the public and building use is consistent with local revitalization goals.

If a business tenant is an applicant, the property owner must provide written authorization for the proposed renovation project.

Properties that are exclusively residential in nature (apartment buildings), home-based businesses that are not assessed for commercial use, religious institutions, and municipal buildings are not eligible.

Mixed-use buildings with commercial space on the ground floor and residential space above are eligible applicants.

ELIGIBLE EXTERIOR/FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS - Eligible expenses include materials and wages for improvements to the front, rear and side facades of buildings that are visible from a public street or parking area. The buildings proposed for façade improvements must be owned or used by eligible applicants. Eligible work includes repair, renovation, reconstruction and restoration as follows:

- Carpentry
- Storefront construction
- Awnings
- Painting
- Signs (when done in conjunction with other façade improvements)
- Masonry cleaning and repair
- Window repair/replacement
- Doors/entryways
- Lighting
- ADA improvements in conjunction with façade work
- Roof repair/replacement (when done in conjunction with façade improvements and when the roof is a distinctive element of the façade and is visible from the street)
- Other work as deemed appropriate by local FIP committee.

ELIGIBLE SITE IMPROVEMENTS - Site improvements are allowed when done in conjunction with exterior façade improvements. Eligible site improvement work includes:

- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Pedestrian amenities
- ADA improvements
- Sidewalk construction/replacement
- Parking lot improvements

- Other work as deemed appropriate by the local FIP committee

ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL AND SERVICE FEES - Fees for architecture, design, engineering services, and construction management.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES - Ineligible expenses are those not specifically stated under eligible expenses such as, but not limited to, the following items:

- Rehabilitation expenses incurred prior to application submittal, review and approval;
- Property acquisition/mortgages
- Mortgage refinancing
- Cost of borrowing (loan interest & fees)
- Site plan, building permit or sign permit fees
- Construction of new buildings or additions to existing structures
- Wages paid to the applicant, employees of the applicant, or members of applicant's family for construction work
- Interior renovation expenses
- Any portion of expenses for which the applicant pays a contractor in merchandise or service in lieu of cash.

APPLICATION, APPROVAL AND PAYMENT PROCESS

1. Interested business/property owners contact the First Selectman for program information, application forms and design guidelines. The First Selectman meets with prospective applicants (if necessary) to provide information, explain process, review recommended design guidelines, and advise the applicant that there may be other local or state approvals/permits required (building permits, zoning permits, etc.). It is the applicant's responsibility to secure any and all needed permits.
2. Business prepares and submits application to First Selectman with all necessary documentation including a color photograph of the existing façade; the renovation design plan; paint colors (if applicable), awning and material samples (if applicable); status report on securing any required local permits; documentation (e.g. certified mail receipts, facsimile transmission reports, bid submissions) that a minimum of two written cost estimates for each component of the project was requested by the applicant; and the applicant's preferred vendor(s) for the project. No construction work is to occur prior to project approval by the Local FIP Committee.
3. The Cornwall FIP Committee meets to review applications on a first come-first serve basis. The Committee may invite an applicant to the meeting to discuss their renovation plans and answer questions. If an application is complete and the project is eligible for a rebate, the CFIP Committee shall consider approving the application as long as grant funds are available.
4. Once the Local FIP Committee makes a final decision on an application, it issues a letter to the applicant stating the committee's decision and funding commitment - approved, approved with minor conditions, denied as presented but with guidance for modifications, etc.

5. If approved by the Local FIP Committee, the applicant moves on to the next step. If denied, the business works with Local FIP Committee to modify the project and resubmit revised plans and cost estimates as appropriate.
6. The business and First Selectman may hold a pre-construction meeting to finalize project details, if necessary. The First Selectman, who may refer a decision to the entire Local FIP Committee, must authorize any modifications to the originally approved renovation plans in writing. Project modifications must be within the limits of the Local FIP Committee's original funding commitment.
7. The renovation project commences. The Cornwall Building Official and First Selectman monitor construction for on-going compliance with the approved renovation plans.
8. When project is completed, the applicant provides the First Selectman with complete documentation that the approved renovation expenses are paid. Documentation will include either a cancelled check or invoice marked "paid in full" and the contractor or sub-contractor's certification of project payment.
9. The First Selectman and Building Official conduct an inspection of the project. The First Selectman prepares a project report that summarizes the actual project expenses and recalculates the rebate amount accordingly. The Local FIP Committee reviews the project accounting and recommends a final rebate amount to the applicant.
10. The First Selectman's office issues a rebate check to the applicant from the CFIP account.

DESIGN GUIDELINES - Projects approved for the Façade Improvement Program shall comply with the town's rehabilitation/design guidelines from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and all applicable municipal ordinances.

PROGRAM TIMETABLE – The CFIP Committee expects to have the application forms available at the First Selectman's office by February 1, 2017. Applications will be reviewed on a first come-first serve basis and rebates will be awarded as long as funds remain available. Priority will be given to those businesses who did not receive funding in the previous Cornwall Façade Improvement Program. Applicants will have a six month period of time to complete their renovation projects from the date that FIP funding is awarded.

FOR MORE INFORMATION – Contact the Cornwall First Selectman's office located at 24 Pine Street, P.O. Box 97, Town Hall, Cornwall, CT. Phone: 860-672-4959; Fax: 860-672-4068; email: cwlselectmen@optonline.net.

Thank you for your interest!