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ura.org

Avenues of Hope Storefront Façade Grant Program

Statement of Purpose

The Avenues of Hope (AOH) Storefront Façade Grant Program (SFG) addresses AOH business districts' design issues by providing funds to commercial building and business owners to improve their building façades. Improved façades make a neighborhood shopping district more attractive and inviting to potential shoppers.

Program Funding

The AOH SFG may be funded in part through the City of Pittsburgh, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA).

Eligibility

The following criteria will be used to determine whether an applicant is eligible for a AOH SFG grant:

- 1) Area Eligibility: AOH SFG projects must be located within an AOH commercial corridor. Information about Avenues of Hope, including maps, can be found [here](#).
- 2) Types of Businesses:
 - a) Commercial establishments (retail and wholesale trade)
 - b) Service establishments to include:
 - c) Professional services (e.g.: doctors, lawyers, accountants, architects, etc.).
 - d) Personal services (e.g.: dry cleaners, laundromats, barber and beauty shops, etc.).
 - e) Certain repair services (e.g.: office equipment, radio/television, bicycle, furniture, locksmith, etc.).
 - f) Business services (e.g.: advertising, office management, printing, etc.).
 - g) Banks, savings and loan associations, gas and service stations, used car lots, and adult entertainment establishments are not eligible for AOH SFG.
- 3) Other Eligibility Requirements:
 - a) Owner occupancy is not required. Approval of tenant-initiated projects, however, will be contingent upon the property owner's agreement to adhere to program requirements.
 - b) Stakeholder committees within AOH corridors may be assembled to review the commercial properties within the corridor, and authorization to proceed under the AOH SFG program may be contingent upon a favorable recommendation.

- 4) Eligible Activities: The following activities are eligible:
- a) Improvements to the façade of an existing building; This would include treatment of sidewalls for corner buildings and buildings adjacent to vacant lots. This treatment can include restoration, rehabilitation, or a compatible new storefront.
 - b) Up to 25 percent of the grant can be used for interior improvements, including floors, walls, permanent fixtures, plumbing, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility improvements.
 - c) Up to 50 percent of the grant can be used for exterior ADA accessibility improvements, including the installation of ramps, and railings.
 - d) Construction of the façade of a new building in contemporary design is eligible where the design of the façade is compatible with existing architecture in the business district and where the cost of the façade design and construction can be documented separately from the cost of the design and construction of the building as a whole.
 - e) Architectural services are eligible, from a Pennsylvania-registered architect, related to the façade improvements only.

Parameters of the Grant

- 1) Grant Amount: Up to \$12,000
- 2) Match Requirement: Property or business owner must demonstrate that they have contributed 10 percent of the requested grant amount to the project costs.
- 3) Prevailing Wage: Depending on the funding source, prevailing wage rates may apply. Please consult URA staff for more information.
- 4) Term: The AOH SFG requirements shall be binding for a period of seven (7) years from the date of closing.
- 5) Fees: \$100 application fee per eligible storefront (non-refundable)

Waiver of Provisions

The Board of Directors of the URA may waive certain provisions of these guidelines based on a determination of the private and public benefits of the project.

Notification

URA reserves the right to:

- 1) Reject any and all applications.
- 2) Notify the appropriate community-based organization of applications received from businesses in their neighborhoods.
- 3) Announce all loan commitments publicly.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact Miranda Micire at mmicire@ura.org. You can also find more information on our website [here](#).