

Commercial Façade Grant Program Guidelines April 2026

1. Statement of Purpose

The Commercial Façade Grant Program (CFGP) is intended to improve the physical appearance of commercial storefronts and building facades in Pittsburgh's neighborhoods, as part of the City of Pittsburgh's Main & Main Initiative.

2. Program Funding

The CFGP may be funded in part through the City of Pittsburgh, private contributions, and other local, state and federal monies as available.

3. Eligibility

The CFGP offers grants to eligible businesses or owners of properties with a commercial storefront. The below criteria will be used to determine whether an applicant is eligible for a CFGP grant.

4. Area Eligibility

CFGP projects must be located within the City of Pittsburgh. All grant applicants must have a building with commercial use. Priority will be given to properties with ground floor commercial use or that are located within a commercial corridor.

5. Types of Businesses

1. Commercial establishments (retail and wholesale trade)
2. Service establishments, including but not limited to:
 - Professional services (e.g. doctors, lawyers, accountants, architects, etc.)
 - Personal services (e.g. dry cleaners, laundromats, barber and beauty shops, etc.)
 - Restaurant and retail establishments
 - Business services (e.g. advertising, office management, printing, etc.)

Banks, savings and loan associations, non-independently owned gas stations, used car lots, bars, adult entertainment establishments, beer distributors, check cashing outlets, and furniture and appliance rental shops are not eligible for the CFGP.

6. Eligible Activities

Exterior building improvements must be based on an approved work plan including but not limited to: storefront lighting, signage, windows, doors, brick pointing, sidewalk activation, painting, etc.

7. Project Evaluation

The purpose of the CFGP is to strengthen our neighborhood business districts by supporting businesses and property owners in improving the appearance of their façade. This grant program has set grant application deadlines. All eligible applications will be reviewed, and the grant dollars awarded will be subject to funding availability and project evaluation.

Projects will be evaluated based on:

- The project's impact in a City of Pittsburgh neighborhood business district
- Presence of community engagement through a letter or an email from the neighborhood group, a Registered Community Organization (RCO), Council District representative or State Representative
- Adherence to URA design guidelines
- Geographic location

8. Grant Size

Grants will be provided for up to 75% of project costs, or \$20,000 maximum, in reimbursement for eligible improvements. The URA can execute the grant agreement with the property owner or the tenant of the property (tenants must secure the property owner's agreement to access this program).

9. Fees

- \$50 non-refundable intake fee
- \$300 administrative application fee for funded projects (this fee may be financed at closing)
- A 4% due diligence fee (this fee may be financed at closing)

10. Other

- Projects greater than \$25,000 may require the State's prevailing wage rates
- Other conditions may also apply

11. Waiver of Provisions

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

12. Notification

The URA reserves the right to:

1. In its sole discretion, approve or disapprove of grant applications in accordance with these guidelines.
2. Notify the appropriate community-based organization of applications received from businesses in their neighborhoods.
3. Announce all grant commitments publicly.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh at (412) 255-6547 or business@ura.org.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation or national origin. No person, solely on the basis of any of the above factors, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under the loan and grant programs operated by the Commercial & Business Lending Department of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh.

Commercial Facade Grant Program Procedures

1. Plan Your Project:

- a. Determine if your project is eligible by confirming ground floor commercial use and reviewing the [City of Pittsburgh Map](#).
- b. Determine the scope of the facade improvement(s) and review the URA Facade Design Guidelines.
- c. Communicate with your local neighborhood organization / Registered Community Organization, or your [City of Pittsburgh Council District Office](#). The local neighborhood organization may have guidance and resources, or may provide feedback on your design choices.

2. Collect Contractor Quotes:

- a. URA will require applicants to acquire a minimum of one quote from a contractor. The URA recommends acquiring multiple quotes to best assess project cost, but this is not required.
- b. Estimates should list the work that the contractor will do for you.
- c. Estimates should list details of the work and their costs.

3. Apply:

- a. Applicant submits the application to the URA with all required attachments including:
 - i. Clear current photograph(s) of the building's facade;
 - ii. At minimum one quote (cost estimates) from contractors;
 - iii. Description of requested improvements: This could include architectural renderings, drawings, renderings of signage, or written description of the work from a contractor;
 - iv. A \$50 intake fee;
 - v. If applicant is not the owner of the building, written permission from the property owner to do the work (this could be an email or a written letter);
 - vi. A Form W-9 for your business.
- b. An application must be complete before the application deadline to be eligible for the funding round.

4. Wait for Approval:

- a. URA staff will review the submitted application. Staff will reach out if there are items missing from an application that would otherwise be eligible and applicants will have until the application deadline to submit any missing items.
- b. If the design is acceptable, the project meets evaluation criteria, and funding is available, the URA will provide a commitment letter to the applicant within thirty business days after the application deadline.

5. Begin Work:

- a. Once awarded, applicants will sign and return their commitment letter within 10 business days to confirm their acceptance of the grant, and work on the project can begin.
- b. Applicant can now hire their contractors, apply for necessary permits, and keep all paid invoices for the final reimbursement from the URA.
- c. Keep the URA apprised of any major changes to the facade work or the costs outlined in your commitment letter.
- d. Complete all work within six months for your grant commitment to remain eligible. Please communicate any timeline issues with URA staff. Grant commitments expire after six months unless a written extension is provided by the URA.

6. Reimbursement:

- a. Provide copies of final invoices paid to your contractors. Invoices should be marked "paid."
- b. Provide photographs of the completed work.
- c. Make sure there is an updated Form W-9 on file with the URA so you can receive payment. Payment will occur within 10-15 business days of final invoice and photograph submission.
- d. After closing, please keep the URA and City of Pittsburgh staff updated on your business happenings!

Please Note: Projects cannot begin until the applicant receives a signed commitment letter from the URA and signs and returns that commitment letter to the URA. All contractor work that occurs prior to the commitment letter being signed by the applicant and URA cannot be reimbursed.

Technical assistance is available for eligible business or property owners. If you would like support in completing your application by the application deadline, please contact business@ura.org.

Project funding and matching dollars are available through [low-interest loans](#) from the URA and Invest PGH.