

# Shrewsbury Façade Improvement Program Guidelines and Application

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Shrewsbury established the Façade Improvement Program to provide technical and financial assistance to property owners or business tenants seeking to renovate their commercial building façades and enhance other exterior features. The Program's objectives are to improve the physical appearance of businesses, enhance Shrewsbury's Town Center, and help implement the purposes, standards, and guidelines of the Town Center District zoning district. The Program will provide a matching grant for the funding of well-designed improvements to the important features of town center businesses, creating a more attractive and cohesive presentation for the public. This may include restoration or addition of architectural details, new painting and siding, improved windows and doors, awnings and canopies, permanent landscaping features and decorative paving, and/or well-proportioned signage and lighting. Matching grants may range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 based on scope of work and available funds.

Grant availability and maximum grant caps will likely vary from year to year. Please contact the Shrewsbury Planning & Economic Development Department for the latest information (508-841-8512 or [planning@shrewsburyma.gov](mailto:planning@shrewsburyma.gov)). Applicants are encouraged to contact the Department prior to applying to review their project goals and confirm eligibility.

*Applicants are responsible for hiring licensed architects, contractors, and/or sign fabricators. Improvements made prior to receiving any required Town permits will not be funded.*

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following criteria must be met for participation in the Program:

1. Applicants must be property owners or commercial tenants within the Town Center District (TOWN CTR) on the Zoning Map of the Town of Shrewsbury;
2. For businesses required by contractual arrangement to maintain standardized décor, architecture, signs or similar features, applications may be submitted for façade improvements outside these contractual obligations (e.g. permanent landscaping features);
3. Tenants must have written approval from property owners to participate in the program;
4. Property owners must be up to date on all municipal taxes prior to participation in the program;
5. Applicants must comply with all State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code, and zoning requirements. The Town of Shrewsbury reserves the right to apply additional criteria before accepting a project if program demand exceeds budgeted resources.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Façade improvement program applications should be designed to meet the purpose, standards, and guidelines of the Town Center District, as described in the Town of Shrewsbury Zoning Bylaws Section VII.U, and in particular the Design Standards and Guidelines in subsection VII.U.5. Please see the Shrewsbury Façade Improvement Program Design Guidelines for further guidance on how to interpret the Town Center District Design Standards and Guidelines.

## Eligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are encouraged:

1. Restoration of details in historically contributing or significant buildings, and removal of elements which cover architectural details;
2. Window display areas which are appropriately scaled, and which facilitate night viewing;
3. Replacement and framing of windows visible from the street which are appropriately scaled to the building;
4. Signage that is attractively integrated into the architecture of the building, including the window area(s), awnings or canopies, and entryways;
5. Lighting that is visually appealing and appropriately illuminates signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of a building façade;
6. Awnings or canopies that can be both functional and visually appealing;
7. Permanent landscaping features attached to the building where appropriate, such as window boxes or planters;
8. Decorative paving or hardscapes, such as walkways or paths, located on private property and designed to enhance pedestrian access to entrances;
9. New entrance and storefront construction, appropriately scaled within an existing building; and
10. Other approved items (e.g. painting, cleaning, repointing, new siding, etc.) necessary to achieve the overall improvement.

## Prior Improvements

Alterations and improvements that require a building permit and that are made prior to receiving a building permit for said alterations and improvements from the Town are not eligible for reimbursement.

## Alterations

The applicant must agree not to change or alter the improved facade without prior written approval from the Shrewsbury Planning & Economic Development Department for five (5) years from the date of the grant award payment issued under the Façade Improvement Program.

## PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

### Financial Assistance

Funding offered is a matching grant in which the Town would pay the applicant between \$5,000 and \$20,000, depending on the scope of the project, with the applicant responsible for at least 20% of the total cost of the project (for example, if the total project cost is \$10,000, the Town may grant a maximum of \$8,000). Architectural design fees may be included in the total cost of eligible improvements but cannot exceed \$5,000. Architectural design fees alone (without construction/design implementation) will not be funded. The Program will remit payment to applicants after a grant has been approved by the Program Staff (see Procedures below).

## Application and Information

If you wish to participate in the Façade Improvement Program, please fill out the application form below and send it to the Shrewsbury Planning and Economic Development Department.

Questions? Please contact the Department at 508-841-8512 or [planning@shrewsburyma.gov](mailto:planning@shrewsburyma.gov).

## PROCEDURES

All prospective applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below.

### Pre-Application

1. All Applicants are encouraged to meet with Program staff for an initial project discussion before filing an application. The goal of such discussions is to help make the application process smoother and faster, allowing Program staff the opportunity to provide guidance on how to prepare a successful application. Program staff can also help identify any aspects of the façade improvement that will require a building permit. Program staff are happy to have multiple pre-application meetings, at the request of an Applicant, to discuss the building program and design alternatives, depending on the proposed scope of work.

### Application

2. The Applicant submits an application to the Shrewsbury Planning & Economic Development Department. Applications may be submitted at any time during the annual application period, either via mail or online (see instructions on the application form below and check with the Planning & Economic Development Department for details on the annual application period, which may differ from year to year).
3. The Applicant or the Applicant's architect/contractor should prepare and submit conceptual designs and budget estimates with the application, to the extent possible, including an estimate of architectural design fees, if any.
4. If the Applicant elects not to schedule a pre-application meeting, a meeting will be set up between the Applicant and Program staff after the application is submitted to discuss the proposed plans. Such a meeting is optional for an Applicant who participated in a pre-application meeting.
5. Program staff will provide a decision about the grant award to the Applicant no later than thirty (30) days after the application's submission to the Town. The maximum funding amount indicated on the approval announcement will be based upon program grant limits and the extent to which the proposal meets the purposes and design standards and guidelines of the Town Center District. Any grant funds dedicated to architectural design fees will be remitted to the Applicant upon award (to reiterate, up to \$5,000 of a grant request may be budgeted for design fees).

### Post-Application Approval

6. If necessary, the Applicant's architect/contractor will prepare final design drawings and submit them to Program staff for review and final approval.
7. Upon approval of final designs by the Program staff, the Applicant has sixty (60) days to solicit the contractor(s) necessary to complete the improvement scope of work. Contractor invoices must be on contractor letterhead and itemized so that a cost is associated with each task or material to be installed. Should the Applicant be unable to contract with a contractor within this time period, the Applicant shall contact Program staff in writing with a request for an extension, explaining the reason for the delay.
8. Upon approval of the contractor(s) invoice by Program staff, the Applicant will enter into a contract with the Town of Shrewsbury.
9. Program staff sends the Applicant a signed contract and remits the remainder of the grant funds to the Applicant (minus that set aside for architectural design fees, if any).
10. The Applicant has thirty (30) days from the execution date of the contract to submit a first building permit request to the Town, if a building permit is required.

Mar 24, 2023

## Construction and Completion

11. The contractor(s) constructs the project improvements as specified in the final design. Any changes to the final design must have prior approval of Program staff. It is up to the applicant to notify the Program of these changes in writing.
12. The Applicant notifies the Program staff once the project is completed.
13. Program staff certifies, through a site visit, that the improvements comply with the final drawings and specifications.
14. The Applicant must submit to the Program staff copies of all paid invoices and copies of canceled checks or credit card statements.

The Facade Improvement Program reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.

## TERMINATION AND CLAWBACK PROVISIONS

The Town of Shrewsbury has the right to terminate any agreement under the Facade Improvement Program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or if the project has been started prior to the approval of any required building permits from the Town of Shrewsbury. Should such violations occur, the Town of Shrewsbury has the right to seek the return, in part or in full, of any grant funds remitted to the Applicant.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit the Town of Shrewsbury Planning and Economic Development website for information about additional business development resources: <https://shrewsburyma.gov/636/Planning-Economic-Development>

Mar 24, 2023

## Town of Shrewsbury Façade Improvement Program

RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION (VIA MAIL OR E-MAIL) TO:

Town of Shrewsbury Planning & Economic Development Department – 100 Maple Avenue,  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545 - [planning@shrewsburyma.gov](mailto:planning@shrewsburyma.gov)

### APPLICATION FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Website (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Business Organization of Applicant (select one):

Corporation

Partnership

Sole Proprietorship

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship of Applicant to the storefront to be renovated (select one):

- Owner: Attach copy of latest tax bill and proof of payment
- Tenant: Attach **a)** copy of Town of Shrewsbury business permit and **b)** Written permission from building owner to participate in the Program, including expiration date of present lease.

#### PROPOSED PROJECT INFORMATION

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

What elements are included in the proposed Façade Improvement Project? (Check all that apply):

Awning or Canopy

Entrance – New Door/Doorway

Historic Restoration

Landscaping (Permanent)

Lighting

Painting or Siding

Signage

Mar 24, 2023

Windows/Display

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the scope of work below (feel free to add pages, provide current photos of the property, or anything else you think would be helpful) and attach conceptual drawings of the proposed façade improvement project (these can be as rough or as refined as you currently have):

***If known, please indicate the following:***

Estimated project cost or the total amount budgeted for improvements. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Portion of the above dedicated to architectural design fees (if any). \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***If known, please provide information on the architect or contractor responsible for your drawings, plans, and permits:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Website (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned hereby represents and certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief that the information contained on this statement and any exhibits or attachments hereto are true and complete and accurately describe the proposed project, and the undersigned agrees to promptly inform the Town of Shrewsbury Planning & Economic Development Department of any changes in the proposed project which may occur. By signing, the applicant certifies that they have completely read, and agree to, the program guidelines detailed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Building Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tax ID #

Mar 24, 2023

---

Signature of Commercial Tenant (if Applicant)

---

Date

---

Print Name

---

Tax ID #