

DISTRICT OF KITIMAT

Business Façade Improvement Program – 2018



Program Purpose and Goals

The District of Kitimat, in collaboration with the Kitimat Chamber of Commerce, aims to enhance economic development by encouraging private sector investment in façade improvements for existing businesses. This follows other initiatives to help existing Kitimat businesses make improvements, including the Revitalization Tax Exemption program for commercial properties.

The availability of façade improvement grants comes at a time in which the community is experiencing a period renewal resulting from industrial development.

This program is made possible through a grant from Northern Development Initiative Trust.

The Program

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and are reviewed on a first come, first serve basis until the annual budget of the program has been allocated.

The District of Kitimat will provide a 50 per cent reimbursement grant up to a maximum of up to \$5,000 per building/project to improve the façades of commercial buildings.

Each building/business is eligible for a one-time grant only.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1,000.

Eligible Properties

Businesses may be eligible to receive a façade improvement grant if they meet the following criteria:

- Located in a commercial zone or Service Centre (M2, M2-A, M2-B zones)
- Based at their current location for at least one year prior to the date of application

Eligible Applicants

- You must be either the property owner or business owner (if the applicant is the business owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant);
- Non-profit societies occupying commercial storefronts; and
- Home-based businesses (eligible for wayfinding signage only*);
- All property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current;
- There must be a current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt);
- There must be no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding; and
- You have not received a previous grant under this program for the subject property.
- Not-for-profit organizations (building tenants) are also eligible to apply to the program.

Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the designated commercial areas are not eligible (exception if the home is commercially zoned and has a storefront);
- Municipally owned buildings (even if they have business tenants);
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in these program guidelines); and
- Non-operating business (the business must be in operation).

Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement);
- Exterior architectural features;
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims etc.);
- Windows (only if part of larger improvements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement);
- New siding;
- Façade painting;
- Entrances and doorways (if part of larger enhancements)
- Awnings
- Signage (affixed to the building)
- *Way finding signage (sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway). Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaws and regulations.
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only AND are part of a larger facade improvement project.

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following are improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance;
- Structural repairs;
- Roofs;
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.);
- Landscaping;
- Paving;
- Fencing;
- Interior/ internal improvements;
- Any improvements not visible from the public right of way;
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings;
- Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval;
- Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Eligible Costs/Expenses

- Direct project labour costs
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to facade only);
- Contractor fees
- Rental of tools and equipment
- Project related materials and supplies

Ineligible Costs/Expenses

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Equipment purchased;
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Shipping cost
- GST/PST
- Duties
- Permit fees
- Façade improvements expenses started prior to application approval

Design Guidelines

In order to be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project. Grants will be awarded based on merit, as determined by District of Kitimat and Kitimat Chamber of Commerce staff.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project, and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process. As much as possible, projects must be consistent with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area.

For businesses located within the Downtown Revitalization Area, the improvements should align with Kitimat's Downtown Design Guidelines. A PDF version of the guidelines is available on the municipal website at: www.kitimat.ca/EN/main/business/building-land-development/downtown-design-guidelines.html

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Façade Improvement Program, and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

Business Application Process

Business Façade Improvement Guidelines

Applications will be accepted by the District of Kitimat Economic Development Department by mail, in person or electronically.

Submitting an application does not necessarily mean a project or a specific grant amount will be approved. All project proposals are subject to a comprehensive review, must meet high quality standards, and must reflect the spirit and intent of the Façade Improvement Program Guidelines. Generally, the application, approval and reimbursement process is as follows:

- 1- Owner/ Tenant contacts the Municipality to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, discuss your project, and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
- 2- Owner/ Tenant submit a complete application with designs. All required supporting materials and documents (including owner authorization) must be received prior to be considered complete.
- 3- Staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the applicable Design Guidelines and Façade Improvement Guidelines.
- 4- Applications are reviewed and a decision to accept or reject the application is made.
- 5- Applicant is advised of the decision by email and mailed letter.
- 6- For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the Municipality.
- 7- Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
- 8- Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses (including invoices or other conformations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
- 9- Owner/Tenant provides a Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval and has been paid in full, as well as before and after photos, a business testimonial, and any other supporting documentation.
- 10- Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passes final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
- 11- Staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
- 12- Applicant is issued a cheque.

PLEASE NOTE: Approved Projects must be completed by Year End. Funding cannot carryover from one calendar year to the next.

Evaluation / Selection Process

Business Façade Improvement Guidelines

A three (3) member Project Review Committee comprised of District of Kitimat (Economic Development & Planning) and Kitimat Chamber of Commerce staff will review applications and determine which projects qualify for funding.

All Eligible Projects will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Has the owner/tenant demonstrated how the modifications will benefit the business?
- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Design Guidelines?
- Will the project provide a noticeable improvement on the streetscape?
- Was a professional designer or architect used?

Older buildings may be prioritized for approval depending on the number of applications received.

Program Marketing Plan

The District of Kitimat Economic Development department and Kitimat Chamber of Commerce will jointly promote the Business Façade Improvement Program through the use of printed materials (brochures, newspaper ads), websites and social media platforms. Both organizations will include information on the program in their monthly newsletters.

Additional Information

The District of Kitimat has implemented a Revitalization Tax Exemption (RTE) program to encourage improvements to existing “Class 6” buildings. Applicants to the Façade Improvement Program may be eligible for this exemption. Contact Community Planning & Development at 250-632-8910 for details.

Business Façade Improvement Program

Grant Application

DISTRICT OF KITIMAT

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Building Address: _____

If you are applying as the tenant of a building, please provide the following information and attach a letter of consent from the owners stating that you are permitted to make these changes and that the improvements will come at your expense.

Owner Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Project Description

Describe the proposed project – Please attach any extra sheets, photos, designs, samples, etc. Describe the work to be done and materials to be used and note how this related to the Design Guidelines.

Planned Start Date: _____

Planned Completion Date: _____

Total Project Cost (estimated): _____

Funding Amount Requested: _____

Date Application Received: _____

Applicant Checklist

Attach to Application

_____ Property taxes paid

_____ Utility account paid

_____ License fees paid

_____ Required permit applications complete

_____ Building owner authorization

_____ Photos of existing conditions (before)

_____ Detailed specifications

_____ Contractor's cost estimates

_____ Drawings/designs

_____ Material and colour samples

_____ Signed Terms and Conditions

Business Façade Improvement Program

Terms and Conditions

I, _____ of _____ have
(Applicant) (Business / Building)

Read the complete application and concur with and give my consent to the work proposed in the application.

I assume all responsibility for obtaining appropriate architectural drawings, building permits and inspections, and hiring of contractors as necessary.

I will allow the District of Kitimat to use before and after pictures of the project and testimonials for the purpose of promoting this program in the future.

I agree not to involve the District of Kitimat or the Façade Improvement Program in any legal action between myself and any contractors, estimators, employees, workers or agents arising from or out of the Façade Improvement Project.

I give my consent to the District of Kitimat to make all inspections necessary to confirm that the approved plans are implemented in accordance with the expected standards

Payment of approved grants will be made upon the applicant providing the municipality proof of final completion of proposed improvements along with verification of expenditures and proof of final inspection (when required).

Signature _____ Date _____

OFFICE USE

Application
Received by:

Date:

