

Refresh Façade Improvement Grant Program

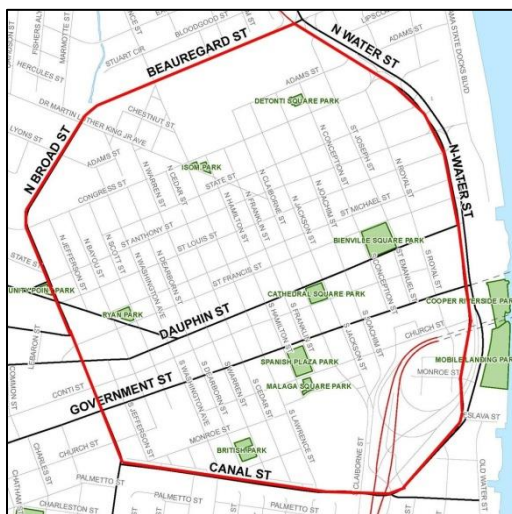
Overview

The Downtown Mobile Alliance (DMA) is pleased to launch The Downtown Development District's Refresh Façade Grant program, a façade restoration and storefront improvement grant program. The Refresh Façade Grant Program supports the revitalization of the Downtown Development District by leveraging private investment with public funds. Eligible projects include high-quality façade improvements to existing structures that will eliminate blight, encourage investment, increase property values, and create an attractive and inviting downtown.

Eligible Improvements may include:

- Facade Improvements
- Streetscape Improvements
- Window, Storefront, Cornice or Door Repairs/Rehabilitation
- Sidewalks, slate pavers, curbs and gutters
- Façade Restoration, including repointing and waterproofing needed to preserve the facade

Projects must be located within the Henry Aaron loop or inside the ring created by Broad, Beauregard, Canal and Water Streets.



Through a competitive application process, the Refresh Façade Grant Program will provide financial assistance to property and business owners in the Henry Aaron loop for qualified street facing façade improvements and streetscape improvements. The Program will operate as a

matching grant to business and/or property owners aiming to improve exterior elements of their properties visible from the street. The Program may reimburse up to 50% of the total project costs with the remaining 50% paid by the participating business and/or property owner, as determined by the Downtown Mobile Alliance's Incentives Committee. Program participants will be reimbursed for approved documented eligible expenses following the satisfactory completion of the improvement project.

The Incentives Committee of the Downtown Alliance will review Refresh Façade Grant Program applications and submit approved applications to the TIFD1 Committee for its review and approval. If the Committee approves the application, the city will send the applicant Terms and Conditions to sign and return to the city. In addition, when the project is completed the property owner will grant the city a façade easement. The term of the easement will be 5 years for awards up to \$20,000.00, 10 years for awards from \$20,001.00 to \$30,000.00, and 15 years for awards from \$30,001.00 to \$40,000.00. A sample façade easement will be attached to the Terms and Conditions.

By applying to Refresh Façade for improvements, the applicant is:

1. Seeking funds to be invested in properties that support the goals of the Refresh Façade Improvement Grant Program through eligible street facing façade improvement activities and/or streetscape improvements in accordance with TIFD1 terms and conditions;
2. Agreeing to maintain all façade, streetscape and other funded improvements up to city standards.
3. Asking for a maximum reimbursement of up to \$40,000 in matching funds on a completed project.

Program Eligibility

Applicant Criteria:

Eligible grant applicants must be:

- Owners of existing buildings the improvement of which will meet the objectives of the New Plan for Old Mobile inside the Henry Aaron loop.
- Owners of small businesses located inside the Henry Aaron Loop.

Eligible grant applicants must demonstrate:

- Property taxes are current.
- All taxes and fees due to the City have been timely paid.
- No other debts or liabilities are owed to the City.
- Legal entities comply with the City of Mobile ordinances and business license requirements.
- Business Improvement District assessments are current.

Award Limitations:

Maximum Allowable Award: The Refresh Façade Grant Program offers a one-time grant for eligible façade improvements. Payment is by reimbursement only for up to 50% of eligible project costs. The maximum grant amount is \$40,000 for documented eligible project costs of \$80,000.

Example: The applicant receives a Refresh Façade Grant for a project with eligible project costs of \$50,000; she/he would be eligible for reimbursement in the amount of \$25,000 [$\$50,000 \times 50\% = \$25,000$].

Program Eligibility

Eligible Activities:

Eligible activities shall include expenses related solely to those activities outlined below and/or as determined by the Downtown Mobile Alliance.

Façade Improvements:

- Brick re-pointing
- Removal of vinyl or aluminum siding
- Façade restoration and/or repair
- Renovation of covered entrances
- Window restoration
- Renovation of cornices; gutters and downspouts
- Painting in connection with repointing and waterproofing
- Drainage and/or downspout/scupper repair visible from the street
- Removal of nonconforming elements.
- Masonry cleaning

Streetscaping Improvements:

- Replacement or installation of signage
- Replacement or installation of new awnings or canopies
- Installation of new exterior lighting

- Sidewalks and paving; LID implementation

Design Criteria

Design Criteria continued

Ineligible Activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Installation of vinyl or aluminum siding
- All interior work, including code compliance, and structural work
- Non-permanent fixtures
- Business / personal property, equipment and supplies
- Interior lit signs, or interior window coverings
- Upper-story additions to existing buildings
- Billboards
- Security bars
- Razor/barbed wire fencing

Guidelines for Eligible Projects:

- All projects receiving funding must meet certain design standards contained within the Mobile Historic Districts Guidelines, if applicable, and Downtown Development District form-based code.
- Prior to commencing any work, the Downtown Mobile Alliance must approve the external components of the grant recipient's project, and possess all applicable permits, as required by the City of Mobile and, when required, the Architectural Review Board and /or the Planning Commission, as well as any other pertinent entity with oversight responsibility.
- All work must be completed in accordance with all applicable local and state codes.
- At project commencement the applicant must present the Downtown Mobile Alliance with a copy of all building permits.
- Prior to reimbursement, the applicant must submit a copy of the certificate of occupancy (CO), a breakdown of all costs associated with the facade, and vendors' lien releases

Application Process

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Downtown Mobile Alliance to review the proposed project prior to submitting a completed application.

The Downtown Alliance will begin accepting applications on **June 1, 2026**. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis and subject to funding availability.

E-mail submissions should be addressed to: ellis@downtownmobile.org and hard copies should be delivered simultaneously to 261 Dauphin Street Mobile, AL 36602.

Priority will be given to projects that fully support and enhance the revitalization of the identified Downtown Development District corridors. Priority will also be given to projects funded with private investment that provides for high-quality improvements which will enhance the appearance of facades and mitigate blight.

All applicants must submit the following information:

- Completed application;
- An application fee of 3% of the grant amount or \$600, whichever is lower;
- Photographs of existing façade;
- Renderings, elevations of proposed improvements and measured plans as necessary;
- List and/or description of materials to be used;
- Detailed cost estimates/bids for proposed improvements from at least two licensed contractors for each type of work to be performed;
- A statement certifying that property taxes are current and no debts or liabilities are owed to the City;
- If applicant is property owner, Proof of Property Ownership;
- If applicant is not property owner: Owner Consent Form; and
- Cost breakdown of all eligible activities and a method of verification.

Program Expectations

Grantee Responsibilities:

Grantees will be responsible for the following:

1. Project Maintenance:

Before the project is complete, the Grantee must submit signed Terms and Conditions to the City of Mobile to ensure that the improvements are properly maintained and kept in good repair for at least five (5) to fifteen (15) years depending on the amount of the grant. Maintenance must equal or exceed the standards of the International Property Maintenance Code.

Projects that vary from the approved scope of work will not receive any reimbursement.. The Downtown Mobile Alliance is obliged to be a careful steward of public funds and reserves the right to recover grant funds awarded for improvements that are altered, removed, destroyed or not maintained for the term of the façade easement.

2. Reimbursement Requirements:

To receive reimbursement, all grantees must:

- complete, sign and submit a W-9 for the disbursement of funds;
- document all expenditures by providing the Downtown Development District (DDD) proof of payment (receipts, paid invoices, etc.) for all eligible improvements within 30 days of completion;
- provide the DDD a cost breakdown verifying that documented payments are for approved expenses;
- document that all contractors and subcontractors are paid in full and submit lien waivers
- submit a certificate of occupancy or final inspection of work performed under a city right of way permit, as appropriate to the project.

3. Promotional Rights:

Until put into service, all projects will display signage acknowledging the DDD Refresh Façade Grant Program's support for the project.

4. Regulatory Approvals:

The Grantee will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals where applicable. All work must comply with city and state regulations. Applicants should contact the for assistance with permitting.

5. Project Compliance:

All work must be completed by licensed and bonded contractors, that legally operate in the City of Mobile. The applicant is responsible for obtaining necessary permits for all work. Applicants are encouraged to hire minority, women-owned, or an emerging small business certified contractor.

Project Selection Guidelines

- Preference for selection will be given to projects that address the following:
 - Rehabilitation of existing properties that demonstrate a high degree of neglect and/or disinvestment;
 - Rehabilitation of long-vacant buildings which, if occupied, will contribute to the viability of the Downtown Development District;
 - Projects that advance the goals of the New Plan for Old Mobile;
 - Renovation of existing and occupied structures to address deferred maintenance or non-conforming details; or,
 - Rehabilitation that addresses immediate health and safety concerns.
- The Incentives Committee will assess the applicant's ability to develop and present a complete design concept. The committee reserves the right to require design assistance as a condition of the grant.
- The committee will assess the applicant's ability to complete the proposed project. Applicants will be required to present a project budget and financing plan that outlines how the project will be funded.
- Applicants will be required to show estimates from licensed and bonded contractors. Applicants will be required to submit a copy of their contracts and proof of payment in order to receive reimbursements.

If the applicant is a general contractor or serving as a general contractor overhead and profit are not eligible expenses.

- Project proposals will only be approved by the Committee if applicants agree to grant the city a façade easement for a minimum of five (5) years to be recorded in the public records of Mobile County, requiring the maintenance of all improvements.
- If the application is denied, the applicant may re-apply after meeting with the Alliance to discuss how the application can be improved to meet the goals of the Refresh Façade Grant Program.
- The Downtown Mobile Alliance's Incentives Committee will evaluate the project timeline and all approved work must be finished by the completion date. If the project is not finished on time, the award will expire unless the TIFD1 Committee grants an extension prior to the completion date.