

**CITY of PORTAGE
BUILDING FACADE IMPROVEMENT
LOAN PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Building Facade Improvement Loan Fund Goals
Statement

To provide matching funding for the purposes of upgrading and improving the exterior front, side and rear facades of existing privately owned businesses for the purpose of creating attractive commercial business districts while enhancing the image of Portage. The funding for this program was made possible through the City of Portage and Chamber of Commerce's grant award in the America's Best Communities program, sponsored by Frontier Communications.

Purpose of the Loan Program

The Building Façade Improvement Loan Program (Loan Program) was established to stimulate exterior improvements, upgrades and renewal of existing buildings. The intent of the program is to produce visible changes to the front, side or rear building facades, if visible from the public right-of-way. The Loan Program is intended to facilitate the completion of all exterior improvement projects possible, however, because of the limited matching loan funds, monies will be awarded only to projects that will be completed within one year of grant award. Loan program is reimbursable and funds cannot be used for projects already completed or started before loan award. Residential buildings are not eligible to receive funding from this program.

A. Matching Loan Fund Uses

1. Loans provided by this program are to be used for exterior rehabilitation to existing commercial buildings within B1, B2, B3 & B4 Business Zoning Districts, Portage Chamber of Commerce members located within City limits, and non-profit organizations operating a commercial enterprise in compliance with City requirements.
2. All improvements are to be approved by the Plan Commission or in cases of buildings on the Municipal Register, by the Historic Preservation Commission.
3. Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to exterior improvements, such as: painting, masonry/brick cleaning, awnings, materials, labor, entrance rehabilitations, window replacements, masonry rehabilitation/replacement, architectural assistance, exterior restoration and signs.
4. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to: interior repairs/remodeling, additions, roof repairs, unpermitted repairs or non-code compliant activities.
5. Total matching loan amounts shall not exceed \$5,000.00. Minimum total eligible project cost must be \$3,000.00. All loans require a 20% matching cash contribution

from the property owner.

6. Only one application may be submitted for each façade. Property owners with multiple buildings are eligible for a maximum of 2 loans within a 3 year period. Either the property owner or the business tenant may apply. For buildings with multiple tenants, each tenant is eligible to apply. Property owner's written approval necessary for tenant application.
7. A building or façade need not be occupied at the time the application is submitted. Due to limited funds, priority consideration will be granted to occupied buildings.

B. Loan Application Process

1. Applications and Guidelines for the program are available at the Municipal Building, City Website (www.portagewi.gov) and the Chamber of Commerce.
2. Completed facade improvement applications, design plans, cost estimates and construction schedules shall be submitted to the City Hall. The Economic Development Loan Fund Committee shall consider the application and loan repayment terms pending approval by Plan or Historic Preservation Commission. Applications shall include a business plan, proof of property insurance and credit report of business and/or owner(s). Loans shall require the applicant shall enter into a re-payment agreement with the City for the matching funds received and secure the loan with a UCC Lien and personal guarantee on business property.
3. The Plan Commission shall approve the design plans and construction estimates. If the building is located on the Municipal Register, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
4. Any design applications and/or loan applications that are denied will receive a letter of explanation and may re-apply upon revising or amending the application.
5. Applicants must be property owners or tenants with the property owner's permission and are eligible if they comply with one or more of the provisions in Section A.1. Applicants will be approved on a first come, first-served basis to the extent that funds are available and shall sign an agreement pledging repayment of the loan.
6. Prior to receiving any matching loan funds, applicants shall be current on all financial obligations to the City of Portage, including, utility bills (sewer and water), real estate and personal property taxes, and any fees and fines that are outstanding.
7. All loan recipients shall comply with the loan guidelines. Any changes in the facade improvement subsequent to approval of plans must be resubmitted to the Plan Commission for approval. Changes not requiring approval shall include,

modification of construction sequence or completion date by less than 60 days, change in construction/repair technique, changes in materials that will not result in appreciable difference in appearance or durability from original material.

8. Unapproved changes or deviations may result in forfeit and immediate repayment of loan.

C. Requirements for Obtaining and Repayment of Matching Fund Loans

1. Eligible project cost must be a minimum of \$3,000, with a 20% matching cash requirement. Maximum loan amount is \$5,000. Projects applicants must enter into a repayment agreement for all funds received and obtain proper permits prior to commencing work.
2. All loans shall have an interest rate of 2.0% and require monthly payments. Upon successful repayment of loan in compliance with all conditions, 50% of interest paid shall be refunded.
3. Payment terms and schedule of loans in the amount of \$5000 or less shall be based on the applicant's ability to pay and vary in term up to a maximum of 3 years with a minimum monthly payment of \$50.00 and the establishment of a UCC Lien to secure the loan.
4. All approved loan funds shall be disbursed by the City of Portage, subject to late payment fees as established by the City. All loan payments will be made to the, City via automatic debit/transfer. Payment due date will be determined by the Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund Committee.
6. Approved loan funds shall be disbursed on the following basis: 50% at time of loan approval and 50% upon completion of project. Projects must be completed within one year of obtaining building permit. Loan recipient shall repay all funds disbursed by the City if project is not completed in the 12 month period. Upon project completion, the property owner shall present the City valid lien waivers from all persons providing materials and/or performing work on property from which loan was sought.
7. Upon full re-payment of loan, 50% of accrued interest paid will be refunded to loan recipient. This interest refund will only apply to loan recipients who have fully repaid loan, on time, within the terms of the note agreement or to recipients who have paid off loan in advance of payment schedule. Anticipated refund cannot be used as any loan payment.
8. Only projects and expenses listed under Section D, "Eligible Improvement Expenditures", are eligible for matching loan funds. Businesses are eligible for a maximum of 1 loan every 3 years.

9. Outstanding balance of any loan issued shall be immediately paid in full upon sale or closure of business at current location or if loan is more than 60 days past due.

D. Eligible Improvement Expenditures

Facade Improvements: Painting, staining (including the surface preparation), exterior cleaning, exterior lighting, masonry/brick/stone repair or replacement, repair or replacement of cornices or other architectural detail, repair or replacement of windows, installation or replacement of trim, siding on front, side or rear of buildings that face public streets or parks, renovation of entrances.

Awnings: Removal and replacement of existing awnings, addition of new awnings.
Code Enforcement: Any work required to specifically meet City or State building or zoning code requirements.

Professional Design or Architectural Service: Any design or assistance provided by professional consultant for exterior facade improvements.

Signs: Replacement, repair or renovation of storefront signs in compliance with City Sign Code.

E. Ineligible Improvement Expenditures

The following expenditures are not eligible for use by funds received through the "Building Facade Improvement Loan Program".

Additions: Building additions, other than exterior finish materials, are ineligible projects for the loan program.

In-Kind Labor Costs: Any wages, salaries, and associated benefit costs of property owners, business owners/managers, their employees, agents, or relatives.

Interior Remodeling/Renovations: Any interior remodeling work, even if related to exterior improvements.

Roof Repairs: Any roof repair or replacements are ineligible except in cases where a new roof style is included with a facade restoration or replacement project.

Unapproved Facade Improvements: Any improvements which have not been reviewed or approved by the Plan Commission or Historic Preservation Commission.

Matching Funds for or Repayment of Other Loan/Grant Programs: Funds received from the Building Façade Improvement Loan Program may not be used to satisfy required matching funds for other loans and/or grants; nor may they be used to repay other loans and/or grants.