



City of Salem

Storefront Improvement Program

Program Guidelines

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Mayor

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Director, DPCD

The City of Salem Storefront Improvement Program is funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) as part of the Mayor's goal to revitalize commercial areas in Salem. The Storefront Improvement Program is administered by DPCD.

To help business owners better understand the program, we provided a listed of frequently asked questions and answers to those questions. If you would like further information or would like to apply, please contact DPCD.

What type of assistance is available?

The Storefront Improvement Program offers two types of assistance to eligible businesses and property owners—Design Assistance and Construction Grants. Applicants can apply for both programs.

➤ **Design Assistance**

The Salem DPCD provides Design Assistance for qualified businesses at **no cost** to the applicant. Design Assistance consists of an on-site meeting with the business owner, a schematic design for the proposed improvements, a budget estimate and a written description of the proposed work.

➤ **Construction Grant (up to \$5,000)**

Eligible businesses can apply for up to \$5,000 for **exterior improvements** to their storefront. (For multi-storefront buildings, each storefront can receive up to \$5,000 match with a maximum of \$15,000 for the entire building.) The program requires a **match of funds** by the applicant; every dollar paid by the City must be matched by a dollar from the applicant.

Who can apply?

Any business owner or property owner located in one of the eligible districts can apply for the program. A business owner that is leasing space in the district must have lease authority or obtain authorization from the building owner to make improvements to the property.

What types of projects are eligible?

The program can only fund **exterior** improvements to your storefront. Only work approved by DPCD is eligible for the program; work completed **prior** to receiving a commitment letter from the city is **not** eligible for funding.

The following types of improvements are eligible for funding:

- Installation of new signs or improvements to existing ones
- Installation, repair or replacement of awnings
- Restoration of exterior facade
- Exterior painting
- Removal of inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes and materials
- Reconfiguration of existing doors and entrances
- Repair or replacement of existing storefront windows
- Installation of exterior building, sign or display area lighting
- Removal of security window bars, roll-down grates and grate boxes (installation of electronic security systems to replace grates is allowable)
- Other improvements may be allowed on a case-by-case basis

Priority will be given to installation of new signage and the removal (or conversion) of security grates, boxes and tracks. If you have solid grates and are applying to the Storefront Improvement Program, you will be required to remove them.

Are there design guidelines?

All projects must comply with the Salem Zoning Ordinance. The city does offer a sign guideline manual that is available at DPCD as well as a [Commercial Design Guidelines Manual](#).

How does the application process work?

The program uses a 2-step application process. The time frame for processing your application depends on the detail of your design and the number of applications received. Each of the steps is listed below with an estimated time frame.

- **Step 1 (4-8 weeks):** Meet with the Economic Development Program Director to go over the program guidelines and fill out a **Project Consideration Form**. This form is reviewed by DPCD to determine if the project qualifies and funds are available. If the project is accepted, you will be notified on next steps for using design assistance and/or the process for submitting your project design for the necessary approvals.
- **Step 2 (2-3 weeks):** Once the project has an approved design, you must submit a **Grant Application Form**, with all the required documents and plans, to DPCD. Upon approval, you will be asked to sign a Letter of Agreement. Within a week, you will receive a commitment letter from the city and will be free to begin construction. *Work started prior to receiving the commitment letter is not eligible for funds.*

How do I know if I am accepted into the program?

Once you receive a commitment letter from the city, you are officially accepted into the grant program. If you are only applying for design assistance, you are accepted when DPCD notifies you, after completing the project consideration form.

What happens after I am accepted?

You can begin construction after you receive your commitment letter. Work selected for a construction grant must be completed within 6 months of approval, unless an extension is granted by DPCD. You are responsible for obtaining any permits necessary for carrying out the improvements and compliance with all applicable safety standards and conditions. **If the project exceeds \$2,000, you are also responsible for complying with the Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Act and collecting the necessary Davis-Bacon form from your contractors.** *For more information about Davis-Bacon prevailing wages, please contact DPCD.*

Once the project is complete, you will submit an invoice package to DPCD showing that the project is complete as specified, contractors/vendors were paid in full and all other requirements were met. **Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and cannot be issued until the proposed project is complete.** DPCD will review the completed project to determine that the work was completed as specified and approved in your grant application.

The Storefront Improvement Program reserves the right to promote an approved project including, but not limited to, displaying a sign on the site during and after construction, and using photographs and project descriptions in program materials and press releases.

Contact Information

City of Salem, Department of Planning & Community Development, 120 Washington Street, 978/619-5685.

City of Salem reserves the right to make changes in the conditions of the Storefront Improvement Program as warranted.