



## **Grant Guidelines & Application**

Charleston Main Streets (CMS) is proud to offer a Façade Activation Program for business properties located in Charleston's East End, West Side, and Downtown. Eligible properties include those located within the East End Community Renewal Plan, West Side Community Renewal Plan, and Strategic Urban Renewal Plan for Downtown Charleston, East End, and West Side Districts. *This program is made possible through funding from the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority and Truist Foundation.* CMS is a grass roots organization whose goal is to assist businesses and merchants in our targeted areas with the belief that a strong business community paves the way for a strong neighborhood. It is our hope that these funds, subject to appropriation, will be used as an incentive and motivation for property and business owners to renovate the facades of their buildings in a manner that keeps with the historically appropriate feel for the East End and West Side neighborhoods and aesthetically enhances their business making it more attractive for current and future customers.

### **Façade Activation Grant Guidelines:**

1. The Façade Grant Activation program is a competitive grant process. Awards for each application and project will be decided upon by a Selection Committee and scored based on four main criteria: Quality of application, Financial viability, Project visibility, and Historic integrity. The physical street address must include direct access into the business from the street. These funds are a 50/50 match, i.e. if your project costs \$5,000 and is approved, CMS will match your \$2,500.
2. Two (2) written estimates for the total price of the project are required. If freelance work is planned to be completed, a full rendering of the work must be submitted along with quotes for the cost of all materials used for construction/renovation.
3. A graphic, physical representation and samples of materials along with a narrative must accompany the application of the proposed project. A color photograph representing any façade work to be completed is required.
4. CMS reserves the right to ask for clarification of any part of the application.
5. Work started prior to receiving written approval of grant funds will not be included in the reimbursement, unless previously approved by the Façade Grant Selection Committee.

6. The Grantee must submit a paid bill and cancelled checks or credit card receipts for reimbursement. Any unapproved changes may void the grant.
7. The applicant may be the property owner or tenant. A tenant must submit the property owner's signed approval.
8. A property owner or lessee may not apply for a grant if the property or business has previously received a façade assistance grant from CMS within two (2) years of this application date, or if any local taxes, fees, or fines are unpaid.
9. The CMS Executive Director will ensure that applications are complete and forward those to the Façade Grant Selection Committee.
10. Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:
  - a. **Quality of Application** – Is the application clear and concise? Is the project reasonable in scope, price and timeframe? Does the project meet the goals and objectives of the Façade Activation Program?
  - b. **Financial Viability** – Has the applicant demonstrated the ability to provide an adequate match? And the ability to pay invoices and await reimbursement? Has the applicant been awarded funds in the past, and if so, was the project successfully completed in a reasonable timeframe?
  - c. **Project Visibility** – Is the subject property one of visual prominence in the streetscape? Is it located on a corner or at a gateway? Does the property serve as an anchor for the district? Does the project address a blighted or vacant property? Is occupancy a probable outcome of the project?
  - d. **Historic Integrity** – Is the subject property a contributing structure in a historic district? Does the proposal address efforts necessary for the building's preservation? Does the applicant address the need for long-term maintenance plans?
11. All proposed designs must be in compliance with the corresponding CURA district Renewal Plan and the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston and must be approved by the Façade Grant Selection Committee. All required bids, vendors, and project timelines will be reviewed before final approval.
12. All storefronts shall be designed, constructed and maintained to complement and accept the architectural features of the building. All accessories, signs and awnings shall likewise harmonize with the overall character of the building and the area around it.

13. Once the project is approved and before any construction begins, a contract outlining all agreed upon work proposed within the grant shall be drawn up and signed by the CMS Executive Director and the applicant.
14. Appropriate building and zoning permits must be obtained from the City of Charleston and exterior building code violations must be brought up to date prior to grant reimbursement. The business and/or property owner must be in good standing, in compliance with, and current on all business licenses, municipal fees, taxes and levies.
15. The applicant grants permission to CMS to take and use photos of the completed project for publicity, educational and promotional use.
16. Façade Grant funds cannot be used for the following purposes: Permit fees, architectural or engineering fees, administrative expenses, taxes, inventory, and temporary signage.
17. The completed project must be left in its approved design and colors for a period of five (5) years from the date of completion, or as otherwise agreed upon by the grantee and CMS.
18. Application deadlines are as follows: March 31, June 30, September 30, December 31. Applications must be delivered via email or postmarked by the due date via US mail to the CMS office. Please see items #20 for CMS office contact information.
19. Approved applicants must submit a final report recapping their project and providing receipts accounting for total award reimbursement within 6 months of award notification.
20. Contact information for the Façade Grant Program:  
Email – [Facades@CharlestonMainStreets.org](mailto:Facades@CharlestonMainStreets.org)  
Physical Address: 428-A Shrewsbury Street, Charleston, WV 25301