

Business Façade Improvement

Frequently Asked Questions



Program Overview

The Business Façade Improvement program provides annual grant funding for local governments to enhance economic development by encouraging private sector investment in businesses façade improvements.

Program Frequently Asked Questions

How do I strengthen my application for funding?

The Business Façade Improvement program runs through an annual competitive intake process. Applications are assessed based on a number of strategic factors, outlined in the program guide. With limited funding available each year to support the BFI program, applications that include marketing materials and activities to actively promote the program within its designated municipality/regional district will be scored higher than those applications where the program is not. Staff will also consider program history.

When will we receive a funding decision?

Following Northern Development's invitation to apply, and a finalized application has been submitted to Northern Development, staff complete an application review and forward the application to the CEO for a funding decision. If approved, staff provide notice via email. An approval decision will be provided no later than December 31.

When can we start promoting the Business Façade Improvement program in our community?

Once you have received notification of your funding approval you may begin the program promotion and application intake.

If program funding is being carried forward for a second year, the program can be promoted upon confirmation from Northern Development staff.

When will we receive our approved grant funding?

The grant is disbursed at project completion. Reporting for the Business Façade Improvement administration year is due by January 31 of the following year (for example the program administered in 2024 would be reported to Northern Development by January 31, 2025). Once the reporting has been processed by Northern Development the grant will be disbursed.

What documents will we need to administer the program effectively?

To effectively and efficiently administer the Business Façade Improvement program within your community the following materials are needed: Customized program guidelines (Northern Development template), BFI application form, BFI reporting form/checklist, and any other materials the local government needs to promote the program or communicate program expectations, funding terms, agreement between parties, etc.

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What flexibility do we have to customize program eligibility for our community?

The Program Guidelines template has sections highlighted in yellow for community customization. All eligibility criteria specific to costs and project types are fixed. A community may choose to remove eligible project types from the list based on unique need but may not add additional projects outside the scope of what is listed in the program guidelines.

If you have questions about eligibility or proposed work not addressed in the guidelines, please contact Northern Development staff for discussion.

If we receive a façade improvement application that may or may not be eligible, what should we do?

It happens. Project applications may come through that are not clearly eligible or ineligible. When that happens, you can give the staff at Northern Development a call to discuss the project.

If we do not allocate all the approved funding for the calendar year, what do we do?

Applicants that have \$10,000 or more remaining from the previous year's funding approval will carry forward the remaining funds for this year's program administration. A new application will not be supported to top up the grant to a full \$20,000 maximum.

What is carry forward funding and how does it work?

Carry forward funding is when an approved community still has \$10,000 or more of the year's annual grant allocation uncommitted at year end. The community is given another calendar year to disburse the remaining funds. When carry forward funding is recommended, a new application to the program is not required, but updated guidelines for the calendar year need to be provided. Program promotion can begin January 1 of the new calendar year with confirmation from Northern Development.

For example: in 2026 the community was approved for \$20,000 but only supported one project and disbursed \$5,000 at the end of the year. The remaining \$15,000 will carry forward to 2027 to administer the program. The community would then be able to support up to three projects at the maximum \$5,000 grant amount.

If we complete the program reporting before the end of the calendar year, can we submit reporting early?

You may submit reporting prior to the January 31 deadline; however, reporting claims may not be reviewed or processed until January.