

# **TOCCOA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

***ALL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS MUST BE APPROVED  
PRIOR TO WORK COMMENCING***

## **Purpose Overview**

The Toccoa Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Façade Grant Program is intended to encourage new or existing property owners to improve the appearance of buildings in the Toccoa Main Street District.

Matching funds are made available for eligible improvements to business facades that are easily visible and in public right-of-ways, such as those that face a public street or a public parking area. Improvements must preserve the individual character of each building with its unique features, historic appearance and significance, as well as make a contribution and impact to the appeal of the Main Street district area. Note that all such improvements must meet the Historic Preservation Commission's design guidelines if located within the Historic District and have an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application and building permit.

The Façade Grant Program is funded by the City of Toccoa and administered by the Toccoa DDA. The DDA will determine the amount of matching funds based on the proposed façade change, grant funds available and the number of requests under consideration.

## **Façade Grant Eligibility Criteria**

- Eligible projects must be located in the Toccoa DDA boundary. For information regarding district boundaries, contact the Main Street office at 706.282.3232.
- Eligible participants include commercial and mixed-use property owners and business owners. If the property is leased, the property owner must consent to the proposed project. This consent will be provided in the application form.
- Priority will be given to buildings that are historic, architecturally significant and/or visually prominent, and to buildings with inappropriately applied facades that are unsightly or in need of repair.
- Façade must be facing a public street.

- To qualify for a façade grant, projects must result in improvements that:
  - a. Are appropriate for the building and consistent with the current business use;
  - b. Preserve the architectural integrity and restore, if possible the original building façade; and
  - c. Positively contribute to the appearance and vitality of Downtown Toccoa.
- Eligible projects must:
  - a. Be in harmony with preservation design guidelines outlined in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation found in its entirety at <http://www.nps.gov/typ/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm>;
  - b. Be in accordance with all government rules, regulations and laws, including but not limited to City of Toccoa ordinances and building codes, and if applicable, the Historic Preservation Commission's Design Guidelines.

## Grant Limitations

- a. Maximum granted per façade project up to \$20,000 on a 50/50 matching basis, four grants up to \$5,000 each.
- b. Award may vary based on building size and location to public right of ways at the **Toccoa DDA's discretion**.
- c. No grants will be awarded for work that has already been done or for work that is covered by insurance.
- d. Only one renovation project will be eligible per property in a 3 year time period.
- e. No grants are available for past projects or projects started prior to January 1, 2016.

## Grant Guidelines

1. Because Toccoa is a Georgia Main Street Community, local design services are available and may be provided at no charge from a historic preservation consultant, a drawing illustrating your building's storefront renovation, as well as a work plan, which will meet the design guidelines. This drawing can be included in your façade grant proposal. Please contact the Main Street office for more information on design services.
2. Potentially eligible work is limited to exterior improvements only-storefront facades that are easily visible to the public, such as those that face a public street or public parking area. Funds are only available for exterior improvements, and may be applied to a front, side or rear façade facing a public street or public parking.
3. From minor improvements, to full-scale restoration, a wide range of investment proposals will be considered, including:
  - Exterior walls/materials
  - Exterior building painting, re-siding
  - Exterior door, window and storefront feature repair/replacement/renovation

- Gutters and downspouts, cornice flashing and repair
  - Awnings and canopies installation or repair
  - Decorative exterior architectural features
  - Replacement/uncovering of architectural features
  - Replacement of non-historical storefronts/buildings
  - Restoration of original and/or historic façade
  - Structural stabilization
  - Masonry repairs and pointing
  - Exterior building lighting (not parking lots/pavement lighting)
  - Masonry cleaning (by gentlest means possible), if required for façade painting/stucco, etc.
  - Other façade oriented repairs and improvements
4. INELIGIBLE WORK includes but is not limited to:
- Signs
  - Roofs
  - Yard improvements (vegetation and/or pavement)
  - Interior improvements of any kind
  - Personal property/equipment
  - General maintenance (eg. pressure washing) (except painting)
  - Interior window/door treatments (storm windows and doors)
  - Security system, window bars, cameras
  - Sidewalk improvements
  - Landscape improvements
  - Tools /equipment
  - Paving
  - New construction
  - Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or relatives of the owner/applicant
5. Inappropriate chemical cleaners and sand blasting are strictly forbidden for surface cleaning of structures, due to possible damage of aged building components.
6. Participants assume full responsibility for all aspects of the project, any relationships with contractors and suppliers, and securing all necessary municipal approvals.
7. Applicants agree to maintain the approved improvements in good condition for a period of at least three years, making repairs as necessary, or risk repayment of grant funds to the City. This is at the Toccoa DDA's discretion, and will not be enforceable if the property changes owners.

## **Application Guidelines**

The attached application form is to be submitted to Toccoa DDA, c/o Ms. Connie Tabor, 92 North Alexander St, Toccoa, GA 30577. Applicants interested in the program should also consult with the Community Development Department to obtain appropriate permits and, if

necessary, the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). For assistance and more information, please contact, Connie Tabor at 706.282.3269.

Applications will be reviewed by the Toccoa DDA within thirty (30) days of receipt and in the order received. Only complete applications will be reviewed. A complete application includes the attached application form and all supporting materials as specified in the instructions. Incomplete application packets will be returned to the sender within two weeks if all materials are not submitted. Two itemized cost estimates are required with bids for identical scopes of work. Applicant must provide documentation that the contractors are licensed, bonded and/or insured. Applicants are encouraged to solicit local bids. If the applicant wishes to perform the work themselves, the grant funds apply only for materials not labor. Rental of tools and equipment requires valid receipt. A color photograph of the building is also required. Any drawings or architect's plans for the project should also be included.

## **Application Review**

The Toccoa DDA shall:

- a. Review each application packet for completeness;
- b. Make a determination regarding eligibility;
- c. Classify the project as either a minor or major improvement to set the timeline for completion; and
- d. Provide a grant approval or deny the project.

Each application packet will be reviewed on the following standards for review:

- a. Priority will be given to buildings that are historic, architecturally significant and/or visually prominent, and to buildings with inappropriate applied facades that are unsightly and in need of repair;
- b. Extent to which the project advances the goals of improving building appearance;
- c. Extent to which the project is compatible with the Historic Preservation Commission's design guidelines and/or the characteristics of the downtown area;
- d. Extent of the project's impact upon the Downtown Toccoa streetscape and pedestrian atmosphere;
- e. Historical/architectural significance of the building;
- f. Original condition of the building and the need for the changes of the proposed project;
- g. Extent to which the original building is preserved;
- h. Removal of historically inappropriate alterations;
- i. Prominence of the building;
- j. Quality of the work proposed;
- k. Level of match participation of the applicant;
- l. Range of projects completed and proposed as part of the Downtown Façade Grant program;
- m. Any other relevant factors deemed by the Toccoa DDA to be applicable.

The public is welcome to attend the meetings of the Toccoa DDA which will be held in Toccoa City Hall as needed. The applicant is required to attend the meeting in which his or her application is considered. The majority of the Toccoa DDA will be present to approve, deny, or table each complete application.

No later than two weeks after the Toccoa DDA meeting date, the applicant will receive a confirmation letter indicating the grant award decision, or in some cases, a request for additional information. In the instance of a decision to deny or table an application, the letter will indicate the DDA's reason for doing so. The Toccoa DDA reserves the right to table, deny or request modifications in any or all application packets, in whole or in part, and to negotiate changes in the proposed project. In the case of denial by the Toccoa DDA, the applicant can address the issues identified by the DDA and re-apply for a grant.

## **Grant Awards**

Approved projects will be reimbursed at up to fifty percent (50%) of the approved projects' total façade renovation cost. The award will not exceed the Façade Grant Program maximum grant of \$5,000.

**Please note:** If work is started on the applicant's project before the decision to make a grant award, only the remaining work will be eligible for a matching grant. Work should be pre-approved by the Toccoa DDA.

Approved applicants who change the scope of their work or elect to use a new contractor must submit new estimates and a revised proposal which must be reviewed and approved for the work to be eligible for reimbursement.

The Toccoa DDA reserves the right to recommend funds as it deems best to achieve its purposes and at its sole discretion. For example, the Toccoa DDA can grant funds in amounts as it deems appropriate to encourage the projects it deems most beneficial. Many factors are considered, such as the Main Street budget, number of applicants, financial considerations, applicant match, mixture of proposed projects, and the extent to which projects fulfill the goals and standards for eligible projects as set forth above.

## **Project Completion**

The Toccoa DDA shall classify each proposed project as either a minor or major improvement based on the project type and scope. Minor improvements include projects such as painting, re-pointing brick and replacing non-conforming doors and windows. Major improvements would include projects costing above \$20,000 such as a complete restoration of a building façade. Minor improvements must be started within 30 days of receipt of the confirmation letter and completed within 120 days of said receipt, or re-application will be required. Major improvements must be started within ninety (90) days of receiving the confirmation letter and completed within twelve (12) months of said receipt, or re-application will be required.

Failure to complete projects within four months of approval date, if minor improvements and twelve months of approval date if major improvements, will result in loss of approved funds. To qualify for reimbursement, all work must be complete and in conformance with the approved plans.

## **Reimbursement**

After project completion, the applicant is reimbursed with awarded grant funds upon:

- a. Satisfactory completion of the project with conformance to approved plans;
- b. Receipt of a reimbursement request plus all receipts and proof of payment, including canceled checks;
- c. The Toccoa DDA shall review all receipts, prior to award approval.
- d. Vendor receipts must be included for material and/or labor;
- e. Contractor must provide receipts to applicant;
- f. Documentation and signature of contractor of cost required;
- g. Before and after photos required;
- h. Compliance with all applicable municipal rules, laws, ordinances, and regulations;
- i. Building permit must be obtained before façade grant approval;
- j. Applicant must be current with all city taxes, business license fees and other applicable fees; Applicant must provide a copy of current business license and current receipt of payment of taxes;
- k. Reaffirmation of applicant's commitment to maintain project improvements for a period at least 3 years.

All reimbursement requests are to be submitted to Toccoa DDA, c/o Ms. Connie Tabor, 92 North Alexander Street, Toccoa, GA 30577. The Toccoa DDA reserves the right to increase or decrease a grant award in accordance with receipt of actual expenditures.