



COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Program and Design Guidelines

The North Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (“North Beach CRA”) Commercial Façade Improvement Program (“Program”) is a matching grant incentive program available for business owners and commercial property owners to help pay the costs of physical improvements to the building façade of their place of business.

The Program is available to commercial buildings in North Beach’s Normandy Isles/Vendome Plaza neighborhood, located within the Normandy Isles National Register Historic District, please reference the Program Boundary Map and/or contact the North Beach CRA to determine eligibility. The neighborhood’s architecture contributes to the area’s historic character and reflects the Miami Modern (MiMo) architectural style, with notable influences by French-born urban planner Henri Levy. The Program focuses upon cultivating an improved visual experience and sense of place through external enhancements to existing buildings.

Program funding awards consist of matching grants of 70% the cost of eligible projects, up to an amount not to exceed \$20,000 per application provided on a reimbursement basis for expenses paid on completed work.

Façade Improvements Benefit Everyone

- ❖ Business Proprietors and Commercial Property Owners: spur growth in foot traffic and first-time customers, increased sales, and attraction of new tenants to vacant storefronts.
- ❖ Residential Community and Visitors: business vitality supports the local economy, improves conditions, contributes to a safer environment, and instills pride and a sense of community.
- ❖ Development and Investment in the CRA: supports economic development, strengthens relationships among community stakeholders, and affirms public confidence in the role of the North Beach CRA.

For additional information and access to the Program’s online application, please visit the North Beach CRA website, www.miamibeachfl.gov/northbeachcra.

You may also contact the North Beach CRA by telephone at 305.673.7572 or schedule in person appointments at the North Beach CRA District Office located at 962 Normandy Drive (Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).



The following information contains important Program details including eligible and ineligible property improvement types and expenses, requirements for application submittal and eligibility criteria, the Program cycle timeline and grant selection process.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Program aims to (i) assist business and property owners to improve, repair, and preserve older buildings; (ii) stimulate investment in private property that revitalizes and raises property values; and (iii) highlight historic architecture and foster a sense of place that is attractive and welcoming to the entire community, whether visitor, resident, shopper, or merchant.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

- Any building owner or commercial tenant of a nonresidential building located within the Program's geographic area is eligible to apply.
- All applications from building tenants require the signature and approval of the building owner. Exterior improvements must be completed within 12 months of award. The award letter and application agreement will specify the deadline for when the work needs to be completed. All improvements must comply with Miami Beach Municipal Code and Florida Building Code standards.

Ineligible

- Properties that are exclusively residential or do not contain ground floor commercial use;
- Properties containing prohibited or non-conforming uses;
- Properties whose primary purpose is a place of worship;
- Properties encumbered by judgement liens, delinquent mortgage and tax obligations, and/or building or code violations; and
- Vacant, unimproved land.

ELIGIBLE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

A building façade is defined as one vertical side of a building regardless of the number of stories. Only those portions of the building that are visible from a public street are eligible for the Program.

To be eligible for grant reimbursement, expenses must be related to improvements made to the street-facing exterior of properties, including:

- Restoration or rehabilitation of the building's original and/or historic construction materials (and removal of false façade elements);
- Stucco and/or clapboard restoration;
- Painting (colors must be approved administratively);
- Windows (impact-rated), framing installation, glass, and/or door repair or replacement;
- Signage;
- Awnings (including the repair or removal of old awnings and canopies and/or installation of new awnings);
- Exterior lighting installation, repair, or replacement;
- Façade or masonry renovation or repair;
- Parking facility and/or driveway or installation, repair or enhancements;
- Installation of brick, textured, and/or sustainable/pervious pavement; and

- Accessibility upgrades.
- Soft costs such as design fees (architecture, engineering, plans), contracting services, building permits and surveys. Payments for the applicant's own labor or other in-kind costs are NOT eligible.

INELIGIBLE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

- Improvements inconsistent with the direction of the North Beach CRA Board or application guidelines.
- Improvements performed prior to execution of final agreement with North Beach CRA.
- Interior renovations and new construction of additional floor area or habitable space.
- Payments for the applicant's own labor or other in-kind costs.
- Any service or improvements performed by a non-licensed contractor.
- Storm water enhancements.
- Decorative fencing or privacy fencing.
- Removal of architecturally significant features.
- Installation or repair of statues and fountains.
- General maintenance that should be performed as part of routine up-keep.

The following descriptions represent considerations for improvements and are not intended to be inclusive of all permissible improvement types:

Façade

- New storefronts, display windows, and exterior architectural elements.
- Removal of elements that cover original architectural design and details.
- Replacement of architectural elements that have structural deficiencies.
- Exterior painting and new lighting.
- Demolition required for the approval of the façade improvements.
- Roof improvements that are visible and contribute to the architectural aesthetics of the building. Complete roof repair or replacement is not permitted.
- Improvements that enhance access, such as handicapped ramps.

Signage

Upgraded signs are one of the most common and effective ways of drawing attention to a business. An effective sign is memorable and showcases the quality and personality of a business. The simpler the sign, the more attention it will receive. Eligible improvements could include (1) building or street-edge signage and (2) electrical work directly related to the exterior of the building or the installation of approved signage.

Awnings

Awnings help define storefronts and embellish the streetscape. They provide shade to protect merchandise from the sun and shelter customers from bad weather. Eligible improvements could include the removal of old awnings and the production and installation of new awnings and canopies.

Lighting

Decorative external light fixtures attached to the building or freestanding. Improved lighting enhances the visual appeal of storefronts and increases public safety along the entire street. Strategic use of warm, ambient lighting can enhance product display and improve advertising to customers while contributing to an attractive, safe street front.

Framing, windows, and entrances

Together, framing, display windows, and entrances comprise the “storefront system” and should be compatible and inviting. Materials, color, and scale should work together to create a pleasant design that lures customers and enhances the commercial corridor.

Storefronts with ample window space add more natural lighting and allow customers to see into the store, permitting the merchandise to speak for itself. Window displays provide an opportunity to introduce creativity and leave a lasting impression on passersby.

Entrances composed of large glass panels provide for maximum visibility and are welcoming to customers. Make it easy to see into your store. Clear windows and minimal signage will lure customers inside.

Restoration of historic or original construction

Highlighting historic detail is an easy way to create a memorable storefront and reinforce district identity. Restoring historic architectural details is often more unique and attractive than introducing contemporary elements. Modifications which are consistent with original building design and evidenced by a past building permit approved by the City may qualify for administrative, fast-track approval.

Miscellaneous

- Landscaping and irrigation when considered integral to the façade treatment of the building.
- Permanent site furnishing that provides a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, such as benches, trash cans, bike racks, etc. Improvements to the pedestrian and transportation functionality of the property.
- Improvements necessary for fire safety and/or ADA accessibility compliance.

REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Grant funds will be allocated to projects satisfying one or more of the Program criteria. An application will be considered, where preliminary approval of the following requirements has been satisfied. The City reserves the discretion to accept, reject or request modification of any application.

- Submission of a completed application form
- Color photographs of current façade from sidewalk or street
- Conceptual design and specific scope of work
- Proof of fire and extended insurance for property
- Proof of insurance and necessary business licenses for selected contractor
- Itemized project cost estimate
- Documentation of property owner’s approval and permission for tenant improvements
- Documentation that the subject property is up to date on all City of Miami Beach and Miami-Dade County property taxes
- Documentation that the business located in the subject property has an active and valid City of Miami Beach Business Tax Receipt (BTR)

Verification and eligibility determination

- North Beach CRA staff shall verify all information as necessary.
- Once an applicant has been determined to meet eligibility requirements, an initial inspection of the property will be conducted by staff to evaluate suitability and determine if there are any code violations or life and safety issues requiring remediation.
- Applicants will be notified in writing regarding eligibility status, including explanation for application denial, if applicable.

Approval and notifications

- Grant awards may only be authorized by the North Beach CRA Board following a recommendation by North Beach CRA staff. To obtain matching grant funding, applicants must meet all property eligibility and program requirements in effect at the time of funding approval.

PROGRAM CYCLE TIMELINE (TENTATIVE)

- Applications to the Program are accepted twice per year. During each grant cycle, the online application may be accessed for an application period of 4-6 weeks.
- After closing of the application period, staff will review applications and make preliminary award recommendations over the following 3-4 weeks. If the project is not recommended for award of grant funding, the applicant will also be notified.
- Grant applications will be evaluated on a first-come, first-qualified, first-served basis.
- Following preliminary recommendation for award, staff will schedule a meeting with applicant to ensure clear understanding of program guidelines, and obligations and responsibilities of all parties.
- Each application recommended for award by the staff must be considered and approved by the North Beach CRA Board, who authorizes awards pursuant to adoption of a resolution.
- Following North Beach CRA Board approval, the grant recipient will receive an award letter and grant agreement for execution outlining the grant details, project deadline, and expectations.
- The grant recipient is required to provide bi-monthly updates to North Beach CRA staff throughout the project permitting and construction process.
- After the improvements are completed, the grant recipient must provide the following to the North Beach CRA for review, prior to reimbursement of expenses: copies of receipts and/or paid invoices, proof of payment (copy of checks or bank statements), contractor license documentation, and photos of completed work.

APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

The North Beach CRA Board will consider the following criteria when evaluating applications:

- Businesses and properties owned by Miami Beach residents;
- Businesses and properties owned by veterans;
- Projects that support small business retention and expansion in the North Beach CRA;
- Projects with heightened vehicular and pedestrian visibility;
- Projects that support, encourage, promote, or maintain affordable or workforce housing;
- Projects that incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED);
- Projects with improvements of high-quality design and/or value based on recognized professional standards or best practices;
- Projects that align with the design standards established for the neighborhood and, when applicable, which may include historic preservation;
- For vacant commercial properties, identification of an end use (office, retail, etc.) and tenants secured (at least a letter of intent); and
- Projects that have a clear construction timeline and can be completed within six (6) to twelve (12) months.

GRANT AWARDS

- The maximum contribution awarded per applicant or property is \$20,000.
- The Program will match, on a reimbursement basis, up to seventy percent (70%) of the total project costs, up to an amount not to exceed \$20,000.
- Fifty percent (50%) of the grant award is eligible to be disbursed upon satisfactory completion of fifty percent (50%) of the approved project improvements.
- Project costs incurred before application approval and/or the grant award are ineligible for reimbursement, therefore applicants are strongly discouraged from commencing construction prior to applying for the Program and receiving express approval from North Beach CRA staff and the North Beach CRA Board.
- Amendments to these guidelines may be incorporated from time to time by the North Beach CRA. Vested authority shall be granted to the North Beach CRA Executive Director or his/her designee to authorize minor waiver or amendment to these guidelines. All major amendments to or deviation from these guidelines shall be approved by the North Beach CRA Board.

COMMON FAÇADE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

*This image depicts architectural elements commonly associated with building façades. It is provided for illustration purposes only and not intended to provide design recommendations or requirements.

