



**CITY OF BESSEMER
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The City of Bessemer Façade Improvement Program provides financial assistance to eligible property and business owners for exterior improvements that enhance the appearance, safety, and economic vitality of commercial properties.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

- ✓ Confirm ownership of the property or obtain written authorization from the property owner.
- ✓ Ensure all City taxes, licenses, and fees are current.
- ✓ Review the program guidelines and eligible improvements.
- ✓ Obtain cost estimates from qualified contractors.
- ✓ Do NOT begin work before receiving written approval from the City.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Examples of eligible façade improvements include:

- Exterior painting
- Masonry repair and restoration
- Storefront improvements
- Window and door replacement
- Awnings and canopies
- Exterior lighting
- Signage improvements
- ADA accessibility improvements
- Decorative architectural enhancements
- Historic façade restoration

Example:

Project Cost Grant Amount Owner Contribution

\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000

HOW TO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT

1. Receive City approval.
 2. Complete approved improvements.
 3. Submit invoices and proof of payment.
 4. Complete final inspection.
 5. Receive reimbursement based on approved grant amount.
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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Submit complete applications.
- ✓ Obtain multiple contractor quotes.
- ✓ Keep copies of all project records.
- ✓ Communicate with City staff before making project changes.
- ✓ Take photographs before work begins.
- ✓ Do not exceed the approved project scope without prior approval.

IMPORTANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

****No Work Before Approval****

Work started before City approval may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Exterior Improvements Only

Grant funds are intended for visible exterior improvements that improve the appearance of the property and surrounding business district.

Reimbursement Program

This is generally a reimbursement grant program. Property owners are responsible for paying contractors and submitting documentation for reimbursement.

KEEP THESE DOCUMENTS

You will be required to submit:

- ✓ Contractor invoices
- ✓ Paid receipts
- ✓ Proof of payment (cancelled checks, bank statements, credit card receipts, etc.)
- ✓ Before and after photographs
- ✓ Required permits and approvals

PROJECT INSPECTIONS

City staff may conduct inspections:

- Prior to project approval
- During construction
- Upon project completion

All work must be completed according to approved plans and applicable building codes.

OWNER MATCH REQUIREMENT

Depending on program guidelines, owners may be required to contribute a portion of project costs.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the Façade Improvement Program?

The Façade Improvement Program provides financial assistance to eligible commercial property owners and business owners for exterior building improvements that enhance the appearance, safety, and economic vitality of commercial corridors within the City of Bessemer.

2. Who can apply?

Eligible applicants may include:

- Commercial property owners
 - Business owners with written property owner approval
 - Mixed-use commercial property owners
 - Nonprofit organizations occupying eligible commercial properties
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3. What types of improvements are eligible?

Examples include:

- Exterior painting
 - Storefront renovations
 - Window and door replacement
 - Awnings and canopies
 - Exterior lighting
 - Signage improvements
 - Masonry repair
 - ADA accessibility improvements
 - Historic preservation improvements
-

4. What improvements are not eligible?

Examples include:

- Interior renovations
 - Furniture and fixtures
 - Inventory purchases
 - Operating expenses
 - Routine maintenance
 - Roof repairs not visible from the public right-of-way
 - Improvements started before City approval
-

5. Can I start work before I am approved?

No.

Work started before receiving written approval from the City may not be eligible for reimbursement.

6. How much funding can I receive?

Grant amounts will depend on available funding and program guidelines. The City may establish a maximum grant amount per property and may require matching funds from the owner.

7. Is this a reimbursement program?

Yes.

Property owners are generally required to pay for approved improvements and then submit documentation for reimbursement after the work has been completed and inspected.

8. What documents will I need?

Applicants may be required to submit:

- Completed application
- Property ownership documentation
- Contractor estimates or quotes
- Photographs of existing conditions
- Business license (if applicable)
- W-9 form
- Proof of insurance (if required)

9. Do I need permits?

Possibly.

Applicants are responsible for obtaining all required permits and approvals before construction begins.

10. Can I do the work myself?

Generally, improvements must be completed by licensed and insured contractors. Contact the City for specific program requirements regarding self-performed work.

11. How do I receive reimbursement?

After project completion, applicants must submit:

- Paid invoices
- Proof of payment

- Before and after photographs
- Required permits
- Final inspection approval

Once approved, reimbursement will be processed according to City procedures.

12. What happens if my project costs more than expected?

The property owner is responsible for costs exceeding the approved grant amount unless additional funding is approved by the City in advance.

13. Can I change my project after approval?

Any changes to the approved scope of work must receive written approval from the City before the changes are made.

14. Will my property be inspected?

Yes.

The city may conduct inspections before, during, and after construction to verify compliance with program requirements.

15. What is the goal of the program?

The goal is to improve commercial properties, encourage investment, strengthen business districts, enhance property values, and promote economic development throughout the City of Bessemer.

Important Notice

Cash payments are strongly discouraged because they are difficult to verify. If cash is accepted, the owner should provide:

- Signed contractor receipt
- Invoice marked PAID
- Contractor acknowledgment of payment

Suggested Program Policy

Reimbursement will only be made after the property owner submits acceptable proof of payment, paid invoices, and all required supporting documentation, and the City verifies that the approved façade improvements have been completed in accordance with program requirements.

City Verification

Prior to reimbursement, the City of Bessemer Economic & Community Development Department may verify:

- Completion of approved improvements
- Compliance with program guidelines
- Accuracy of submitted invoices
- Validity of payment documentation
- Compliance with applicable building codes and permit requirements

Reimbursement funds will not be released until all required documentation has been reviewed and approved by the City.

Documentation Checklist

Required Document	Submitted
Completed Reimbursement Request	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contractor Invoice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proof of Payment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>

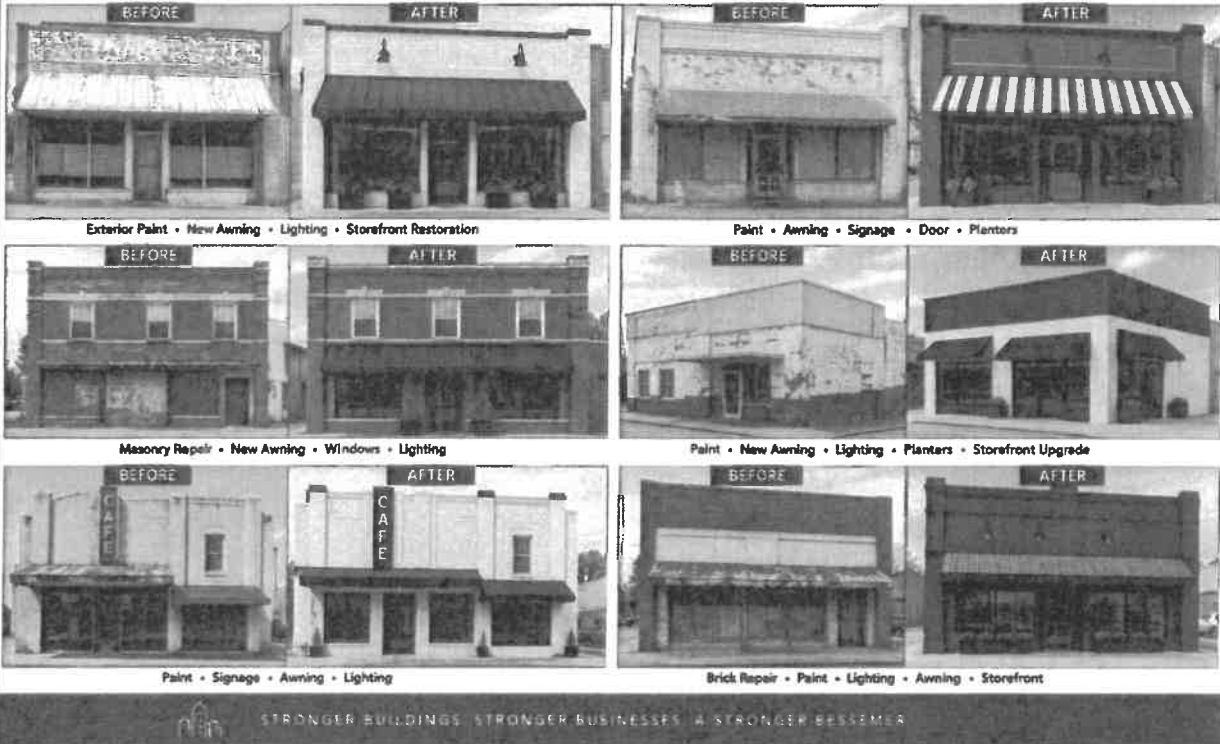
Please turn in your completed application along with all the REQUIRED documentation to:

City of Bessemer
Economic & Community Development
1700 Third Ave North
Bessemer, Ala 35020

Questions? Please call 205-424-4060

CITY OF BESSEMER FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

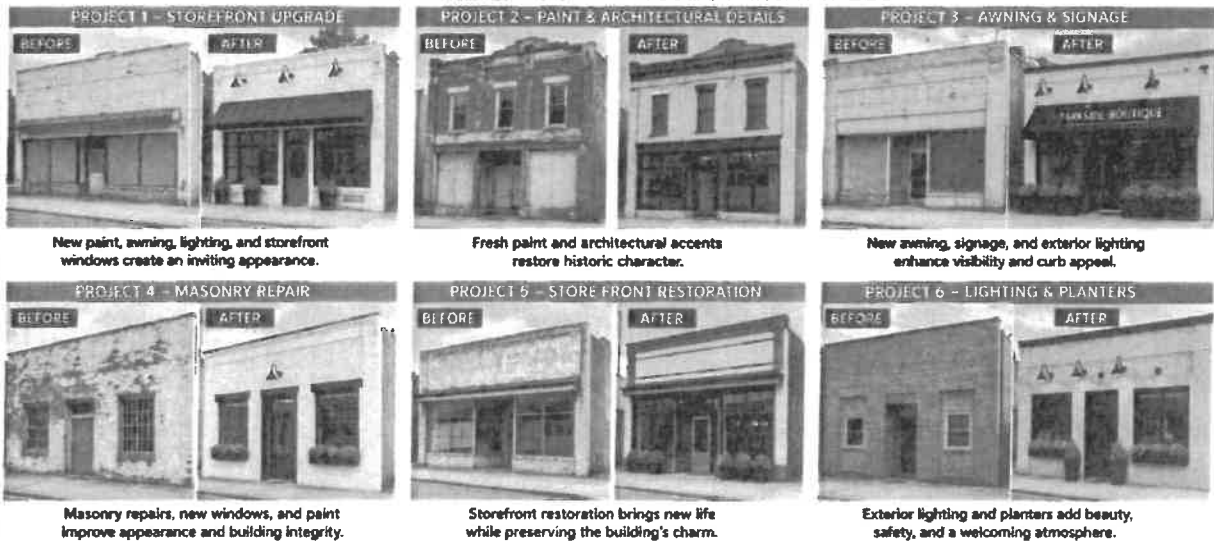
Investing in Our Properties. Strengthening Our Community.



CITY OF BESSEMER FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Revitalizing Our Community • Strengthening Our Businesses • Building a Better Bessemer

BEFORE & AFTER PROJECT EXAMPLES



CITY OF
BESSEMER
ALABAMA
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

TOGETHER, WE CAN
create a stronger, more vibrant
Bessemer for businesses,
residents, and visitors!



INTERESTED IN IMPROVING YOUR PROPERTY?
Contact the City of Bessemer Economic & Community
Development Department for program details and
application information.

205-424-4060 | 1700 3rd Avenue North, Bessemer, AL 35020

A **Façade Improvement Program** focuses on the **visible exterior portions of a commercial building** that enhance its appearance, safety, accessibility, and economic vitality. CDBG-funded façade programs are intended to improve the public appearance of business districts and encourage private investment. Eligible improvements must comply with HUD requirements and the City's program guidelines.

Areas of a Building That a Façade Program May Cover

Building Front (Primary Façade)

- Exterior painting
- Brick cleaning and tuckpointing
- Stucco repair
- Stone restoration
- Decorative architectural features
- Exterior trim replacement
- Cornice repair
- Exterior siding repair or replacement

Storefront

- Storefront restoration
- New storefront systems
- Display windows
- Glass replacement
- Entry doors
- Security doors (if compatible with design standards)
- Transom windows

Windows

- Window replacement
- Historic window restoration
- Decorative window trim
- Energy-efficient windows
- Storefront glazing

Doors

- Main entrance doors
- ADA-compliant entry doors
- Decorative entrance improvements
- Hardware replacement
- Historic door restoration

Exterior Lighting

- Decorative wall lighting
- Gooseneck lighting
- Canopy lighting
- LED façade lighting
- Security lighting that enhances the building's appearance

Awnings and Canopies

- Fabric awnings
- Metal awnings
- Architectural canopies
- Replacement of damaged awnings

Signage

- Wall-mounted business signs
- Monument signs (where allowed)
- Hanging signs
- Historic sign restoration
- Sign lighting

Accessibility (ADA)

- Accessible entrances
- Handrails
- Accessible ramps
- Door hardware improvements
- Accessible exterior routes

Masonry

- Brick repair
- Block repair
- Concrete repair
- Mortar repointing
- Waterproofing (when part of exterior restoration)

Roof Features (Visible from the Public Right-of-Way)

- Decorative parapets
- Fascia repair
- Roof screening
- Cornice restoration

Note: Full roof replacement is generally not considered a façade improvement unless it is specifically part of an approved exterior rehabilitation project.

Site Improvements Directly Related to the Façade

- Decorative planters
- Benches
- Trash receptacles
- Bicycle racks
- Landscaping
- Decorative fencing
- Courtyard improvements visible from the street

Typical Ineligible Improvements

- Interior remodeling
- Interior painting
- Office furniture
- Inventory
- Kitchen equipment
- Appliances
- Flooring
- HVAC systems (unless integral to an approved exterior rehabilitation)
- Routine maintenance
- Working capital
- Vehicle purchases

Benefits of a Façade Improvement Program

A well-designed façade program can:

- Improve the appearance of commercial corridors
- Increase property values
- Attract new businesses and customers
- Encourage private investment
- Preserve historic buildings
- Improve pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Reduce building deterioration
- Support downtown revitalization
- Strengthen neighborhood pride
- Stimulate economic development



City of Bessemer
Economic & Community Development
Dr. Charlena Morton
Director

City of Bessemer Façade Improvement Program
2026

City of Bessemer
Economic & Community Development
1700 Third Avenue N
Bessemer, Ala 35020
(205) 424-4060

The Façade Improvement Program is designed to encourage commercial building improvements that enhance the appearance of business corridors within the City of Bessemer. The program provides financial assistance to eligible property and business owners for exterior renovations that improve the visual appeal, safety, and economic vitality of commercial areas.

The City of Bessemer's Façade Rehabilitation Grant program promotes growth and development by supporting small business owners in transforming their commercial buildings into vibrant, attractive spaces. Property owners and businesses can receive matching reimbursement grants of up to \$15,000

To refurbish the exteriors of their existing buildings, enhancing the community and stimulating economic activity.

The City of Bessemer is committed to assist businesses and property owners in the downtown and older commercial districts, The Façade Rehabilitation Grant program has helped several businesses out a new "face" on the way they market their goods and services.

Projects must be consistent with Federal HUD Guidelines including Federal Labor Standards, State and Local Building Codes, Zoning/and Planning Approvals, Scenic and Historic Approvals and Guidelines, any other relevant or applicable regulations/regulators.

Program Details:

- Grant amounts up to \$15,000 inside Priority Areas for Economic Development.
- Grants require a 1:1 match by the tenant or property owner. Approved applicants must spend an amount on improvements, renovations, and/or additional at least equal to the amount of grant funds provided.
- Business must be within the city limits of Bessemer, Ala.
- Business must meet all eligibility requirements and be approved for grant prior to any work being performed to be reimbursed.

Application Process:

- Submission and approval of complete grant application are required to the start of any improvements eligible for assistance.
- All improvements must be to the exterior of the building.
- This program is a reimbursable program. If approved, owner will be required to submit invoices prior to any payments.
- Applications will be prioritized using a scoring process that evaluates:
 - Completeness & accuracy of the application
 - Impact on target area
 - Long-Term use of property
 - Financial viability of the project.

City of Bessemer Façade Improvement Program

The Façade Improvement Grant provides financial assistance for exterior renovations and repairs to small businesses in commercial and mixed-use buildings. Enhanced building facades can increase curb appeal, benefiting businesses such as retail shops, restaurants, bakeries, and breweries.

Awards are remitted as reimbursements paid to owner after the successful completion and documentation of the approved project.

Purpose of the Program

By enhancing the appearance of building facades and emphasizing the most viable use of commercial properties within the areas, the program serves to improve the economic viability of these areas and to provide a diverse offering of businesses to best serve the citizens of Bessemer. Better aesthetics and more viable commercial uses in a manner authorized by all applicable laws and regulations of the State of Alabama and the City of Bessemer will increase property values, improve the market ability of space within the buildings and draw additional business, visitors and residents to the area.

Façade Improvement Program – Applicant Requirements

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding assistance:

1. Business Location

- The property/business must be located within the city limits of Bessemer, Downtown or within the Historic District
- Priority may be given to businesses located within designated commercial corridors or redevelopment areas.

2. Property Ownership / Authorization

- Applicants must be:
 - The legal property owner; or
 - A tenant/business owner with written approval from the property owner.

3. Business Status

- The business must possess:
 - A current City business license
 - Current state and federal registrations, if applicable
- Businesses must be in good standing with the City of Bessemer.

4. Taxes & Financial Obligations

- Property taxes, business licenses, and municipal obligations must be current.

- Applicants may not have outstanding code violations, liens, or judgments with the City of Bessemer.

5. Eligible Improvements

Eligible façade improvements may include:

- Exterior painting
- Storefront restoration
- Windows and doors
- Exterior lighting
- Awnings and canopies
- Signage
- Masonry repair
- Landscaping improvements
- Architectural enhancements
- ADA exterior accessibility improvements

6. Ineligible Improvements

The following are generally not eligible:

- Interior renovations
- Routine maintenance
- Roof repairs (unless façade-related)
- New construction
- Inventory or equipment purchases
- Temporary signage
- Work started before approval

7. Contractor Requirements

- Contractors must possess all required licenses and insurance.
- Applicants may be required to submit multiple cost estimates/quotes.

8. Design Approval

- All improvements must receive written approval from the City prior to construction.
- Proposed improvements must comply with applicable zoning, building, and historic preservation requirements.

9. Before & After Documentation

- Applicants must provide current photographs of the property before work begins.
- Final photographs and proof of payment must be submitted before reimbursement.

10. Reimbursement Basis

- Funding assistance is provided on a reimbursement basis only.
- Applicants are responsible for paying contractors/vendors upfront unless otherwise approved by the City of Bessemer.

11. Project Completion

- Approved projects must typically be completed within the timeframe established in the grant agreement (example: 90–180 days).

12. Compliance

- Applicants agree to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations associated with the program.
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Application Checklist

Please submit the following with your completed application:

- Completed Application Form
- Copy of Business License
- Proof of Property Ownership or Signed Landlord Authorization
- Current Photos of Building Exterior
- Contractor Estimates/Bids
- Proposed Design Plans or Drawings (if applicable)
- W-9 Form
- Proof of Insurance for Contractor
- Copy of Deed or Lease Agreement (all pages)
- Certificate of Good Standing (if applicable)

Incomplete applications or no submission of required documents may delay processing.

Please turn in all application, Project Description & all required documentation to:

City of Bessemer
Economic & Community Development
1700 Third Avenue N
Bessemer, Ala 35020
(205) 424-4060

Before returning your application:

- Be sure application is completely filled out legibly and accurately
- All required documents have been attached to the application.
- Application has been signed and dated.
- Do not submit any original documents

Questions:

**Economic & Community
Development**
City of Bessemer
1700 Third Avenue N
Bessemer, Ala. 35020
205-424-4060



City of Bessemer Facade Program Application

Updated MAY 2026

NOTICE TO APPLICANT

Applications will be accepted and reviewed individually. The application submittal period may be closed at any time at the discretion of The City of Bessemer Economic & Community Development.

Each document required as part of this application needs to be labeled as such. The detailed project narratives must be submitted addressing all of the information on pages 2-3 of this application; any and all supporting documentation related to the narrative is welcome. Additional documentation may be requested during the application review process as determined necessary by the Director.

Application Checklist

A complete application shall consist of the following documents:

- Completed Grant Application
- Proof of Property Ownership or Signed Landlord Authorization (Deed or Lease Agreement)
- W-9 Form
- Business License
- Proof of Insurance Business and General Contractor
- Proof applicant is up to date on all City taxes, fees, and licenses
- Contractor Estimates or Bids, photos of building exterior
- Copy of any lease agreement authorizing the tenant to make exterior improvements or a letter from the property owner authorizing improvements to be made
- Detailed business plan or proposal for the re-use of the property (vacant structures or future businesses), as applicable, Design Plans or Drawings (if applicable)
- Detailed Project Narrative, including:
 - Any plans, drawings, concepts, sketches, or other visual renderings
 - A proposed timeline of improvements
 - Any cost estimates for the proposed improvements, including quotes, scope of work, contractor, etc.
 - A detailed description of the impact to neighborhood and other businesses
 - Copies of any City approvals or permits for the proposed improvements

Contact Information

Business Name _____ Federal Tax ID # or EIN # _____

Contact Name _____ Contact Email _____ Contact Phone _____



City of Bessemer Facade Program Application

Updated MAY 2026

Contact Mailing Address _____

Applicant Eligibility Information

Applicant Type: Property Owner Tenant

Structure Type: Single-Tenant Structure Multi-Tenant Structure Vacant Lot

Business: Commercial Services Retail Services Professional Services Residential Mixed Use Vacant

Franchise Type: Local Chain Regional Chain National Chain N/A

Number of Tenants or Sultes Located in Structure: _____

Project Information

Proposed Improvements (check all that apply)

New Signage Signage Repair Signage Replacement Façade Modification Façade Repair

Façade Replacement Façade Upgrade Landscaping/Plantings Outdoor Lighting

Other Activity: _____

Include a detailed description of the proposed improvements, including scope of work, materials, contractors, and any other relevant information. Any approvals or permits from the City should be included, as available, for the proposed work, including compliance with the City of Bessemer.

Projected Timeline for Proposed Improvements

Total Days	Start Date	End Date

Include a detailed timeline of the different phases, steps, actions, and benchmarks of the projected timeline for completing the proposed improvements.

Funding Information

Total Funding Amount Requested	Total Match Amount	Total Projected Cost

Source of Matching Funds	% of Anticipated Match

Include all supporting documentation related to the match amount and proposed costs, including quotes, letters, documents, approvals, etc., providing source of funds and proof of fund availability.



City of Bessemer Façade Program Application

Project Description

Please describe the proposed
Exterior building and site
Improvements *

What are your goals with this project *

How will the grant funds help your
business? *

I attest that I do not have any outstanding
Taxes, fees, judgements, or liens to any government entity* Yes No

I understand all work will require building permits and must be completed by a licensed contractor
and must be completed within 6 months or 180 days from approval notice.

_____ Yes, I agree _____ (initial here)

_____ No, I do not agree _____ (initial here)



City of Bessemer Facade Program Application

Updated **MAY2026**

Affidavit

By signing below, I certify that all information provided is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge and agree that I have read and understand The City of Bessemer Grant Application guidelines and understand that any non-compliance with the award agreement may require repayment of any issued funds:

Applicant Name

Applicant Signature

Date

