

Wabash Marketplace, Inc.

Façade Improvement Program

In 2015, Wabash Marketplace Inc., (WMI) will launch a new Façade Grant Program funded through the Economic Development Group and the City of Wabash. The grant is administered through WMI's Economic Restructuring Committee with project designs being approved by the Wabash Historic Preservation Commission (WHPC).

Grant funds are available for exterior facade improvements only, and may be applied to any exterior façade that faces a public street or visibly open space such as a parking lot. Other requests will be considered and voted upon by the Economic Restructuring Committee of WMI. Grant amount for each application will be weighed based on the overall applicant investment and matching criteria. All applications will be scored by the Economic Restructuring Committee of WMI. Each application will be scored by three (3) individuals, two WMI members and a person designated by the Redevelopment Commission. These scores will then be averaged. WMI board of directors will vote on the final scores of applicants and funds will be awarded accordingly. Decisions by the WMI board are final and non-appealable.

1. Program Goals:

The primary goals of the Façade Improvement Program are to:

- Maintain vibrancy of Wabash's downtown core by encouraging investments that enhance the visual aesthetics of commercial properties that lead to increased property values.
- Stimulate economic development by providing incentives to increase private investment, ensure structure sustainability, and create aesthetically pleasing areas that attract new businesses, residential uses, and consumers.
- Complement other revitalization efforts to ensure the maximum leverage of resources.

2. Program Participation Criteria

Criteria to participate in the Façade Improvement Program:

-Program Boundaries: Buildings proposed for façade improvements must be located in the Downtown Wabash Local Historic District. Any applicants outside this boundary will be considered by the Economic Restructuring Committee of WMI based on the property's impact on the Downtown Wabash Local Historic District.

-Buildings proposed for façade improvements must have commercial activity as their primary purpose, such as: retail and specialty stores, restaurants, bars, cultural venues, professional offices. These include:

- Mixed-use buildings are eligible where first floor is retail commercial use and upper floors are residential in nature.
- Vacant buildings are eligible as long as owners intend to renovate building to habitable condition as determined by the City of Wabash's Building Commissioner or the International Building Code.

- Buildings that are solely used for residential purposes are not eligible for this program. Examples of ineligible residential properties include single-family houses, duplexes, apartments, condominiums, and assisted living centers.
- Faith-based or religious organizations or uses are eligible for this grant program as long as the project meets the criteria established in these guidelines.

-Grant program focuses on the improvement of existing buildings' facades. Therefore, new construction is only eligible as an extension of an existing façade via a project where the newly constructed façade area comprises no more than 25% of the total façade grant project cost.

-Applicants who own multiple buildings in the allowable area may submit multiple Façade Improvement Applications.

-Applicants must have a signed Grant Agreement with WMI prior to commencing work on the primary facade. Funds spent on primary façade before the Grant Agreement is signed by both parties are not eligible for reimbursement.

-Funding awards cannot be increased after the Grant Agreement is signed. However, if a grant recipient reduces the level of investment, WMI must reduce the grant amount previously approved, for a grant cannot equal more than 50% of the façade grant project.

-Along with the Application Form, applicants are required to submit a detailed scope of work and a cost estimate in the form of a contractor's bid. This information is vital in determining whether or not the project fits the goals of the Façade Improvement Program and helps establish the grant amount to be awarded.

-All projects receiving a grant award must comply with the Wabash Historic Preservation Commission. The WHPC must provide a Certificate of Appropriateness for all eligible work before construction begins.

-All façade improvements must be in compliance with all City of Wabash guidelines, local Zoning Ordinance, Sign Ordinance, Building Codes and other codes, and any other local, state, and federal laws and ordinances.

-A licensed general contractor must be utilized for projects with a total project cost over \$10,000 unless waived by WMI due to scope of work.

-Engineering study is required on all buildings where total project cost exceeds \$40,000. If engineering study reveals structural deficiencies that jeopardize the building, the owner must remedy structural deficiencies otherwise they will forfeit their Façade Improvement grant.

-Applicants delinquent in property taxes or delinquent in WMI membership fees are disqualified from applying for the Façade Improvement Program unless delinquency is remedied.

-An applicant that is also a board member of Wabash Marketplace, Inc. may not participate in the scoring process, deliberations or inspections as they apply to the board member/applicant's project.

-Applicants are responsible for obtaining all necessary local, state, and/or federal permits prior to the start of construction.

-All applicants must pay a \$75 non-refundable application fee at time of application submission.

-Façade Improvement work must begin within six months of grant award and must be completed within one year of contract award. WMI reserves the right to rescind any award if work has not commenced within the specified time frame.

3. Match Requirement

The Façade Improvement Program requires a dollar-for-dollar match by the owner of the structure intended for improvement:

- 40% of the cost of significant roof repair or replacement will be allowed as match toward the façade grant match requirement.
- 30% of the cost of renovation to non-eligible facades, (rear or sides of building), will be allowed as match toward the façade grant match requirement.
- 100% of the cost of eligible improvements to primary (front) façade by owner will be allowed as match toward the façade grant match requirement.

4. Eligible Expenses

Façade Improvement Program Funds must be used for the primary façade of the eligible building. The following types of improvements are eligible for funding under this program:

Architectural details	New or renovated attached signs
Siding materials	Brick work, tuck pointing, stone work
Paint	Soffit and Fascia
Windows	Exterior lighting attached to the building
Doors	Awnings
Any other façade improvements as approved by WMI	

5. Program Criteria – Applicants will be scored on the following criteria. Applicants may receive zero (0) to five (5) points for each criterion. Each application will be scored by three (3) individuals, two WMI members and a person designated by the Redevelopment Commission. Each criterion will then be averaged. The applicant's total score will be compared to all other applicants. Applicants with the highest scores will receive priority.

-Private Investment: projects in which the applicant is providing more than the required 50% match will be given a higher priority.

-Focus on Vacant or Underutilized Structures: is the building currently vacant or partially vacant? Is any part of the building incapable of habitation?

- Project's impact on surrounding corridor: Will project enhance surrounding renovation activities?
- Long term durability and sustainability of improvements: Structural versus less permanent improvements.
- Applicant's readiness to proceed: Applicant has performed structural/engineering analysis of building, obtained architectural plans, cost estimates, contractor bids.
- Visual prominence of structure or façade: Is the building located in priority area, historic district, or prominent corner in the downtown core?
- Structure's level of blight and or risk of deterioration/demolition: Is the building in immediate need of repair in order to save it from further severe decline or threat of demolition?
- Applicant is undertaking restoration of existing building instead of new construction.
- Buildings receiving Façade funds in the past five years will receive a lower score than those that have not.

6. Application Requirements and Submission

A completed checklist of items is required when submitting a Façade Improvement Grant Application. Please see attached checklist.

If you have any questions regarding this application packet, please call Wabash Marketplace, Inc. at 260-563-0975 or email questions to info@wabashmarketplace.org.

Submit your application(s) by mail: Wabash Marketplace, Inc., P.O. Box 420, Wabash, IN 46992.

Or in person: Wabash Marketplace, Inc., 104 West Market Street, Wabash, IN 46992.

Façade Improvement Program Application Checklist

- Are you a member of WMI? **You must be a member and current with membership fees to apply for Façade Improvement Program Funds.**
- Complete Applicant Information Sheet (attached)
- Is intended Façade Program property located in Historic Preservation District? **See attached Map.** If not, meet with WMI to determine eligibility.
- Are your property taxes current? **Complete the attached form and go to Wabash County Treasurer's Office to receive Property Tax verification on your building(s).**
- Detailed scope of work completed?
- Obtain contractor bids?
- If estimated project cost is over \$40,000 has there been an engineering study completed?
- Have you met with the Wabash Historic Preservation Commission to discuss scope of work and compliance to historic standards? **Complete the attached Certificate of Appropriateness and obtain approval through the Wabash Historic Preservation Commission.**
- Have you met with local building inspector to determine compliance with local building codes? **Contact John Stephens at 574-377-0316**
- If your scope of work is over \$10,000, is your contractor licensed?
- Have you obtained necessary permits for scope of work?
- Have you put together your project time-line?
- A \$75 nonrefundable application fee must be paid at time of application submittal. This fee covers administrative cost for processing applications.
- No work on primary façade may begin until grant agreement is signed by all parties. Once signed, work may proceed provided all previous conditions are met (permits, engineering study, WHPC, etc.)
- When work has been completed with evidence of required match, WMI will reimburse applicant with approved grant amount. **Notify WMI in writing of completion of work along with necessary evidence of match. WMI reserves the right to inspect all work done under this program.**

Façade Improvement Program Applicant Information Sheet

Applicant Name: _____

Doing Business As: _____

Applicant Address: _____

Applicant Phone: Work _____ Cell: _____

Applicant Email: _____

Address of Façade Improvement Project (a separate application is required for each building requiring Façade Improvement Funds):

Is Intended Building Currently Occupied? _____