



COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Funded by the Dept. of Housing & Urban Development

Choice Neighborhood Initiative Grant

Administered by the City of Winston-Salem, NC

2025

Choice Neighborhood Initiative

The City of Winston-Salem in partnership with the Housing Authority of Winston-Salem (HAWS) were co-recipients of the \$30M Choice Neighborhood Initiative Grant in 2020 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grant is designed to redevelop Cleveland Avenue Homes and the surrounding area. A pillar of the CNI grant is implementing Critical Community Improvements (CCIs) that promote a better sense of livability, workability, economic mobility and beautification in the surrounding area.

Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program Overview

The City of Winston-Salem has developed the Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program (CFIGP) funded by the CNI grant to encourage growth and development by assisting property owners and businesses with improvements and/or renovations to the exterior of their buildings. This document outlines the grant program and how this grant will support businesses in enhancing their exterior appearance and contributing to the overall revitalization of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative target area.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- The grant is available to brick-and-mortar businesses, both owned and leased, including retail stores, restaurants, auto body and repair shops and service providers, operating within the CNI target area.
- The business must be in an area eligible for the grant, as defined by CNI target area and Neighborhood Services staff.
- Businesses must be owned by individuals or entities that meet the grant's criteria, which may include operating as a registered business entity and being in good standing with City of Winston-Salem ordinances and all other relevant ordinances.
- The business must comply with local zoning laws, building codes, current on all property taxes and other relevant regulations.
- If the applicant is a tenant, they must have a fully signed lease and written approval from the property owner supporting the improvements to be made and agree to the terms and conditions of the grant award. A lease term of a minimum of one (1) year is required.

Eligible Improvements Criteria

- Exterior Painting: Repaint or refresh existing paint to enhance the visual appeal. Includes surface preparation and application of high-quality paint.
- Signage: Design and install new or improved signage that is visible, legible, and complies with municipal laws.
- Lighting: Upgrade or install new energy efficient LED lighting to highlight the facade and improve visibility and safety during evening hours.
- Windows and Doors: Repair, replace, or upgrade windows and doors to improve energy efficiency, security, and aesthetics
- Facade Repairs: Address any structural repairs needed for the facade, including masonry work, stucco application, vinyl siding or wood replacement.



Grant Terms and Conditions

- Grants shall not exceed \$40,000 per business and/or applicant.
- Grant funds must be used exclusively for approved exterior facade improvement projects. Any changes to the project scope or budget must be approved by the grant administrator.
- Projects must be completed within one (1) year of the grant award notification.
- Grantees must provide regular progress reports and a final report upon project completion, including before-and-after photographs and proof of expenses.
- All work must comply with local building codes and regulations.
- The grant may only be spent on structures within the CNI target area.
- Funding shall only support capital investments (expenditures for renovations and/or improvements to the exterior of the structure).
- Funding shall **NOT** be used for personal property or in connection with personal property.
- All proposed renovations and/or improvements must receive or have received appropriate permits from the City of Winston-Salem.
- Improvements and/or renovations must be made within 1 year of the award notification.

Application and Award Process

- Complete in full and submit the grant application form, available in-person at the Bryce A. Stuart Municipal Building or online City of Winston-Salem's website.
- Provide required documentation, which may include:
 - Proof of business registration and ownership or lease.
 - Summary of business owner's façade improvement expectations.
 - Scope of work
 - Photographs of the existing facade.
 - Proof of location (i.e. Certificate of Insurance)
- Applications must be submitted by May 30, 2025, at 5:00pm. Late submissions may not be considered.
- Neighborhood Services staff will evaluate the application, and all supporting documentation based on the evaluation criteria listed in the next section.
- Grant funds shall NOT be front-loaded or advanced prior to any work commencing.
- Funds will be awarded to the applicant, and they are responsible for paying their contractor(s).

Evaluation Criteria

Applications are typically evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Impact (10 points):** Potential of the proposed improvements to enhance the business's appearance and attract customers.
- **Design Quality (15 points):** Professional quality of design and alignment with local aesthetic guidelines.
- **Feasibility (30 points):** Realistic budget and timeline, and ability to complete the project within the grant period.
- **Financial Health (10 points):** Business is up to date with all commercial property taxes and utility bills and is not under receivership nor bankruptcy proceedings.
- **Community Benefits (30 points):** Contribution to the overall improvement of the commercial area and community engagement.

Post Award Next Steps

- The selected applicant(s) shall meet with a City Construction Advisor to review their proposed scope of work to discuss the feasibility.
- Once the scope of work is reviewed and approved, the selected applicant shall invite at least three (3) contractors of their choice to submit a quote for their approved scope of work.
- The selected applicant(s) and property owner(s) will sign an agreement with the City of Winston-Salem and obtain a notice to proceed prior to any work commencing.
- The grant program is designed to be funded as a reimbursement into at most two installments; the first installment can be paid at fifty (50%) percent of completion and the final payment will be released after all work is completed and inspected.
- Applicants must submit regular progress reports to the CNI Business Façade grant administrator, including updates on work completed and any issues encountered.
- Applicants must provide a comprehensive final report upon project completion, including before-and-after photos, a summary of work performed, and proof of expenses.
- Applicants must ensure all work complies with HUD grant requirements and local regulations. Provide documentation of permits, inspections, and approvals.
- Selected applicants may need to cover costs upfront and may seek reimbursement by submitting invoices and proof of payment in two (2) installments.

Additional Resources

- [Unified Development Ordinance \(UDO\)](#): Refer to the UDO regarding the development ordinances, permitting information and aesthetic standards to ensure compliance.

FAQs

- **How often is the grant available?** The grant may be offered on a periodic basis, such as annually or semi-annually. Check with the Neighborhood Services staff for specific timelines.
- **Can I apply for multiple projects?** Eligibility is for only structures located within the CNI target area, one (1) per business, unless the business and/or property has another functional business in the target area.
- **What is the business and/or property owner responsible for?** The business and/or property owners are responsible for submitting their application and pertinent supporting documentation. They are also responsible for providing at least three (3) quotes from different contractors and selecting their contractor. The business and/or property owners are responsible for any current and/or future damages to their property. The business and/or property owners are responsible for paying their selected contractor. This responsibility for the business and/or property owner may exceed outside of the information in these guidelines.
- **What is the City of Winston-Salem responsible for?** The City is responsible for administering the grant program. Evaluating all applications and communicating with all applicants. The City is also responsible for paying selected applicants for their improvements and/or renovations.
- **What if my application is not approved?** Unsuccessful applicants may seek feedback and reapply in future grant cycles or explore other funding opportunities.

This information provides a general overview of what to expect from a CNI Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program (CFIGP) Specific details may vary based on the grant program and local regulations.

Contact Information

For more information or assistance with the application process, contact:

- City of Winston-Salem Neighborhood Services Department
- Phone: 336-727-8000
- Website: <https://www.cityofws.org/276/Lending>
- Office Address: 100 E. First Street Winston-Salem, NC 27101 Suite 423