

**City of Whiteville**  
**Building Improvement Grant Program**  
**Downtown Whiteville Municipal Service District**  
**Information and Application Package**

**I. Overview**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Building Improvement Grant Program is to provide assistance and economic incentives to downtown property owners to renovate storefronts of buildings in the downtown municipal service district.

**Program Objectives**

- Improve public understanding of the benefits of preserving and maintaining the unique architectural assets of the community.
- Improve the appearance of storefronts in the downtown areas.
- Encourage economic development in the downtowns by improving the overall appearance of the downtown areas.
- Increase merchants' and property owners' understanding of the importance of appearance to economic success.
- Encourage quality design projects which capitalize on the rehabilitation of existing properties.
- Assist property owners with design guidance and expertise.
- Preserve the unique historic character of the downtown district.
- Gain eligibility for contribution to the National Historic Registry.

**Eligibility**

1. Eligible properties must be located within the boundaries of the designated Municipal Service district (see attached map).
2. Only commercial buildings are eligible for funding. No funding will be awarded for private residences or other non-commercial uses.
3. Property owners or tenants may apply; however, any tenant requesting funding must provide written permission from the property owner with the grant application.
4. Property owners may apply annually; however, applicants may only be awarded funding for each individual property every two years.
5. Only one grant will be awarded per property per fiscal year.
6. Applicants who do not receive funding may apply again during the same fiscal year.

## **II. Financial Matters**

### **Funding Amounts**

**The maximum grant amount is \$2000 per property.** This is a matching grant program requiring a 50/50 cash match from the grantee. Grantees must provide a cash match equal to or greater than the grant award. (Cash purchases are direct, out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are supported by paid invoices, cancelled checks, signed receipts or official payroll records.)

### **Funding Requirements**

1. Applicant must provide a minimum of two written estimates for costs of labor, materials, and/or other work associated with the project along with the application.
2. Upon completion of the project, grantee must provide copies of paid invoices for all costs associated with the project.
3. Grants will be awarded based on availability of funds. A maximum of \$2000 will be awarded per project. Applicants can apply for less than the maximum funding amount for their project.

### **Source of Funding**

The Building Improvement Grant Program for the downtown municipal service district is made possible through an appropriation by the Whiteville City Council.

## **III. Project Guidelines**

### **Project Standards**

1. Grant funding shall apply only to improvements to the front (façade) of the building. All matching contributions must also apply to the front of the building.
2. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation shall be used as guidelines for all improvements associated with the project.
3. Rehabilitation projects shall respect the architectural integrity of the building, retaining those elements which enhance the appearance of the structure, and adding elements which are in keeping with the architectural style of the building.
4. Where possible, any modifications which have previously been made to the building, and which have altered the original character of the building, should be removed or reversed so as to restore the building to its original appearance.
5. All projects shall obtain proper permits (where required) and shall meet all state and local code requirements.

### **Examples of Eligible Expenses**

- Removal of false fronts, siding, or metal awnings or canopies
- Cleaning of brick, stone, or other building face materials
- Sign removal or replacement
- Canvas awning installation
- Front window or door repairs
- Repainting (building façade only)
- Structural repairs to building face
- Restoration, addition or replacement of exterior fixtures
- Addition or replacement of address information
- Restoration of historic architectural features
- Costs associated with project design or construction (architectural, engineering, or consultant fees, etc.)
- Demolition costs associated with an approved project
- Window, Display, or Storefront Design
- Reopening or Grand Opening Advertisement
- Exterior lighting

**All projects are subject to the approval of City of Whiteville.**

### **Ineligible Expenses for Grant Reimbursement**

- Expenses incurred before or after the contract period
- Any expense not part of the approved budget for the grant application
- Costs associated with preparing the grant application
- Expenses not supported by proper documentation (paid receipts, invoices, etc.)
- Landscaping
- Repairs, alterations or additions to the interior of the building
- Repairs, alterations or additions to any part of the building other than the front façade
- Any items not permanently affixed to the face of the building (benches or other furniture, flower pots, decorations such as flags or banners, temporary or seasonal decorations, portable or temporary signs, etc.)
- Parking improvements
- Installation of materials (siding, etc.) which obscure the original architectural features of the building
- Any alterations or additions not in keeping with the architectural style of the building or the character of the district.

## IV. Process

### Application Process

1. **Applications must be submitted at Whiteville City Hall or Vineland Station.**
2. Application must include:
  - All completed and signed application forms
  - Written authorization of the property owner, if applicant is not the property owner
  - Two written estimates of all project costs
  - Design plans or sketches, where applicable
  - Statements from lending institutions, if applicable
  - Project budget
3. The Planning and Inspections Department will be available to answer questions or provide technical assistance as needed during the application process.

### Review and Award Process

1. Projects will be reviewed for compliance with existing codes and or ordinances.
2. Projects will be evaluated based on the adherence to project guidelines, innovation, appropriateness for the architectural style of the building, context within the surrounding environment, and overall impact to the appearance of the building and the district.
2. Each application will be reviewed by the City of Whiteville. Funding will be awarded based on the above standards and availability of funds.
4. The City of Whiteville reserves the right to reject any and all applications that do not meet the stated criteria.
5. Written notification will be sent to each applicant stating whether the project is accepted as presented, accepted with conditions, or rejected.

### Payment Process

1. Prior to commencement of the project, a contractual agreement must be signed by the grantee, the property owner (if the property owner is not the grantee) and the city manager.
2. Project must be carried out based on the approved plans and scope of work submitted with the application. Any change of plans after project approval must be reviewed and approved by the City of Whiteville.
3. Grants are made on a **reimbursement basis**. Grantees must submit a request for reimbursement, including proper documentation of all expenses incurred on the project, before any reimbursements are made. This means that the grantee must have funds available to cover project expenditures until reimbursement is made.
4. A final accomplishment report must be submitted with the request for reimbursement.

5. Projects are not considered complete until all necessary inspections (if required) have been passed, and the project has been reviewed for adherence to approved plans and scope of work submitted with the application.
6. Upon completion of the project and receipt of all final documentation, a check will be issued to the grantee for the agreed upon sum of the grant, up to a maximum of \$2000. Checks will be issued within four weeks of request for reimbursement.
7. **All projects must be complete and all documentation submitted to the City of Whiteville.**

**For Questions Please Contact:**

**Madison L. Ward  
Economic Development Planner  
701 Madison St.  
Whiteville NC 28472  
910-640-1380 ext. 2005  
mward@ci.whiteville.nc.us**

**317 Madison St  
Whiteville NC 28472  
910-640-1380 ext. 2003**