Frequently Asked Questions

Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions for the **NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Program**. If your question is not answered below, please feel free to reach out to Associate Manager of Projects and Research Brittani’ Batts at bbatts@savingplaces.org.

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Program Overview

1. **How is the NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Program funded?**

   This program is made possible by a $746,900 grant from the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program (HRSP) as administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Department of Interior. This is the first year of funding for the HRSP. State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Certified Local Governments, and non-profits were eligible to apply for funding to support a subgrant program to fund multiple preservation projects in their rural jurisdictions.

   Funding for this competitive program is provided by the 2018 Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) which comes from revenue from Federal oil leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, providing assistance for a broad range of preservation projects without expending tax dollars.

   For more information about the grants and the HRSP, please visit [https://go.nps.gov/revitalization](https://go.nps.gov/revitalization).

Coordinating Program Application and Community Selection

1. **Who can apply?**

   All state or regional Main Street America Coordinating Programs that have at least three Main Street communities with populations of 50,000 or fewer are eligible to apply. As a part of their applications, coordinators will be required to recommend five communities from within their state or region to participate.

   Because the NPS Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program was created with the intention of supporting preservation in rural communities, communities recommended by the coordinator must have a population fewer than 50,000 people.

   **Recommended communities:**
   - Do not need to be Accredited Main Street communities. However, Accredited Main Street communities will receive priority in the lists of communities that coordinators submit.
   - Must have part or all of their Main Street commercial district already listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places to be considered.

2. **Can a community apply?**

   No, the application is open to coordinators only, with community selection within that state to follow. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to your state’s coordinating program and ask to be recommended in their application.

3. **Will coordinators be able to submit recommended communities along with the application?**

   We ask that coordinators recommend five communities within your application. If you are selected, three communities will be chosen from that list of five. *(continued on next page)*
In order to be considered, each community must submit a letter of support to be included in the coordinator application.

Four coordinating programs and three communities within each state will be selected to participate.

4. **When do applications open?**

   Applications open for coordinators on January 8, 2020. (Note: Grant applications will open to building and business owners in Spring 2020. See more details below.)

5. **What is the deadline?**

   The deadline for coordinator applications is February 12, 2020.

6. **Will the Coordinating Program be responsible for administering the funds?**

   No, Main Street America will be administering the NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Program funds.

7. **Is there a required financial commitment from the participating Main Street Coordinating Programs?**

   There is no financial commitment. However, there is a time commitment. Selected Coordinating Programs and local Main Street organizations will be required to help with outreach and application gathering.

   Coordinating Programs will be invited to participate in project design review. If there is local design review required, MSA will work with the Coordinating Programs and the local Main Street organizations to determine the flow of the project reviews.

   MSA reviewers overseeing this project design review meet the [Professional Qualification Standards](#) used by the National Park Service, published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61.

8. **When will winners be notified that they have been selected?**

   Coordinator application review will conclude March 4, 2020. Selected Coordinating Programs will be notified by March 6, 2020.

9. **How many grants will be given?**

   Each community of the twelve communities will receive about $46,000 for façade improvement grants to building and business owners. The number of grants will be determined by the size of grants building and business owners apply for. MSA estimates between 50-70 grants will be given overall.

10. **How much will the individual grants be?**

    Individual grants to building and business owners will be between $5,000 and $25,000. Each grant will require a match of at least 30% of the total project cost. For example, if the total project cost was $24,000, the grantee would contribute $7,200 (30%) and receive $16,800 (70%) in grant dollars. *(continued on next page)*
Grants will not exceed $25,000. So, in a project where $25,000 is less than 70% of the total project cost, the grantee would need to demonstrate ability to cover any additional costs in the project total. For example, if the total project cost is $50,000, the grantee would still receive a maximum grant of $25,000, with the remainder of the project cost to be covered with grantee match dollars.

Grant Program Details

1. Who is eligible to receive an NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant?
   Building owners and business owner tenants of commercial and/or mixed-use buildings are eligible to apply. Project buildings must be located within commercial districts and either already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP, either individually or as contributing to a district) or eligible to be listed (individually or as contributing to a district).

   Business owner tenants must demonstrate written approval from the building owner in order to be considered eligible.

2. What types of façade improvement projects are eligible for funding?
   Exterior rehabilitation and preservation projects including (but not limited to) awnings, storefronts, exterior lighting, window repair, masonry work or cleaning, and signage are eligible. Projects involving roof repair or landscaping may also be eligible if they are part of the scope of work for a larger exterior rehabilitation or preservation project.

   Successful applicants must preserve and repair original historic materials wherever possible. No portion of the funds may be utilized for interior improvements to the building. No portion of the funds may be utilized for work completed prior to receipt of the grant.

   All proposed rehabilitation and/or preservation work and improvements must be submitted to and approved in advance by MSA and NPS and be conducted in accordance with local design guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

   Please refer to NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Application page 2 for more details.

3. What will the grant applicant need to submit for project design review?
   In addition to the completed NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Application, each grant applicant will need to submit:
   - A narrative description or the project scope.
   - Construction scope of work.
   - Construction schedule.
   - Contractor scope of work with cost estimates.
   - A copy of the executed contract between the applicant and general contractor and/or subcontractors for the Project with a schedule of performance timeline.
   - Renderings and/or architecture plans (if available/applicable). (continued on next page)
4. **How does the project design review work?**

The applicant will submit project design review materials to MSA, who will review the proposed project scope and design in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Note: MSA reviewers overseeing this project scope and design review meet the Professional Qualification Standards used by NPS, published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61.

MSA will forward the materials to NPS who will review the project scope and design for compliance with Section 106 of the National Preservation Act of 1966 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). They will have 60 days to conduct their review.

If the project scope is determined to be in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and in compliance with the Section 106 and NEPA requirements MSA and NPS will approve the project and grant application to move forward for funding.

5. **Will grantees be required to sign a subgrant agreement?**

Yes, a signed subgrant agreement is required from grantee for awards being passed down. The agreement will adhere to guidelines from MSA and NPS regarding the grant and budget, funding, documentation, schedule, reporting, inspections, and warranties. Please see subgrant agreement form for more details.

6. **In addition to the subgrant agreement, what additional documents will a grantee need to submit in order for the grants to be disbursed?**

With their subgrant agreement, grantees will need to submit:

- A project completion schedule with project milestones demonstrating % project completion
- A current credit report received within the past 90 calendar days (if not available, MSA can obtain the report at grantees request)
- Certificate of insurance naming Main Street America as an additional insured. Please see subgrant agreement form for details on coverage.

7. **How will the grant be disbursed?**

50% of the grant will be disbursed within 30 days of the finalization of the subgrant agreement. When the project has been determined to be 50% completed, 30% of the remaining funds will be disbursed.

Then, when the project has been determined to be full completed will all grant requirements met, the remaining 20% of the grant will be disbursed.
8. How will the grantee demonstrate 50% and 100% completion of the project?
Grantees will demonstrate 50% project completion through submitting photos and other predetermined metrics that provide evidence for their original completion schedule’s milestones.

Grantees will demonstrate 100% completion through project completion photographs, other predetermined metrics, submitted semi-annual reports, and meet all of the requirements of federal funding (see below).

9. How long does the grantee have to complete their NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant project?
The grantee has up to 24 months from the finalization of the subgrant agreement to complete their project.

10. Do project properties need to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places before the grantees receive the grant?
No, grantees may receive their first grant installment before their project property is listed in the NRHP. However, project properties must be listed in the NRHP by the end of the project in order to receive the final grant installment of 20%.

11. Will grantees be required to sign a preservation agreement or covenant?
Yes, as required by all recipients of the funding from the federal Historic Preservation Fund. See details in the Historical Preservation Fund Manual, Chapter 6, Section M.

For grants below $10,001, grantees will be required to sign a five-year preservation agreement. For grants between $10,001-25,000, grantees will be required to sign five-year covenant agreement, which will be recorded on their property deed. See example agreement and covenant on the NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Program homepage.

12. As recipients of federal funds, what requirements will grantees need to meet?
As recipients of federal funds, grantees will be required to:

- Submit all proposed rehabilitation and/or preservation work and improvements to MSA (who will submit the project for review to NPS for review and approval. All proposed rehabilitation and/or preservation work and improvements must be conducted in accordance with local design guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.
- Display this NPS signage onsite while work is being done. See example for instructions.
- Comply with federal wage rate requirements and the Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). The federal Wage Rate Requirement is $10.20/hour.
- Get their project property listed in the NRHP as an individual listing or as a contributing structure to a district that is listed in the NRHP.
- Sign either a five-year preservation agreement or five-year preservation covenant.

13. Are there additional grantee requirements?
Yes, grantees will be required to submit semi-annual reports documenting predetermined metrics as well as their project match of at least 30% of the total project cost. See the Semi-Annual Report Form for details.

Also, grantees will be required to comply with all Federal and State Civil Rights and Equal Employment opportunity laws and agree not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.