

Culpeper Renaissance Inc.

Façade, Sign & Awning Improvement Grant Program Description and Terms of Participation

Introduction

Culpeper Renaissance Inc. (CRI) is launching an incentive plan to support and revitalize the historic downtown corridor. The overall appearance of the downtown buildings will weigh heavily into the success of the ongoing effort. Over the past 25 years, Culpeper Renaissance Inc. has assisted in the rejuvenation of downtown. Unfortunately, some buildings within the CRI footprint have unmet maintenance needs which may contribute to damage of their facades.

The Culpeper Renaissance Inc. Façade, Sign & Awning Improvement Grant Program was designed to assist with the maintenance and rehabilitation needs of buildings within the CRI footprint. The goal is to offer 50/50 matching grants to interested and qualified building and business owners. The Culpeper Renaissance Inc. Design Committee will administer the grant program.

Financing Terms

Grants may be awarded for up to 50% of the total cost of qualified façade restorations, repairs or rehabilitations. With a maximum grant award of \$2,500 for facades, and \$500 for signs or awnings. The annual budget for this program is \$10,000.

The Applicant must match the grant with cash or other certified funds. The Applicant may not charge, or receive credit for labor or “sweat equity” performed by the owner, Applicant, or any non-skilled laborer. Grants will be paid out on a reimbursement basis only after the Applicant proves full compliance with the grant award as set forth herein.

The grant may be treated as income subject to State and/or Federal Income Tax provisions. CRI cannot offer tax advice and offers no warranties relating to tax implications resulting from this grant. Applicants should consult with a tax advisor for clarification.

Eligible Improvements

The Façade, Sign & Awning Improvement Grant Program will encourage façade improvements ranging from minor projects to full façade renovations. The Grant Program is not designed to fund projects that constitute routine maintenance.

The following list illustrates the types of projects that may be funded by this grant program.

1. All exterior walls of building, with priority given to street-facing facades.
2. Exterior renovation, restoration, or reconstruction, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Façade washing/Brick cleaning
 - b. Removal of historically inappropriate materials from the facades

- c. Sign repair, if sign is integral to building façade
 - d. New signs, if the proposed sign is in a high-quality representation
 - e. Lighting
 - f. Awnings/canopies
 - g. Window restoration and replacement
 - h. Painting
 - i. Door replacement
 - j. Restoration of original architectural features
 - k. Window display area remodeling
 - l. Exterior lighting
 - m. Parapet repair
 - n. Other building preservation needs
3. Architectural design fees up to \$1,000, on a reimbursement basis, upon project completion.
 4. Landscaping immediately adjacent to the building.

Grants will not be awarded for projects that may damage the building façade. Specifically, sandblasting of brick will not be funded under the program, nor will the program participate in projects that include sandblasting of brick. In general, grant funds may not be used for improvements completed or in progress prior to notification of grant approval. However, the CRI Design Committee may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Restoration projects that accurately replicate historic architectural elements will be given funding priority. Preference will be given to structures of architectural or historic significance as determined by CRI and/or the Culpeper Architectural Review Board. Properties lacking architectural or historic significance may be deemed eligible for the program if proposed changes will create a façade typical of the architectural periods predominantly represented in downtown Culpeper.

Grant funds will be disbursed only upon completion of the project and submission of paid receipts from all laborers and material suppliers.

Exterior improvements must comply with the Culpeper Architectural Review Board guidelines and with all other applicable Town codes and regulations.

Eligible Participants

Owners and tenants (with permission from the building owner) of commercial or mixed commercial-residential property located in the CRI footprint may apply for funds. Tenants must have at least a two-year lease at the location in order to qualify for the grant program.

Commercial buildings are those buildings with commercial uses on the first floor. Residential uses are allowed above the main floor.

Only structurally sound buildings with safely functioning mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems will be considered for grants. In addition, the building owner must show evidence of insurance on the property in amounts to cover the property and intended improvements. Further, the aforementioned insurance must name the Town of Culpeper as an additional insured to the extent of any grant funds awarded.

Additional Grant Provisions

Neither the Town nor the board members of CRI are liable for damage to the building or personal injury that occurs during the project. All contractors and subcontractors used for work funded by this grant must be licensed if required by law and must be able to demonstrate qualifications.

No grant funds shall be assigned or pledged to any third party, nor be used for any purpose other than reimbursement of project costs as approved by the CRI Design Committee.

The successful applicant agrees to maintain the property and improvements, including, but not limited to, promptly removing graffiti, sweeping and shoveling in front of the property, and other appropriate maintenance. The Applicant agrees to return a pro-rated amount of the grant money received if the sign or awning improvement is removed within two years.

Grant Approval Process

1. The Applicant must submit a Façade, Sign or Awning Improvement Grant application to CRI.
2. CRI staff will review the application with the Applicant and will then forward the application with a recommendation regarding the grant to members of the CRI Design Committee before the Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting.
3. Façade Applications shall include an inspection of the site by a licensed architect or structural engineer to verify that the building is structurally sound and that all major building systems, such as electric, HVAC, fire protection, and plumbing, are functioning safely. All code deficiencies shall be noted. This is not required for sign or awning applications.
4. CRI Design Committee will review the application at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The committee will attempt to act upon the grant request at this meeting; however, the committee may request additional information from the Applicant or delay final action on the grant request for other reasons. The committee will not approve a specific grant amount until it has seen at least two bids from qualified contractors. Grant funding will be based on the lowest reasonable bid from a qualified contractor. The Applicant may use a higher bidder; however, the grant award will not cover the additional expense.
5. After the CRI Design Committee approves the application, the CRI staff in writing must approve all change orders. If the Applicant at any time deviates from the requirements set out by the review committee and fails to obtain a valid approval for such deviations, the grant may no longer be available. If, during the course of the project, unforeseen difficulties increase the cost of the project, the Applicant may see expedited review of a request for additional funds as long as the Applicant has not already received the maximum grant amount available. The CRI Design Committee will conduct the expedited review.
6. The Applicant may not serve as his or her own contractor except in those instances where the Applicant is an owner or partner in a company regularly doing business as a building contractor and in the opinion of CRI has the capacity and skill to complete the proposed improvements.
7. The Applicant must obtain a letter of approval from CRI prior to starting the project; however, it is not necessary that the letter be obtained prior to filing an application for a Façade, Sign or Awning Grant.
8. Necessary building or sign permits must be obtained before work begins. Questions regarding building or sign permits should be directed to the Town of Culpeper or other appropriate governing or regulatory bodies.
9. Prior to the release of any grant funds, the Applicant must submit to CRI lien waivers and a project completion report, including copies of all bills, receipts, and cancelled checks associated with the project, and proof of the payment of prevailing wages. In addition, such report shall

include evidence that such project for which the grant was awarded is 100% complete and all outstanding accounts and invoices are paid in full. The building inspector shall make a final on-site inspection of such completed project prior to the release of any grant funds for such project. In addition, the Chair of the CRI Design Committee, or his designee, must also inspect and approve of the project upon completion prior to the release of grant funds.

10. CRI may consider multiple grant requests pertaining to one site provided that the specific projects are sufficiently distinct and separate. However, only two grants may be given to one building in one year.
11. CRI reserves the right to deny any grant application or make changes in conditions of the Façade, Sign or Awning Improvement Program as warranted.
12. Recipients of any façade grant funds must agree to observe all applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the use of grant funds.
13. Projects must be completed in accordance with the procedures set forth in this document within one year from the date of the CRI Board meeting in which the grant was awarded or grant approval will automatically be revoked. The Design Committee reserves the right to allow a reasonable extension of time upon receiving a written request from the Applicant to do so.
14. CRI reserves the right to prioritize the applications on the basis of the location of the project, the extent of the work, the level of private funding and the relative impact of the proposed improvement on the area. In addition, CRI reserves the right to reject any applications regardless of the availability of funds or compliance with the Town of Culpeper design ordinance.

CRI makes no representations concerning final approval of any grant application and/or eligibility for reimbursement until the conditions herein have been met. Nothing herein creates a right of action against CRI. In the event Applicant institutes any legal action against CRI relating to this application, the Applicant agrees to pay all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, related to the legal action. This application shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. If any provision of this application is held to be invalid by a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall be deemed severed and shall continue in full force and effect.

Media Release

With the submittal of an application for a Façade, Sign or Awning Improvement Grant, the Applicant gives permission to notify media regarding the award of these grants. The Applicant acknowledges that representatives from either CRI or the Culpeper Architectural Review Board may provide the media with photographs of the Applicant and the project completed with grant funds.

Submit completed applications to:
Culpeper Renaissance Inc.
127 West Davis Street
Culpeper, VA 22701
(540) 825-4416