



## **Façade Assistance & Corridor Enhancement (FACE) Program Policy & Procedures 2019**

The Façade Assistance & Corridor Enhancement (FACE) program provides financial assistance to encourage exterior investment and enhancement to commercial industrial or office properties within the City of Worthington. The program provides a mixture of grant funds and no-cost financing to building owners or commercial tenants to improve their building facades and surrounding streetscapes. Retail and residential properties are not eligible for funding.

FACE is part of the City's efforts to retain and attract jobs in its commercial corridors. Improved properties will support the City's goal of attracting and retaining commercial renters and owners that provide employment in Worthington. Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate strong economic impacts within the City.

Worthington is known for appealing architecture and historic aesthetics, much of which derive from Worthington's design review and approval of development along the High Street and Granville Road corridors. This program is intended to spur investment in older and/or obsolete commercial properties to enhance the attraction and retention of employers to Worthington.

The City's previous façade program, ReCAP, was created in 2014 to focus on Worthington's industrial corridor. The program successfully supported sixteen projects through 2018, when the City understood the need to expand the geographic eligibility of the program to other commercial corridors. Previous awards have ranged from \$5,000 up to the maximum allowed of \$25,000. The City's contribution has been matched at least one to one with private funding in each project.

### **Section 1: Assistance Available**

A combination of grants and no-cost financing are available under FACE to fund commercial building exterior enhancements. FACE assistance is provided as a one-time, up-front cash payment for the loan portion, as well as a one-time reimbursement of the grant portion upon project completion. This assistance is intended to partially fund exterior enhancements to the

properties and improve the aesthetics of the City to prevent devaluation and disinvestment along the various commercial corridors. This program is not intended to help offset routine/deferred maintenance.

The maximum FACE award is fifty percent (50%) of the lowest contractor's bid (three bids required) for work under the project. The maximum FACE award is \$25,000. The cash assistance award will be comprised of half grant and half loan (each capped at 25% of the total project cost). The awardee may elect to forego the loan portion, but the grant portion will still be capped at 25% of the total project cost. Each project has a maximum one-time grant reimbursement payment of \$12,500, and a maximum \$12,500 loan at zero percent (0%) interest for a term of up to three (3) years. The actual award amount is determined by the cost of the work to be done under the project. Here is an example of a FACE project award:

Total Project Cost (Lowest of 3 Bids):	\$40,000
<b>FACE Award (50% of Total Project Cost):</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Grant Portion (25% of FACE Award):	\$10,000
Loan Portion (25% of FACE Award):	\$10,000

As part of the FACE Program, the City provides design assistance to applicants through a contract with the Neighborhood Design Center. When potential applicants contact the City regarding interest in the program, City staff will connect them with the Neighborhood Design Center who will provide design advice and assistance related to meaningful ways to utilize funds to enhance the aesthetics of the property. This design assistance is provided at no cost to the applicant.

If qualified to do so, the applicant may perform the improvement work. FACE funds cannot be used to compensate the applicant for the purchase or rental of tools and equipment or for applicant's labor or the labor of family, friends, employees, or others with a financial interest in the business or property. In such instances, FACE can be used only to pay for materials.

An application seeking FACE funds must be filed with the City to be considered for funding. The City may solicit certain property owners or tenants to participate. Applications will be reviewed by City staff and then forwarded to the Worthington Community Improvement Corporation for recommendation to City Council.

Awards are subject to the availability of funds and are first-come, first-served. 2019 application review deadlines are:

- February 28, 2019
- April 26, 2019

June 28, 2019  
August 30, 2019

The grant-loan award must be for exterior front façade enhancements (and/or side building elevation if located on a corner lot) and/or the streetscape adjacent to the subject building.

**Section 2: Eligibility**

Building owners and tenants, with the property owner’s approval, can apply for cash assistance if (1) the improvements are to a commercial building (industrial or office only – retail and residential are not eligible) within the City of Worthington; and (2) the applicant and building owners are in full compliance with City ordinances and regulations, including income and real estate tax obligations and building and zoning code regulations.

After an award is made, all build-out work must be completed according to the construction schedule submitted as part of the application. In all cases, FACE-assisted construction must be completed within 24 months of making application. All build-out work must be performed by licensed contractors which are bonded and insured for the project. All project work must be in compliance with applicable City building permit processes and planning commission approvals.

Applications must demonstrate, via a bank’s letter of credit, loan commitment or personal financial statement, the ability of the applicant to complete the entire project as proposed and repay the loan portion of the cash assistance award.

To receive funding or otherwise participate in the program, recipients cannot be in violation of any City rules, regulations or ordinances. A project close-out occurs upon an awardee’s submittal of any Certificates of Occupancy issued regarding the project, paid invoices to the licensed contractors and/or suppliers, and the full repayment of the loan component.

**Table 1: Eligible Improvement Costs**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exterior painting that incorporates a major visual change</li><li>• Significant masonry cleaning and restoration modification (if part of an overall design restoration)</li><li>• Addition of awnings or replacement of awnings with a updated design style that results in a major visual enhancement</li><li>• Enhanced exterior building lighting that creates a noticeably enhanced appearance</li><li>• Storefront entry systems and individual windows and door replacement or modification (if part of an overall design restoration)</li></ul> |
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- New or restored façade elements such as: cornices, soffits, canopies, and other detail elements
- Streetscape plantings, street furniture, new curbs and sidewalks, streetlights and related streetscape amenities
- Demolition (if part of an overall design)
- Signage, if new sign is in line with City overlay standards and/or new sign is significantly upgraded from existing old, out-of-date, substandard, or non-conforming signage
- Storm water improvements to parking lots

**Table 2: Ineligible Costs**

- Paying down on existing loans
- Routine/deferred maintenance (including painting, general masonry upkeep, general window and door upkeep, and repair or replacement of current lighting or removing inoperable lighting fixtures)
- Building Permit & Inspection Fees
- Working capital
- Security fencing or gates
- Inventory
- Roof repair or replacement
- Awning repair or replacement if utilizing the same style of awning
- Interior improvements of any kind

**Section 3: Application & Grant Payment Process**

FACE assistance is appropriated by Worthington City Council as part of its annual budget process; in 2019, the program has been appropriated \$75,000.

Building owners or tenants with the building owner’s approval, are to complete and submit the FACE Application Form, which must include digital photographs of the subject property as well as renderings or illustrations of the proposed improvements. The cost to prepare an application, if any, is solely the responsibility of the applicant.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the City's Economic Development Manager to discuss the project before submitting application materials. When contact is made, the Economic Development Manager will provide information regarding the program and will connect the potential applicant with the Neighborhood Design Center. The Neighborhood Design Center will provide design advice and assistance at no cost to the applicant. The Neighborhood Design Center is available to prepare renderings or illustrations of the proposed project and assist with other parts of the application.

City staff will review submitted FACE applications after the review deadlines listed in Section 1 and prepare them for the Worthington Community Improvement Corporation. The Worthington Community Improvement Corporation will prepare formal recommendations of funding for projects to City Council. Awardees should receive the approval of City Council prior to any construction commencing under their respective projects.

A one-time, up-front cash payment for the loan portion will be remitted upon City Council approval of the project and execution of an agreement between the City and the awardee detailing the terms and conditions of assistance. The grant portion will be paid to the awardee as a one-time reimbursement, upon request, after the project work has been completed.

#### **Section 4: Selection Criteria**

City staff will process each FACE application that has been submitted by the review deadline and prepare it for full review by the Worthington Community Improvement Corporation. Applications for assistance will be measured according to the following:

- Current physical condition / exterior appearance
  - Prominence and visibility of site
  - Perceived age of facilities and lack of exterior upkeep
  - Extent to which current conditions are impacting surrounding properties
- Project scope of work
  - Improvements will positively impact the site's appearance along the corridor
  - Improvements are in line with design expectations and build quality typical for similar properties in Worthington
  - Scope of Work will result in impactful, lasting aesthetic benefit to the property and does not simply entail deferred maintenance
  - Extent of pre-planning via the scope of work
  - Estimated completion time of the project
- Project viability and demonstrated ability to repay
  - Estimated total exterior project costs are reasonable and appropriate for the scope
  - Bids are in line with trade customs and comparable projects in the area

- Applicant's capabilities and capacity to successfully manage and complete the project
- Site not marked by obvious significant obstacles to renovation
- Applicant's ability to repay the loan within three (3) years
- Economic impact of the application
  - Applicant is making an investment in the property that exceeds the 1:1 match requirement
  - FACE funding is critical to the advancement of the project
  - These improvements will help the applicant create jobs/payroll at the project site
  - These improvements will help the applicant retain jobs/payroll at the project site
  - The project, once completed, will assist in keeping commercial tenants and/or locating new tenants
  - The nature of the exterior improvement project likely will result in an increase in the value of the Project Site and surrounding properties
  - Applicant's described use of any FACE award provides optimal return-on-investment in improving exterior façade