



Business Facade Improvement Program 2019

Building a Better Community

Village of Queen Charlotte

Business Façade Improvement Program 2019

Purpose

The Village of Queen Charlotte is a community set between the oceans and mountains of Haida Gwaii. Our local businesses form the social, cultural, and commercial heart of the community, and the character of their buildings is a significant factor in the quality of life of our residents.

The Village has been investing in community improvements such as Spirit Square, the Sea Walk, the Boat Launch facility and the development of park and community spaces. Improving the function, appearance, character, charm and vitality of our retail and commercial storefronts will enhance and maximize these efforts.

This document outlines the eligibility and quality standards for the types of improvements that will qualify for funding. The Business Façade Improvement Program is made possible with the financial support of the Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Program

❖ Business Façade Improvement Grants

The Business Façade Improvement grants match dollar for dollar **up to 50%** of improvement costs to a **lifetime maximum of \$5,000** per applicant to improve the exterior of retail and commercial buildings within municipal boundaries. Projects must have a **minimum total cost of \$1,000** (this includes the 50% applicant contribution).

Each privately owned commercial building is eligible for a grant. Established for-profit and not-for-profit businesses with building tenancy are eligible for the program. In the case of rented or leased space, written approval from the building Owner must be included in the application. This may result in more than one project/grant per building. In the case of a joint project between businesses in the same building, each separate business must submit a separate application for grant funding with a cover letter that explains the nature of the partnership. New businesses may apply for the grant with the stipulation that they need to be able to demonstrate that they are open and operating for at least two months of the year in which they receive the grant.

In order to enable new applicants to enter the program, businesses who have previously received grants and are re-applying will be placed at the bottom of the list for subsequent applications.

In the Village Zoning Bylaw, a commercial use is defined as a use providing for the selling of goods or services, for personal services, or for the servicing and repair of goods; includes retail uses, personal service, wholesaling in conjunction with retail sales, commercial and governmental offices, service stations, tourist accommodations, recreation facilities, commercial schools, household services and all associated repairs; and excludes manufacturing, salvaging, warehousing, the selling, servicing and repair of heavy industrial machinery.

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❖ Way-Find Signage Grants

Way-find signage grants for home occupations can fund **up to 50%** of signage costs to a **lifetime maximum of \$500** per applicant (this includes the 50% applicant contribution). Way-find signage refers to signs located on the business property (i.e. bottom of driveway) which directs customers to the business.

In the Village Zoning Bylaw, a home occupation is defined as an accessory use within a dwelling unit or accessory building for a small professional or home-based business, including but not limited to artist studio, workshop, bookkeeping, legal services and small-scale home sales.

General Guidelines

The Business Façade Improvement Program is primarily focused on the physical appearance of the buildings and their relationship to the street, and all improvements must be visible from the public right-of-way. The character and design of the building along with the businesses contained within attract shoppers both for goods and services that they provide, and for the experience of walking around an interesting and unique business area. Should village staff or Council deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact to the streetscape the application may be denied or require a resubmission.

Eligible Applicants

- Property owners or business owners (*if the applicant is NOT the property owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant*);
- Non-profit societies occupying commercial storefronts; and
- Home-based businesses (*only eligible for way-finding signage*).

Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Exterior architectural features
- New siding
- Façade Painting
- Awnings
- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement)
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims etc.)
- Signage (affixed to the building)
- Windows (only if part of larger improvements)
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger improvements)
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building (only if part of larger improvements)
- Way-finding signage (*only home-based business are eligible*)

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Ineligible Façade Improvements

- Routine maintenance or structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping, paving, fencing
- Interior / internal improvements
- Any improvements not visible from the public right of way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Eligible Costs/ Expenses

- Direct project labour costs
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to facade only)
- Contractor fees
- Rental of tools and equipment
- Project related materials and supplies
- PST

Ineligible Costs/ Expenses

- Owner/applicant wages and/or benefits related to project labour, or other costs related to supplies or administration
- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Equipment purchases
- Utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Shipping costs
- GST
- Permit fees

Business Façade Improvement Grant Application Requirements

Applications **must** include:

- 'Before' picture(s) and a design drawing (front elevation) showing the 'after' with the proposed improvements including color choices.
- A project budget estimate and or contractors quote for the proposed project clearly delineating costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building Owner providing written approval and/or a cover letter explaining a joint project partnership.

Designs need not to be done by a professional architect or designer but it is strongly encouraged that the business/property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that that grants will be awarded based on merit of design and visual impact to the streetscape. The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our streetscape.

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Way-Find Signage Grant Application Requirements

Applications **must** include:

- 'Before' pictures, a design drawing showing the details of the sign, its location, color scheme and content, and a brief description of why signage is necessary for way-finding.
- A project budget estimate and or quote for the proposed project clearly delineating signage costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building Owner providing written approval.

Application Process:

1. Owner/Tenant submits complete application as outlined in the application requirements.
2. Village staff review the application and proposed façade or signage improvements to ensure that program guidelines have been met.
3. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) accepts or rejects the preliminary applications and submits the qualified applications to the Village Council for decision.
4. The Village Council reviews the qualified applications and issues final approvals.
5. Approval or rejection of each application is communicated to the applicant by email or letter.
6. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the Owner/Tenant and the CAO.
7. Owner/Tenant completes renovations.
8. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenditures with the following:
 - **Copies of ALL** invoices or receipts;
 - Copies of cleared cheque/bank statements/credit card statements confirming payments;
 - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable);
 - Pictures of the completed facade improvement or signage installation; and
 - A short statement about how the program has benefited the business.
9. Village staff verify that the facade improvements meet the terms as stated in the Letter of Understanding and provide confirmation to the CAO.
10. The CAO approves the reimbursement and cheque is issued to the project proponent.

Application Time Frame

The Village must apply to the Northern Development Initiative Trust to initiate this program each year and we will be advised if we are successful by February 20, 2019. Therefore, the application intake period will begin **March 1, 2019**.

For the first intake, applications must be submitted **by the first Friday in April** (i.e. April 5, 2019). If funds remain after the initial intake, applications will be reviewed monthly on a first-come-first-served basis and decisions will be made no later than one month after applications are received.

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To be eligible to receive funding, applications must be approved by the Village Council **PRIOR** to starting any façade improvements.

For established businesses, once accepted, the Owner/Tenant has **until December 15, 2019** to complete the project as indicated on the signed letter of understanding.

For new businesses, once accepted, the Owner/Tenant must also demonstrate **by December 15, 2019**, that they have been open and operational **for at least 2 months of 2019** (i.e. must be open for business by October 15, 2019 at the latest). Proof of operational status can be demonstrated with a grand opening flyer, dated sales receipts, or other form of documentation acceptable to the Village.

Project Review

Projects will be reviewed and prioritized based on the following ranked criteria:

1. Age and condition of building i.e. buildings in poor condition have greater likelihood of project approval.
2. Impact on streetscape.
3. Quality of the design.

Appeal Process

In the event that an application is declined, the applicant may request a meeting with the CAO to discuss the application with the purpose of:

- a) Seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the program guidelines; and/or
- b) Providing additional information in order to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

Additional information

Buildings proposing structural improvements must apply to the Village for appropriate permits prior to construction. Home-based businesses seeking signage funding must adhere to signage bylaws and/or regulations.