



Our mission is to create a sustainable, vibrant Downtown that is the heart and soul of our city by showcasing our unique destination and history, and by nurturing our sense of community.

Façade Enhancement Grant Program

The RMS Façade Enhancement Grant Program is offered by Ridgefield Main Street, a Washington Main Street community. This program is offered to Downtown business and property owners who desire to make small scale or larger project improvements to the facades of their buildings and/or areas within property lines.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Façade Enhancement Grant Program is to assist in Downtown beautification efforts by providing financial assistance to businesses and property owners to improve the exterior look of their buildings. The beautification efforts will:

- Enhance the physical image of Downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live.
- Create a cohesive and engaging atmosphere in Downtown.

Definitions:

RMS Designated Area: The physical boundaries of the RMS Designated Area include – Division Street (as extended to the West) on the north, 5th Avenue on the east, Sargent Street to the south and Main Avenue to the west. All properties with frontage on the identified streets are included in the area.

Food Cart Pod: A site with two or more permanent food carts. A permanent food cart is any food cart that does not leave the site on which it is located outside of operating hours.

Eligible: A person who is qualified to participate or be chosen. Eligibility does not mean that the person or entity is guaranteed to receive funding.

Who is eligible to apply?

The following are eligible to apply if located in the RMS Designated Area:

1. Owner(s) of a Downtown business: A business owner with a storefront business facade may apply for funds.
2. Owner(s) of a commercial building: A property owner may apply for funds to improve their property. If a property is leased or purchased under contract, all parties to the lease or contract must agree in writing to the improvements.
3. Owners of a food cart pod: Owners/lessors of a food cart pod may apply for projects that improve the common areas of the food cart pod, not specific food carts.
4. Food cart owners in a food cart pod IF a lease commits them to remaining in the food cart pod for one year following completion of the project.



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What is eligible for funding?

Projects that assist in Downtown beautification efforts and/or improve the physical image of a property or building may be eligible for grant funding if all of the following criteria are met:

1. Funds are intended for improvements or enhancements to exterior facades and surrounding areas of buildings only. This includes rehabilitation, restoration as well as new improvements. It does not include original construction of a building or business, regular maintenance and/or cleaning.
2. Facades and surrounding areas must be visible from a public right-of-way outside of the building. Improvements to the interior of a building are not eligible for a grant.
3. Funds are intended for:
 - Improvement projects in progress at the time of application, or
 - Work to be performed following completion of the application, or
 - Projects that were completed within six (6) months prior to application. If costs for project design completed are to be included in the application, the application must be approved prior to project start.
4. Projects and enhancements make improvements that are “permanent” not that are intended for a temporary period of time.
5. The project meets design guidelines, permitting, zoning or other requirements established by the City of Ridgefield.

Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to: landscaping, signage, exterior lighting, awning replacement, building façade, patio construction.

If there are multiple applications for a single property or building:

1. Applicants must demonstrate that the project design is consistent with all grant applications associated with that building or property.
2. A single building with more than one storefront business or facade is eligible for funds for each independent tenant business' storefront subject to the maximum grant amount available as outlined in this policy. Each storefront must have a separate and direct entrance off of a street or alley.

What grant funds are available?

The RMS Board of Directors has sole discretion whether to provide funding for this Façade Enhancement Grant Program. The program may be discontinued at any time. If funded, a maximum amount of funding will be established.



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The maximum amount of funding available per applicant is based on a building/parcel property description. Each building and surrounding area within property lines is eligible to receive up to a 50% match of projects costs including design, to a maximum of \$5,000 total grant funds each calendar year.

Multiple grant applications may be submitted by business or property owners; with the total amount equaling \$5,000 in grant funds.

When will grants be available?

If funded, RMS will begin accepting applications in February of the calendar year. The application process will be open for as long as funding is available through December 31.

Application Process:

Applicants must complete the RMS Façade Grant Enhancement Application and submit the completed application and required materials to RMS. Only grant applications that are complete will be reviewed and therefore will have preference over those that are not; first-come, first-approved.

A complete application must include:

- The RMS Façade Grant Enhancement Program Application completed,
- A signed Grant Agreement consistent with the RMS Agreement form,
- Architectural rendering of the design, or other materials to portray the improvement(s) proposed, if necessary.
- Cost estimates for the proposed work. It is preferred that projects will be completed by qualified professionals and contractors with experience. However, sweat equity may be considered in the total project costs, if the applicant demonstrates the knowledge, skills and experience in performing work associated with the project.
- A timeline for the project including start and completion dates.

Prior to submitting the application, applicants are encouraged to talk to the City Planning Department to determine what City applications and permits may be required.

How is it determined which applications will receive funding?

Award of grant funding is based on the criteria outlined in this program document.

When an application is received:

1. The RMS Executive Director or designee will review applications to assure they are complete.
2. Once complete, the applications will be reviewed by the RMS Design Committee. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval or denial within policy guidelines.
3. The RMS Board of Directors makes the final decision and has final authority for



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disbursement of funds. Grants may be awarded in the full amount requested or a lesser amount.

Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis with the following exceptions:

1. Only complete applications will be reviewed.
2. Preference will be given to projects that will begin within 30 days of approval of application and completed within 60 days to 90 days.
3. If a sign and/or building permit is required, a project that has received permit approval or a determination that the project is exempt from a sign and/or building permit will have preference over those that do not yet have approval or exempt determination.

If multiple applications are in the review process at the same time and sufficient funding is not available, the following criteria will be used to prioritize the projects:

1. The preference is to provide grant funding for multiple properties, to accomplish the goal of beautification of the entire downtown area.
2. Grants may be approved in a lesser amount than is requested to allow funding of multiple projects.

Program Administration

The RMS Executive Director or designee will:

1. Notify applicants of approval or denial of their application.
2. Administer the project throughout the process with regular updates to the Board.
3. Assure completion of the project as approved. If completed, issue a reimbursement check in an amount equal to 50% of the approved project expenses (not to exceed \$5,000) will be made payable in the name of the applicant(s) as stated on the Grant Application form.

Applicant Responsibilities throughout the project:

1. Notify the RMS Executive Director if there is a change in the timeline for starting or completion of the project.
2. Notify the RMS Executive Director of any potential changes or modifications in the project prior to making the change.
3. Notify the RMS Executive Director if a required permit is denied by the City of Ridgefield.
4. Within 30 days of project completion, submit photographs of the completed project and receipts showing payment for all project expenses to the RMS Executive Director.

Grant approvals may be modified or withdrawn as determined by the Board of Directors if:

1. The applicant does not comply with listed responsibilities as outlined in this policy.
2. The application contains incorrect information that RMS relied on in approving the funding.
3. The timeline for completion of the project is significantly extended.
4. The approved design or project does not receive required permits from the City of Ridgefield.
5. The approved design or project is modified.