

## Thurmont Main Street Community Legacy Façade Grant Program Overview



### What is the Thurmont Main Street Community Legacy Grant (CLG) Program?

The program offers funds to businesses in the Thurmont Main Street area in order to improve the appearance of individual building facades and/or signs and awnings. Community Legacy Façade Grants are a 50/50 match. ***With respect to façade improvements, said improvements must be to external areas visible from the public way unless prior approval has been received.*** It may also potentially be used for interior improvements, and streetscape improvements in the future. The goal of this program is to leverage private improvements while making revitalization efforts affordable, creative and community based.

Our goal is to assist as many qualified projects as our funds allow. This grant will be offered on an ongoing basis as funding permits, and our goal is to fund larger projects in the future. The award amount is based on available funds, the number of qualified applicants, and other evaluation criteria contained in the application. Grant money will be allocated at the sole discretion of the Town of Thurmont subject to approval of submitted applications by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

## Who Can Apply for Funding?

Any building owner or store proprietor/tenant with lease authority or authorization from the building owner can apply for funding. Properties must be **commercial properties** (or residential properties turning commercial) and be located within the Thurmont Main Street designated section of the Maryland Main Street Designation. Tenants must have a minimum of one year remaining on their lease and an option to renew.

According to the State of Maryland's requirements for the grant, we cannot provide assistance to properties owned and/or occupied, in whole or in part, by any of the following businesses or uses: adult bookstore, adult video shop, or other adult entertainment facility, check cashing facility, church or other religious or sectarian organization or use; college or university, community hall, fire station, gambling facility, gun shop, hospital, liquor store; massage parlor; multifamily or single-family housing development including the development of rental properties; nursing home, assisted living facility, crisis care center, group home, transitional housing, homeless shelter, or transient living facility, or pawn shop.

## What Types of Improvements Are Eligible for Funding?

- Exterior cleaning, painting and/or paint removal
- Masonry repair and repainting
- Repair and replacement of architectural details or materials
- Window repair or, in certain cases, replacement
- New awnings or the rehabilitation of existing awnings
- Roof repair
- Storefront/porch/entrance construction/repair
- Rehabilitation or compatible reconstruction of storefronts
- Removal of metal siding and exterior slip covers (surfaces)
- Removal of inappropriate or out-of-date signage
- Repair or rehabilitation of signage
- New signage

## Ineligible Expenditures:

- **IMPROVEMENTS MADE PRIOR TO GRANT APPROVAL**
- Refinancing of existing debt
- Inventory
- Sweat equity (payments for applicant's own labor)
- General business operations expenses (payroll, taxes, utilities, etc.)

## How Are Projects Selected for Funding?

Applications will be ranked and selected based on a clear and documented set of evaluative criteria. Depending on the number of applications, a “waiting list” may be implemented to projects that qualify for selection, but do not rank as high as other applications selected for funding.

NOTE: It is important to note that this is a *reimbursement* grant program, meaning that the applicant (i.e., business/property owner) **must have the improvements completed and fully paid for themselves, with reimbursement made after successful completion of the work and satisfactory submission of all required documentation.**

The evaluative criteria and their anticipated respective weights are as follows:

- **Impact (50%):** – Overall impact of the project within the Thurmont Main Street Designated Area Business to include: Will the project eliminate what was previously a liability for the commercial district? Does the project seek to restore the historical or architectural significance of the building? Will the project contribute to the retention or addition of a business downtown? Will increased pedestrian traffic result? Will the project enhance the current look of the building?
- **Financial Leverage (25%):** – What private investment will be used for this project? While we hope to be able to offer outright grants, projects that leverage more private investment will be evaluated higher than those seeking outright grants.
- **Sustainability/Permanence (12.5%):** – How permanent are the improvements (signs are more changeable than new glazing, for example) and is there a maintenance plan for improvements? Does the business own the building? If not, how much time remains on the lease?
- **Community Contribution (12.5%):** – Is the applicant a good neighbor? Is the area around the business kept clean and free of debris on a consistent basis? Does the business participate in organized Main Street promotions or other community based activities? Does the applicant actively promote downtown Thurmont and their own business?

**Main Street must have sufficient applicant projects that can be completed by April 30, 2019. (Projects may be started as soon as the selected applicant is notified by the Main Street Manager of their award)**

### **Are There Any Design Guidelines?**

Yes. Projects that protect the historic integrity of the building and improve the overall appearance of the downtown area, particularly as it relates to exterior façade projects. The goal is to return the building facades in the downtown area to their appearance following their initial construction. We also recognize that some buildings may have a different period of architectural significance that supersedes the original construction

appearance. Projects must consider the impact on the preservation of the historic fabric and character of the building; are original features being retained and repaired, are historic materials being used? For example, we would not support the installation of vinyl siding, but would support the repair and repainting of original wood siding for a deemed historical building.

Projects should draw upon the history and architecture of the building, but should reflect the current use if not a historical building. We also encourage modern yet compatible awnings, signage, lighting and other fixtures to enhance the appearance of storefronts and downtown.

Please refer to the Thurmont Main Street Façade Improvement Program Design Guidelines for direction on signage, awnings, façade improvements and other aspects of commercial district design. Copies are available on the Thurmont Main Street website: [thurmontmainstreet.com](http://thurmontmainstreet.com), or from the Economic Development Manager, located at 11 Water Street, or the town of Thurmont located at 615 East Main Street. Projects must conform to all appropriate zoning codes. Projects must also meet the approval of the Town of Thurmont and the Maryland Historic Trust requirements, if necessary.

### **How Does the Application Process Work?**

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and cannot be issued until the proposed project has been fully and successfully completed in accordance with the contract. **WORK COMPLETED PRIOR TO LETTER OF COMMITMENT IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING.**

### **Application and Selection Process**

1. Supply non-refundable \$35 application fee, payable to the Town of Thurmont.
2. Complete grant application in full, including:
  - Illustrations of the proposed work or architectural drawings
  - Color photos (minimum 2) of the site and its relationship to adjoining sites
  - Color samples and texture of finish materials, where applicable
  - Landscaping plans, where applicable
  - A bid from licensed contractor on contractor letterhead detailing the proposed work
  - All building construction plans as may be required by the Planning and Zoning Administrator.
3. Deadlines. Completed applications must be postmarked by March 28, 2018, or physically received by 4 PM, March 28, 2018. Applications received after this date may not be considered.

4. The Economic Development Manager and Thurmont Town CAO will review and rank the applications, vote on approval, within 15 days of receiving the applications.
6. Selected applicant's plans will be forwarded to the Maryland Historic Trust for project approval. This must be completed even if property is not a registered historical property. The Economic Development Manager will file the Maryland Historic Trust application.
7. The applicant will be notified, in writing via email, whether their project will receive funding, and to what level. The notification will outline the specified amount of the grant with information on any other requirements. The applicant can then proceed with the necessary permitting and review process.

### **What Happens After a Project Is Selected for Funding?**

1. Renovation/rehabilitation work must begin within three (3) months and be completed within twelve (12) months of approval. Depending on the scope of the project, extensions may be requested. The Town of Thurmont reserves the right to cancel this agreement in the event of failure to comply with this schedule.
2. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all building permits and any other required permits for the work to be done. The applicant is responsible for conformance with all applicable safety standards and conditions.
3. The applicant agrees to maintain the property and improvements.
4. The Thurmont Main Street CLG Program may promote an approved project, including but not limited to, displaying a Main Street/Community Legacy sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in Main Street's materials.

### **How Do I Get Reimbursed for My Project?**

Funds will be released to the applicant as quickly as possible upon satisfactory completion of the project and satisfactory submission of all required documentation. Other reimbursement requirements:

1. Submission of a summary report, including copies of paid invoices/cancelled checks and waivers of lien from contractors (and subcontractors, if applicable), and photos and/or drawings of the completed project. Also, in the summary, also include project start and finish date.
2. The property project will be inspected for compliance of the scope of the project listed on the application.

3. Photos and drawings will be submitted to the Maryland Historic Trust to insure compliance of work, if necessary.
4. Funds will be dispersed only after verification that the work has been completed in accordance with the Facade Grant guidelines, contract, and a copy of your canceled check from the contractor is received
5. Application must be postmarked by March 28, 2018, or physically received by 4 PM, March 28, 2018.

**NOTE: The town of Thurmont reserves the right to make changes in the conditions of the CLG Program as warranted.**