



Reisterstown Main Street- RIA

Facade Improvement Grants Program (FY2026) Guidelines and Application

Important notes:

A pre-application consultation with the Reisterstown Improvement Association (RIA) and the Reisterstown Main Street Manager is required. Contact info@Reisterstown.com to set up a pre-application meeting. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Tenants and business owners who do not own the building in which they operate may apply for this grant. However, they must do so with the written approval of the building owner to undertake the work for which funds have been requested.

Community Need:

In order to deepen the Reisterstown Improvement Association's (RIA) direct service to the community, over the past five months we have solicited a range of views and opinions regarding the most pressing needs of the business community along and in the immediate vicinity of Main Street. Among the most frequently noted problems was the poor condition of many historic properties within the Reisterstown Commercial Revitalization District (CRD). For a variety of reasons, several properties sat unmaintained or in disrepair, sometimes with tenants and often without. In many cases, when business owners wished to see upgrades performed or even perform upgrades themselves, they were unable to do so because of funding shortfalls, the inability to reach an agreement with the property owner, or a simple lack of the capacity necessary to simultaneously operate a business and undertake the substantial planning that goes into capital improvements.

Moreover, several property owners have not been able to financially justify upkeep of or modifications to their properties, and have subsequently seen substantial devaluations in their property. This creates a downward cycle of neglect, whereby buildings are not kept up, their property values decline, and because of their appearance they are less likely to attract future tenants. In other cases, properties have simply been neglected for decades. These deteriorating buildings serve as a blight on the community, and drag down property values and rents throughout the CRD. Unfortunately, there is little incentive for longtime property owners who own their buildings and land outright to maintain their properties, especially if they are not interested in selling said properties. In at least one case, a significant historic building was left to full deterioration, and was subsequently condemned and razed before the community could intervene.

Nearby Main Street-configured communities such as Sykesville, Westminster, and Catonsville have recognized that historic facades themselves are a selling point and attract foot and vehicle traffic. These towns have undertaken significant efforts to preserve and improve historic facades, and have enjoyed substantial economic benefits from "dressing up" their Main Streets. Reisterstown is ready to join these neighborhoods in recognizing the inherent economic value of its historic properties.

Since 2010, RIA has worked closely with several entities including Baltimore County, the State of Maryland, the State Highway Administration, and various other community organizations to maintain and improve the streetscapes within the CRD and along historic Main Street. The Facade Improvement Grant Program will seek to fill an additional gap in the needs of Historic Reisterstown, by providing an incentive to improve the appearance of three buildings per year and partner with local vendors and suppliers to undertake such upgrades. Tenants are eligible to apply, with the approval of the property owner (see guidelines below).

Eligibility Criteria:

- 1) RIA will match up to \$10,000 of a project's costs in cash and/or in-kind donations of labor and/or materials, per building. Applicants must provide a project budget, project timeline, list of permits needed, and evidence of Matching Funds on-hand or previously committed at the time of application.
- 2) RIA will prioritize providing in-kind donations of labor and/or material over awarding cash. In-kind donations will be maximized first, with cash contributions utilized to cover remaining costs totaling a maximum of \$10,000 per award.
- 3) Applicant must provide a dollar-for-dollar match of all grant funds applied for. Matching Funds may take the form of:
 - Business and/or property owner's cash contributions
 - Loan funds awarded through the Baltimore County Building Improvement Loan Program (BILP) (0% loan up to \$30,000) (*download application [here](#)*)
 - Other construction loans and grants (letters of intent and/or award letters must be provided with application)
- 4) For projects over \$10,000, use of the Baltimore County BILP loan program may receive additional points in project scoring. In these cases, evidence of a loan application through the BILP program may be required.
- 5) Proof of the applicant's Matching Funds must equal the sum of the following:
 - Any outside debt, equity, or cash on-hand.
 - The fair-market value of all in-kind donations provided by any outside vendors/suppliers, as determined by RIA in consultation with the vendors and contractors used for work.
 - The value of all cash contributions provided by outside organizations.
- 6) A pre-application consultation with RIA is required. Contact info@Reisterstown.com to set up a pre-application meeting.
- 7) Awards will be granted in accordance with scoring criteria listed within these guidelines, at the full discretion of the RIA Board of Directors. (*See scoring criteria below*)
- 8) Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all grant funding has been awarded within the current fiscal year. Not all applications will qualify for funding.
- 9) The building in question shall be within the current boundaries of the Reisterstown Commercial Revitalization District (CRD), as delineated by the Baltimore County Department of Planning. To determine if a building is within the Reisterstown CRD, [view the map here](#).
- 10) Entities outside of the CRD are eligible to apply, as long as all funding will be applied to a building within the CRD.
- 11) All funds and in-kind donations must be used within 6 months of award notification.
- 12) All permits and local jurisdiction approvals must be in place within 60 days of award notification.
- 13) All contractors hired to perform work, either for in-kind donations of labor or for contracted work, must be licensed and insured in the state of Maryland. Applicants will be required to submit documentation showing that their contractors meet these requirements prior to release of grant funds. Any existing claims against contractors listed on the Maryland Home Improvement Commission website must be provided by the applicant prior to the start of construction.
- 14) A fully executed contract is required on all projects prior to the awarding of funding. Donations of in-kind labor and material require a contract and/or quote listing the fair-market value of donations as well.
- 15) Prior to the start of construction, RIA will perform a background check of the contractor selected to complete the work covered by Façade Improvement Grant funds. This check will determine if, among other potentially disqualifying criteria, the Maryland Secretary of State lists the contractor as no longer eligible to receive state contracts, or any law suits or bankruptcy proceedings are underway.

- 17) Preference will be given to applications with local/minority-owned/women-owned contractors hired to perform work, either for in-kind donations of labor or for contracted work.
- 18) Evidence of site control (e.g., copy of deed including all attachments and legal description, purchase contract, lease agreement regarding the property where improvements are to be made, etc.) must be submitted with application.
- 19) Grants will only be awarded to tenants with written permission – obtained prior to application – from the building’s current owner (and if applicable, the future owner, if for sale or under contract) to undertake the improvements for which funding is requested. At the pre-application consultation applicants will receive a copy of the Building Owner’s Permission to Apply form. Owners must also provide their signature on all plans prior to the start of construction.
- 20) Tenants must provide evidence of lease term (if applicable) for a time period acceptable to the RIA, must be submitted with application.
- 21) Proof of fire, hazard, renter's, and/or general liability insurance on the property must be submitted with application.
- 22) Applicants that use the free Architect-on-Call (AOC) service through Baltimore County will be given preference in scoring. Evidence of AOC-provided plans must be submitted with application (if applicable). For more information contact Amy Mantay at 410-887-3480 or atmanay@baltimorecountymd.gov, or visit the [Architect-on-Call website](#).
- 23) Eligible Improvements:
 - a. Renovation and upgrade of building exterior, such as window and facade improvement, ADA accessibility, and painting. All exterior sides are eligible; however, priority will be given to the face most visible from a public right-of-way.
 - b. Site improvements, including landscaping, signage, lighting, sidewalk treatment, and parking areas (if open to customers).
- 24) A before-and-after inspection, before-and-after photos of all work, and submission of invoices for work will be required prior to the release of funds.
- 25) Contracts for work sponsored by the Façade Improvement Grant shall not be fully paid by the applicant until after the final inspection is done and work is found to be satisfactorily complete.
- 26) If completed work differs from the work for which grant funds were awarded, or if work is not substantially complete, the RIA reserves the right to withhold funding until appropriate corrections are made.
- 27) Any violations of the regulations and guidelines above will be grounds for cancellation of grant award. If building code violations occur, neither RIA shall not be held responsible.

Scoring Criteria (50 points total):

- Historical significance of building (5 points)
- Extent of building’s needed upgrades (including ADA compliance and upgrades to code) (10 points)
- Scale of planned work (including Architect-on-Call-provided plans/design) (10 points)
- Feasibility of planned work (5 points)
- Progress previously made to obtain plans, permits, and approvals (5 points)
- Leveraged funding in place (including consideration of BILP for projects over \$10,000) (5 points)
- Design’s fit with the character of Main Street properties and compliance with federal historic preservation guidelines (10 points)

**Reisterstown Main Street (RIA)
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION:**

Property Address: _____

Name of Applicant: _____
First Middle Last

Address of Applicant: _____

Applicant's Phone: _____ **Applicant's Email:** _____

Are you the owner of the building for which you are applying grant funds? Y / N

If 'No', do you have written permission from your property's owner to undertake this work? Y / N

Owner's Name: _____

Owner's Phone Number: _____ **Owner's Email:** _____

Have you previously consulted with the Baltimore County Architect-On-Call? Y / N

Total Cost of Project: \$ _____ **Grant request:** \$ _____

Describe the scope of your project (please attach all plans/specs, permit applications, and approvals):

Sources of Matching Funds (must equal or exceed total amount of grant funding applied for; please attach all account statements, lender Letter(s) of Interest, and other evidence of Matching Funds):

Cash-on-hand: \$ _____

Construction Loan: \$ _____ Lender: _____

BILP Loan: \$ _____ 3rd Party Lender: _____

Donations of labor/material: \$ _____ Donor: _____

Total Matching Funds: \$ _____

RIA Grant Funds Requested: \$ _____

Total Project Cost: \$ _____

Project Budget (please provide a quote/contract for all work on contractor/supplier's letterhead):

Line Item 1: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 2: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 3: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 4: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 5: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 6: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 7: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 8: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 9: _____	\$ _____
Line Item 10: _____	\$ _____
Total Budget:	\$ _____

Application Certification:

The applicant hereby certifies that the information provided is accurate and correct to the best of the knowledge. The applicant acknowledges that failure to comply with the regulations and guidelines of this grant program, and any known inclusion of false information in this application may result in the disqualification of a candidate or cancellation of a grant award.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Property Owner if not applicant

Date

Please email all applications to: Mainstreetmanager@Reisterstown.com