2026-2027 CITY OF YORK DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Application Deadline: Monday, November 2, 2026

INFORMATION

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The City of York recognizes Downtown as the cultural, historic, and economic heart of the community. The Downtown Improvement Grant Program is designed to promote the revitalization of the City of York's Local Historic District and B-1 Central Business District by encouraging private investment in quality building improvements.

The program supports both exterior façade enhancements and interior up-fit improvements that:

- Activate vacant or underutilized commercial space
- Support small business recruitment and expansion
- Encourage appropriate rehabilitation of historic structures
- Increase downtown foot traffic and retail activity
- Improve the appearance and functionality of commercial properties
- Preserve contributing historic structures within the district
- Address blight and non-conforming design standards

This program provides financial assistance for eligible exterior and interior capital improvements necessary to improve and occupy commercial properties located within the City of York's Local Historic District and B-1 Central Business District.

The program operates on a reimbursement basis. Applicants are responsible for securing contracts, completing improvements, and paying all project costs prior to reimbursement.

FUNDING AND AWARD STRUCTURE

- Maximum grant award: $15,000 per project
- Requires a 20% funding match (For example, a $20,000 project would require a minimum funding match of $4,000).
- Reimbursement-based (paid after project completion).
- Subject to annual budget appropriation by York City Council.
- Applications may be reviewed on a rolling basis or quarterly basis as funding allows.
- Funding availability is limited and may vary annually.

Properties awarded funding are subject to available program funding at the time of reimbursement.

ELIGIBLE AREAS

Eligible properties must:

- Be located within the City of York Local Historic District and/or B-1 Central Business District.
- Be existing commercial buildings.
- Be subject to City of York property taxes.
- Be properly zoned at the time of application.
- New construction is not eligible for funding.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- Commercial property owners
- Business owners or managers occupying commercial space
- Tenants with written property owner consent

Applicants must:

- Hold a current City of York Business License.
- Be current on all City and County taxes, utility accounts, fees, licenses, and assessments.
- Not have active unresolved code violations.
- Not begin construction prior to grant approval.

Owners of multiple buildings may receive assistance for more than one property if funding is available. The City reserves the right to deny funding to applicants who are delinquent on taxes, fees, utilities, fines, licenses, or assessments.

Only one grant may be awarded per business each year. Businesses or organizations that received grant funding in a previous year may reapply in a new fiscal year; however, priority consideration will be given to applicants who have not previously received grant funding.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Eligible improvements include permanent exterior and interior capital improvements that improve the appearance, functionality, accessibility, safety, or occupancy of commercial buildings.

Exterior Improvements

- Awnings, canopies, or shutters
- Exterior cleaning or repainting
- Exterior lighting installation
- Historical detail restoration
- Masonry restoration or cleaning
- ADA accessibility improvements (exterior only)
- Infrastructure improvements to public gathering spaces
- Outdoor seating and accessories
- Parking lot improvements
- Signage installation, repair, or replacement
- Window, door, and framing replacement
- Window area modification for retail display or visibility

Interior Improvements

- Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing upgrades
- HVAC installation or modernization
- Fire suppression systems
- Code compliance upgrades
- ADA accessibility improvements
- Restroom construction or rehabilitation
- Interior lighting upgrades
- Flooring
- Permanent interior fixtures
- Construction or removal of interior walls
- Structural reinforcement necessary for occupancy
- Environmental remediation (lead or asbestos)
- Energy efficiency improvements

All improvements must:

- Be permanent in nature
- Be completed by properly licensed contractors legally operating in the City of York
- Comply with all City building codes and permitting requirements
- Comply with Historic District Design Standards where applicable

INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Grant funds may NOT be used for:

- Construction of new parking lots
- Landscaping not attached to the building
- New construction
- Inventory (i.e. clothing, shoes, food, etc.)
- Equipment not permanently attached to the building
- Furniture not permanently affixed
- Working capital or payroll
- Sidewalks
- Improvements required solely to correct code violations
- Improvements that may be removed if the tenant vacates
- Overpowering signage or backlit awnings
- Projects completed prior to approval
- Work not completed by licensed contractors or subcontractors

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMPLIANCE

Because the program area includes designated historic properties:

- Projects must maintain character-defining historic features where applicable.
- Work must not negatively impact contributing historic elements.
- A completed Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application is required.
- Approval from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) must be secured before construction begins.
- After BAR approval, applications will be forwarded to York City Council for final authorization of grant funding.

Preference may be given to projects that sensitively rehabilitate contributing historic structures.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must submit:

- Completed grant application
- Completed COA application
- Proof of building ownership (recorded deed) or Owner Consent Form if leased
- Proof of current property and casualty insurance
- Two (2) to four (4) photographs of existing conditions
- Conceptual design plans and outline of proposed improvements
- Material list
- Two (2) written cost estimates or bids from licensed contractors
- Detailed line-item budget from a licensed contractor or architect
- Contractor business license or tax ID number (All contractor business licenses will be subject to verification)
- Contractor and subcontractor license numbers
- Accurate color samples (if applicable)
- Finish material samples or photos
- Signage renderings, if applicable

TIMELINE REQUIREMENTS

Upon award approval:

- Applicants must obtain all necessary permits within three (3) months.
- Work may not begin prior to formal approval.
- Projects must be completed within 180 days of permit obtainment unless otherwise approved by the City.
- Deadline extensions may be considered on an individual basis.
- Project documentation must be submitted within 30 days of completion.
- Reimbursement requests must be submitted by Monday, August 2, 2027.

Required project documentation includes:

- Paid invoices
- Receipts
- Cancelled checks or proof of payment
- Final inspection approvals
- Certificate of Occupancy, if applicable

PAYMENT AND REIMBURSEMENT

Grant funds will only be disbursed after:

- All approved work is completed
- Final inspections are approved
- Required permits are closed
- Certificate of Occupancy is issued (if applicable)
- All required reimbursement documentation is submitted
- Final compliance verification by City staff

The grant reimburses up to $15,000 of eligible and approved project costs.

CERTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing and submitting an application, the applicant acknowledges and agrees that:

- Acceptance of an application does not obligate the City of York to award funding.
- The City reserves the right to reject any application or request additional information.
- Applicants must execute a Grant Agreement prior to beginning work.
- Any changes to approved project designs must receive City approval.
- Applicants must maintain records related to the project and grant.
- Applicants must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- Applicants must comply with all applicable fair leasing and equal opportunity requirements.
- Any work initiated prior to grant approval may be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.

2026-2027 CITY OF YORK DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION

Application Deadline: Monday, November 2, 2026

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name and Title:

Business Name:

Address:

City, State, ZIP:

Applicant Phone Number:

Applicant Email:

Number of Employees: Years/Months in Existence:

Property Owner Name: Property Owner Contact:

Business Website (if applicable):

Current Building Use:

Proposed Use After Improvements:

Total Building Square Footage: Number of Floors:

Number of Businesses in Building:

Are there any active code violations?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure
Are the property taxes current?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure
Is business license current?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Description of proposed improvements:

PROJECT DETAILS

When will the project begin:	When will the project be completed?
Has any portion of the described work already been completed?	
Total Project Cost:	Amount of Grant Funding being requested:

PROPOSED FINANCING

Type of Financing	Amount
Cash Investement	
Bank Loan	
Grant Request	
Total	

ATTACHMENTS

The following items must be attached to the application. Applications will not be considered until all items are provided.	**Check if Attached**
Completed COA application (if applicable).	☐
Proof of building ownership, such as copy of the recorded deed with ownership name matching applicants name. If leasing the property, please include “Owner Consent Form”.	☐
Proof of current property and casualty insurance.	☐
Two (2) to four (4) photographs of current building conditions, including close up and panoramic shots. Electronic photos are preferred and can be emailed to rmestas@yorksc.gov.	☐
Conceptual design plans and an outline of proposed improvements, including material list.	☐
Two (2) written cost estimates/bids from licensed construction professionals.	☐
Detailed line item budget from a registered/licensed contractor or licensed architect. Contractors must include their business license or Tax ID as proof that they are eligible to do work in the City of York.	☐
Pictures that indicate quality of finishes.	☐
Signage renderings that graphically indicate sign lettering style, size and sign dimensions.	☐
License numbers for any contractors and subcontractors involved in project.	☐

CERTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By Signing and Submitting this application, the applicant agrees to the following:

- That acceptance of this application does not commit the City of York to enter into a grant agreement, to pay any costs incurred in its preparation, to participate in subsequent negotiations, or to contract for the project.
- That acceptance of this application does not constitute an agreement by the City of York that any contract will be entered into by the City of York.
- That City of York expressly reserves the right to reject any and all applications, portions thereof, or to request more information from the applicant.

If grant is awarded, the applicant agrees to:

- Sign Downtown Improvement Grant Agreement prior to any work beginning.
- Submit any proposed changes to design after award to the City of York for approval.

- Keep records as may be required by the City of York in relation to the grant program.
- Comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws.
- Comply with all applicable local, state and federal statutes governing fair leasing practices and equal employment opportunities.

In addition, the applicant certifies understanding of the following:

- The Downtown Improvement Grant Program is a matching grant initiative. Grants are awarded at the discretion of York City Council. Grants require a 20% match with a maximum grant award of $15,000 per project.
- Applicants may only begin work on the property after receiving approval by the City of York. Any work begun before receiving approval may be ineligible for reimbursement.
- All work must be completed within 180 days of the award.
- Grant dollars are dispersed at the time of project completion. All required documentation (cancelled checks, invoices, receipts, etc.) must be on file with the City of York. Project documentation is due within 30 days of project completion.
- A building owner can only participate in the Downtown Improvement Grant Program with a maximum of three projects.
- Properties found to be in arrears on real property taxes or special assessments will NOT be eligible.
- All projects awarded are subject to program funding at the time of project completion. The city of York will make a good faith effort to notify the applicant should funding become available.

☐ I certify that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge.

_____	_____
Signature	Printed Name
_____	_____
Company Name	Date

CITY OF YORK DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
OWNER CONSENT FORM

If the applicant does not own the property, this form must be completed by the property owner and submitted with the City of York Downtown Improvement Grant Program (DIGP) application.

The undersigned owner of the existing building located at _____ _____ (address) hereby grants permission to _____ (applicant) to act on behalf of the owner for this funding request and has the authority to deal with the property and DIGP funding request in all aspects. I understand that I will be required to jointly (with the applicant) enter in to a DIGP with the City of York.

I further grant permission to _____ (applicant) and his/her contractors to implement the improvements listed on the application approved by the City Council. The undersigned also agrees to work with the applicant to adhere to the DIGP requirements, which include maintaining the improvement authorized by the DIGP for a period of at least four years from the date of the City's reimbursement.

I certify that I have read and understand the policies and guidelines of the DIGP and acknowledge the requirements of this application. The undersigned agrees and understands it will be the applicant/primary contact's responsibility to inform all other interested parties of any correspondence and the status of the DIGP funding.

The undersigned hereby waives any claims against the City of York arising out of the use of said reimbursement for the purpose set forth in the DIGP application. The undersigned agrees to hold the City harmless for any charges, damages, claims, or liens arising out of the applicants participation in the DIGP.

_____ _____

Signature Printed Name

_____ _____

Company Name Date