MAIN STREET FAIRMOUNT

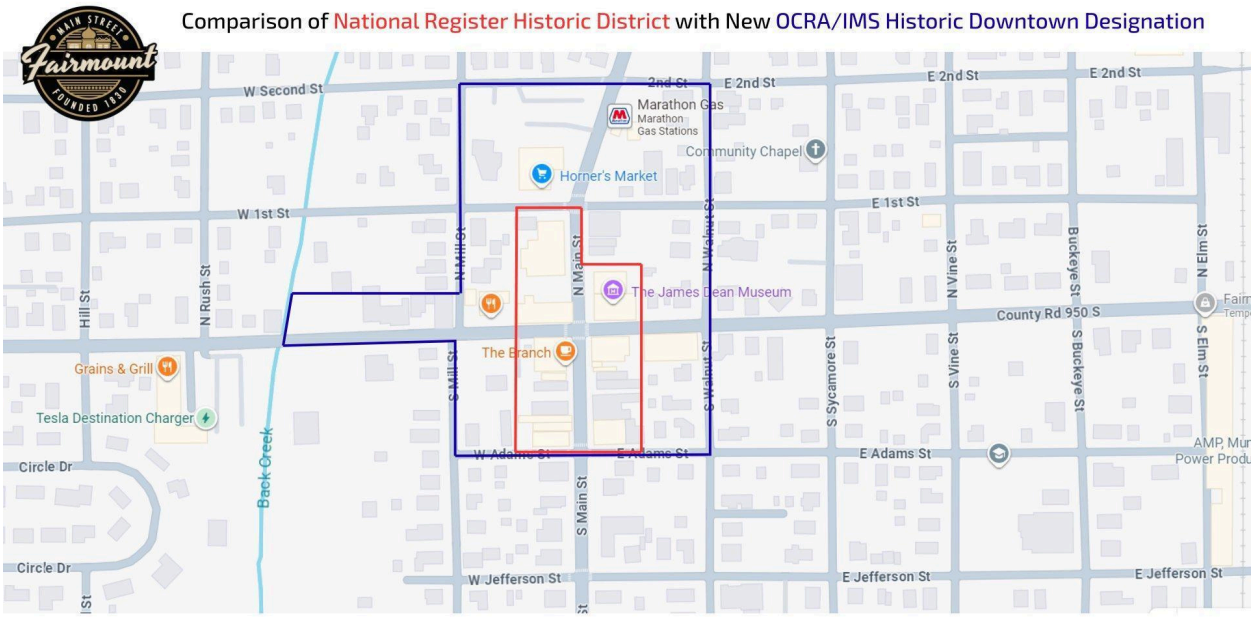
Façade Grant Program

Policy & Application

> This document contains the complete program policy, eligibility requirements, application checklist, and application form. For a plain-language introduction to the program, see the Façade Grant Program Guide available at https://www.mainstreetfairmount.org/facade-grant-program.

Grant Boundary

Eligible properties are located within the Main Street Fairmount (MSF) service boundary in downtown Fairmount, Grant County, Indiana. The boundary corresponds to the OCRA/IMS Historic Downtown Designation, defined as: North — 2nd Street; South — Adams Street; East — Walnut Street; West — Mill Street / Rush Street corridor (including the western jog at W. 1st Street). Properties within the National Register Historic District (red) or the OCRA/IMS Historic Downtown Designation (blue) are eligible.



IMS Director, Tereasa Camin, visited Fairmount to walk the boundary for adjustment consideration and named a new Historic Downtown area as recognized by IMS and OCRA.

Source: Main Street Fairmount / OCRA. Red = National Register Historic District. Blue = OCRA/IMS Historic Downtown Designation.

If you are uncertain whether your property falls within the eligible area, contact the Façade Grant Program Team (FGP) before applying. FGP Team contact information is listed at https://www.mainstreetfairmount.org/facade-grant-program.

Eligibility

Eligible Properties

- Located within the MSF service boundary shown in the map above
- Property is located within the district boundary (commercial, nonprofit — including 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(10) organizations — or private residential property whose publicly visible façade contributes to the historic streetscape)
- Current on all local and state property taxes
- Free of contractor liens, town liens, and fines
- Current on all permit fees; in compliance with local municipal codes
- Not in active foreclosure

Applicant Eligibility

- Applicant must be the property owner, or a lessee with written owner permission
- Lessees must provide a lease demonstrating a term sufficient to complete the project

Historic Preservation Priority

This program prioritizes buildings that retain original historic fabric — brick masonry, storefront proportions, transom windows, cornices, and other character-defining features from Fairmount's Gas Boom era. Buildings with less historic significance may apply but will receive lower scoring. Contact the FGP Team or Indiana Landmarks if you are unsure of your building's historic status.

> **Is your building a "contributing structure"?**
> The National Register of Historic Places nominations for downtown Fairmount identify which properties are considered contributing structures and document the history behind the designation. These nominations are the primary reference for the "Historic Significance" criterion in the Application Scoring Rubric below.
> Fairmount Commercial District: catalog.archives.gov/id/132003133
> Baldwin Addition Fairmount Commercial District: catalog.archives.gov/id/132003129

Program Structure

Component 1: Façade Improvement Program

Minimum Project	$2,500 in eligible improvements
Maximum Award	$10,000. The grant reimburses 50% of approved costs. Example: $25,000 project = up to $10,000 award (50% of first $20,000).
Annual Fund	$10,000 total — shared across all applications. Rolling basis until exhausted.
Budget Cushion	Build a 10–20% contingency into your budget. Award amounts are fixed at approval.
Disbursement	Reimbursement to applicant after completion and inspection

Completion Window	9 months from grant agreement date

Component 2: Sign Reimbursement

100% reimbursement up to $800. No minimum. Signs must meet MSF design guidelines and be approved by the Design Advisory Committee. Requires a separate application. Draws from the same annual fund. Limited to one per property address per calendar year.

Eligible & Ineligible Work

Eligible

- Restoration of original façade or storefront elements
- New façade elements meeting MSF design standards and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- Masonry repair, mortar repointing, cornices, entrances, doors, transoms, decorative details
- Awnings, exterior lighting, alleyway enhancements visible from the public right-of-way
- Window repair and replacement (as part of a larger façade project)
- Exterior painting and surface preparation
- Architectural fees associated with eligible façade improvements
- Hardscaping and selective demolition within a façade renovation scope
- Signage consistent with design guidelines

Not Eligible

- Interior work; work not visible from the public right-of-way
- Roof repairs or replacement; sidewalk or pavement replacement
- Permit fees; full demolition or property acquisition
- Aluminum or vinyl cladding over historic masonry or historic wood
- Work inconsistent with MSF Design Guidelines or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- Labor performed by the applicant or the applicant's own employees

Design Standards

All funded work must comply with the MSF Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Rehabilitation). Both documents are available at https://www.mainstreetfairmount.org/facade-grant-program.

Key principles: repair before replacing; preserve character-defining features; use gentle, reversible methods; no sandblasting or harsh chemical cleaning; no aluminum or vinyl cladding over historic fabric; new elements must be compatible with the historic streetscape without creating a false historical appearance.

> **Federal compliance — when it applies**
>
> For projects claiming the federal 20% Historic Tax Credit (HTC), all work must comply with 36 CFR Part 67 and receive NPS certification. For future cycles incorporating federal Historic Preservation Fund grants, 36 CFR Part 68 and Section 106 review will apply. Current

privately-funded cycles are not federally mandated — compliance is MSF's professional standard. The FGP Team can advise on HTC and federal compliance questions.

Building Condition

Façade investments must be built on a structurally sound building. Before applying, understand the condition of your foundation, roof system, and water infiltration points. Disclose known issues openly — the FGP Team's goal is to connect you with resources, not penalize you.

If proposed façade work would be undermined by an unaddressed structural problem — replacing windows while a foundation is actively failing, for example — the Grant Committee may defer the award until a stabilization plan is in place. Unrelated structural issues are less likely to affect eligibility.

Indiana Landmarks is our structural resource partner.

Technical assistance, contractor referrals, structural stabilization guidance, and low-interest financing for historic commercial buildings. The FGP Team will connect you. Contact us at contact@mainstreetfairmount.org or visit https://www.mainstreetfairmount.org/facade-grant-program for FGP Team contact details.

Contractor Requirements

Applicants must use contractors with demonstrated historic preservation experience. General contractor experience alone is insufficient for most scopes in this program. Contractors must be verified through Indiana Landmarks' approved contractor list or provide equivalent documentation and relevant work examples.

Quality over geography.

Local contractors with proven historic preservation experience are strongly preferred. When no qualified local option is available, an out-of-area contractor with strong HP credentials is acceptable. The FGP Team and Indiana Landmarks can assist with referrals.

Arm's-length requirement: Contractors must be independent of the applicant. Applicants may not hire a contractor with whom they have a personal, familial, or financial relationship without prior written disclosure to the FGP Team. Undisclosed relationships may result in grant forfeiture. Disclosed relationships may require competitive bids.

Application Process

All work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and MSF Design Guidelines. Review both at https://www.mainstreetfairmount.org/facade-grant-program before submitting. The FGP Team can answer design compliance questions before you invest time in a full application.

1. Contact the FGP Team first. Confirm the program is accepting applications, review your project scope, and discuss your budget. Do not skip this step.
2. Submit a complete application with all required documentation (see Application Checklist).
3. FGP Team reviews for completeness and submits to the Grant Committee.
4. Grant Committee reviews and issues decision. All applicants — approved and denied — are notified. Decisions reported to the MSF Board of Directors.

5. Grant agreement executed. No work may begin before the agreement is signed. Work begun before agreement execution is ineligible for reimbursement and will result in disqualification.
6. Complete all work within 9 months of agreement date, in compliance with MSF Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Payment Process

> **Reimbursement after completion — not an advance.**
> "Completion" means full execution of the entire approved scope of work with no outstanding contractor obligations. Partial reimbursements are not available unless a reduced scope was approved in writing before work began. All payment agreements between the grantee and contractor(s) are direct and private — MSF is not a party to those agreements.

1. Submit to FGP Team: contractor invoices, proof of full contractor payment (cancelled checks, bank statements, or receipts), and project completion photos.
2. FGP Team inspects completed work for conformance with approved scope, grant agreement, MSF Design Guidelines, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
3. Following satisfactory inspection, MSF issues reimbursement directly to the grantee — not to the contractor.

Grant amounts are fixed at approval. Cost overruns on the same scope will not be reimbursed. In documented cases of genuinely unforeseen circumstances, the applicant may submit a written increase request to the FGP Team; Grant Committee approval required; reported to MSF Board. Approval is not guaranteed and subject to available funds.

Extensions

Extensions of up to 60 days may be granted for: verified weather delays of 10+ continuous days; contractor illness or documented unavailability beyond applicant control; or documented material supply delays. Extension requests must be submitted in writing before the original deadline with supporting documentation. One extension maximum per project.

2027 Annual Program Timeline

Beginning in 2027, MSF operates on a structured annual cycle designed around Indiana's working weather and Fairmount's event calendar. The application window opens in January when contractors are less busy and building owners can plan. Construction begins April 1, providing a full 9-month window. Projects must pause during James Dean Festival weekend (last full weekend of September).

January	Program announced. Pre-application conversations open.
Jan 1 – Feb 15	Application window. Submit complete applications with all required documentation.
Mar 1–15	Award decisions made and communicated to all applicants.
April 1	Grant agreements executed. Construction begins.
Apr 1 – Dec 31	9-month construction window. Work must pause or be secured during James Dean Festival weekend (last full weekend of September).
Rolling	Inspections and reimbursements issued as projects are completed. No need to wait until year-end.
December	Annual outcomes reported to MSF Board. Planning begins for next cycle.

A second application window (July 1 – August 1) may be offered when funding allows. Same 9-month completion requirement applies. MSF will announce availability each January.

Application Checklist

All items below must be included. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

- ☐ Completed application form (all sections)
- ☐ Written owner permission (required if applicant is a lessee)
- ☐ Color photographs of existing conditions — all publicly visible elevations
- ☐ Material and color samples or specifications
- ☐ Detailed contractor proposal: scope of work, itemized costs, and project timeline
- ☐ Contractor credentials: Indiana Landmarks approved list verification, or equivalent HP experience documentation with relevant work examples
- ☐ Written statement describing how the proposed work preserves or restores the historic character of the building
- ☐ Phased improvement plan (optional but encouraged)
- ☐ Documentation of structural assessment or stabilization plan (required if known issues exist)
- ☐ Evidence that property taxes, liens, and municipal obligations are current
- ☐ Any drawings, renderings, or documentation illustrating the visual impact of the proposed work
- ☐ [At reimbursement stage] Proof of full contractor payment — cancelled checks, bank statements, or receipts

FAÇADE GRANT APPLICATION

Main Street Fairmount | Commercial Property Improvement Program

Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Applicant Phone: _____

Applicant Email: _____

Project Address: _____

Property Use:

☐ Commercial — List business name(s): _____

☐ Nonprofit Organization — 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), or 501(c)(10) — Organization name: _____

☐ Private Residence within the Historic Downtown District boundary (façade/exterior improvements only)

Applicant Status:

☐ I own the property

☐ I lease the property (written owner permission must be attached)

How did you hear about this program?: _____

Section 2: Property Owner Information

Complete if different from applicant.

Owner Name: _____

Years Owned: _____

Owner Mailing Address: _____

Owner Phone: _____

Owner Email: _____

Type of Ownership (individual, LLC, trust, etc.):

_____

Section 3: Proposed Work

Describe the proposed improvements, materials, and intended visual impact. All work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and MSF Design Guidelines.

Description of Proposed Work:

How does this work preserve or restore the building's historic character?

Phased Improvement Plan (optional — describe how this project fits within a larger building improvement sequence):

Are there additional improvements being made to the property not covered by this grant?

☐ Yes — written description and dollar amount attached

☐ No

Estimated cost of eligible façade improvements: _____

Estimated project start date: _____

Estimated project completion date: _____

Section 4: Contractor

Contractor Name: _____

Contractor License Number: _____

Contractor Phone / Email: _____

Historic Preservation Credentials:

☐ Listed on Indiana Landmarks' approved contractor list

☐ Not on list — HP experience documentation and work examples attached

Contractor Relationship:

☐ No personal, familial, or financial relationship exists between me and this contractor

☐ A relationship exists — disclosed in writing to FGP Team prior to this submission

Section 5: Building Condition

Does the building have any known structural issues (foundation, roof, water infiltration, load-bearing systems) not yet addressed?

☐ No known structural issues

☐ Known issues — description and documentation of assessment or stabilization plan attached:

Section 6: Applicant Agreement

By signing below, I certify that:

- I have read and agree to comply with the MSF Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- All information in this application is accurate and complete.

- No work on this project has begun. Work started before grant agreement execution is ineligible and will result in disqualification.
- I will complete all approved work within 9 months of grant approval.
- I understand reimbursement is paid directly to me after work is complete and inspected. Payment agreements with contractor(s) are my own responsibility.
- My contractor has no personal, familial, or financial relationship with me — OR I have disclosed such a relationship in writing to the FGP Team.
- The approved grant amount is fixed and will not increase for cost overruns on the approved scope.
- I have or will have sufficient funds to pay contractor costs in full before requesting reimbursement.
- The structural condition information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge. Misrepresentation may result in grant forfeiture and required repayment.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Submission

Submit to the Façade Grant Program Team:

Website: https://www.mainstreetfairmount.org/facade-grant-program
Email: contact@mainstreetfairmount.org
Mail: PO Box 257 | Fairmount, IN 46928
In person: David Crouse, Fairmount State Bank

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: _____

Grant Committee Review Date: _____

Decision:

☐ Approved
☐ Denied

Grant Amount Awarded: _____

Notes / Conditions: _____

PROGRAM POLICY APPENDIX

Adopted: [Date] | Reviewed annually by the MSF Board of Directors

Grant Committee & FGP Team

The Façade Grant Program Team (FGP) consists of six team members plus one MSF Board of Directors representative, all appointed by the MSF Board. The FGP Team manages day-to-day program administration, collects and processes applications, and submits them to the Grant Committee. The committee meets monthly or as needed and reports all decisions to the full Board.

Duties & Authority

The Grant Committee reviews all applications for compliance with program guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. If guidelines are met and funds are available, the committee has authority to approve. The committee may deny non-compliant applications or applications exceeding available funds. All decisions are reported to the MSF Board with a consolidated fund report.

Application Scoring Rubric

All eligible applications are scored using the following rubric (5 points per criterion, 25 points total). In a tie, the earliest-received application takes priority. The rubric guides but does not mechanically determine decisions — the committee may note reasoning for any variance.

The "Historic Significance" criterion below is assessed against the Fairmount Commercial Historic District and Baldwin Addition Fairmount Commercial District National Register nominations (see links in the Historic Preservation Priority section above). Applicants and reviewers can reference these documents to determine contributing status.

Note: the "Historic Significance" criterion below is informed by the National Register of Historic Places nominations referenced in the Historic Preservation Priority section above.

Criterion	What it measures	Max
Historic Significance	Does the building retain original historic fabric? Is it a contributing structure?	5
Current Façade Condition	How deteriorated is the façade? Higher need = higher score.	5
Scope & Visual Impact	What percentage of the public façade is addressed? Is the streetscape impact meaningful?	5
Phased Plan	Does the applicant have a phased improvement plan? Does this project fit a larger vision?	5
Contractor Quality & HP Credentials	Is the contractor Indiana Landmarks-verified or equivalent? Are work examples strong?	5

Recapture of Grant Funds

Grant-funded improvements must remain in place for three years from final reimbursement. If the property is sold and improvements removed within three years, the original grantee owes MSF a prorated repayment: 100% if within year one, 66% within year two, 33% within year three. This provision is written into the grant agreement at award. MSF documents improvements with photographs at reimbursement.

Grant Limits per Applicant

No applicant may hold more than one active grant per property address at a time. Sign grants are limited to one per property address per calendar year. A property owner with multiple properties may not hold more than two active grants simultaneously across all properties. The Grant Committee may waive these limits by majority vote when circumstances warrant.

Conflict of Interest

Grant Committee members must abstain from voting on any application involving a person to whom they are related by birth or marriage, with whom they cohabitate, or with whom they have a business relationship.

Confidentiality

Confidential financial information in applications is discussed only in executive session and treated with complete confidentiality.

Policy Review & Exemptions

All policies are reviewed annually by the MSF Board of Directors and updated as the program environment or regulatory requirements change. Legitimate exceptions may be granted by formal Board approval with full written documentation. No exception may violate regulatory requirements.