



Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie

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Historic Building Improvement Grant

Guidelines

Program Overview

The Historic Building Improvement Grant is a reimbursement grant program administered by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie in partnership with the City of Erie Historic Review Commission. The program provides grants up to \$15,000 for qualifying commercial and residential structures for exterior improvements (repairs to windows, doors, porches, roofs, gutters, etc.) and requires a 10% cash match. The Historic Building Improvement Grant Program is funded with \$840,000 of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds awarded to the City of Erie through the American Rescue Plan Act.

The purpose of the Historic Building Improvement Grant is to:

- provide critical resources to owners of historic properties,
- foster an attractive and safe environment for residents and visitors,
- stimulate private investment consistent with the historic integrity of the downtown and neighborhoods,
- preserve the architectural heritage of the City of Erie, and
- foster civic pride and a sense of place.

Prior to beginning an application, please read the guidelines in their entirety.

Eligibility Criteria, Conditions and Limitations

ELIGIBLE BUILDINGS

Commercial and residential buildings eligible for this grant program include:

- Contributing structures to a locally designated historic overlay district;
- Contributing structures located in a potential historic overlay district that has submitted a complete application for review by the Historic Review Commission;
- Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a single building or a contributing resource to a historic district; and
- Properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, according to state historic preservation office (SHPO) standards, as a single building or within a proposed historic district, as determined by the city historic preservation planner. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is not required.

Should you have questions about the eligibility of a historic building for this grant program, contact the City of Erie Preservation Planner Chris Kinder at (814)870-1580 or ckinder@erie.pa.us.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The project for which funding assistance is being requested must be **exterior** preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation work on:

- the original historic structure,
- historically significant features of the property, such as original fencing,

- architecturally compatible additions to the original structure, or
- a historically significant or architecturally compatible auxiliary or outbuilding building to the primary structure such as a carriage house or garage.

Roofing and gutter projects are eligible for consideration if the project is a repair or replacement using historically accurate roofing materials such as slate or tile, the project is a restoration or repair of historic, architectural features such as box or Yankee gutters, or the project is a repair or replacement using modern materials that mimic historic materials in appearance and improve durability and lifetime.

Exterior painting and staining projects are eligible.

Grant funding may be used to fund professional architectural services, materials, and skilled labor. Grant recipients and their contractors must pay prevailing wage in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws for projects exceeding \$25,000 in cost and adhere to all requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Certified payrolls demonstrating that prevailing wages have been paid must be submitted along with requests for reimbursement.

All improvements must comply with standards set forth in the City of Erie zoning ordinance and building codes, as well as applicable sections of the Pennsylvania building codes and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Improvements should comply with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation located at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>.

The Historic Building Improvement Grant Program requires a cash match of 10% of the total project cost. For example, if the total project cost is \$10,000, the applicant can request \$9,000 in grant support and must provide the remaining \$1,000 themselves.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects and expenditures that are ineligible for Historic Building Improvement Grant funding include:

- projects started or completed prior to the submission of a grant application;
- repairs that are ordinary in nature, and do not require historically accurate materials, such as driveway or sidewalk repairs;
- interior improvements;
- landscaping;
- exterior work on additions that are not architecturally compatible with the original structure and non-historically significant auxiliary buildings;
- labor provided by the applicant or any other non-skilled labor; and
- labor paid below prevailing wage requirements, except for owner-occupied single and multi-family residences.

Review Process

Applications will be accepted, reviewed, and approved on a rolling basis until all available funds have been allocated or until December 31, 2024, whichever comes first. Funding decisions will be made by the City of Erie Historic Review Commission, which meets the first Monday of each month at 4:00 pm. Complete grant applications must be received by the Historic Preservation Planner three weeks prior to a meeting to be placed on that meeting agenda. Applications received less than three weeks prior to a meeting will be placed on the agenda for the following month.

For those applicants applying for funds to perform work on “contributing structures to a locally designated historic overlay district,” the Historic Building Improvement Grant application will serve as the application for the required

Certificate of Appropriateness. Should the project be awarded grant funding, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be awarded simultaneously, subject to the payment of the appropriate fee.

The Historic Review Commission will give priority to projects that:

- involve the preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of vacant and / or neglected properties of historic and / or architectural significance;
- involve sites that have a high degree of visibility from the public right-of-way;
- demonstrate a large financial commitment on the part of the applicant;
- priority will be given first to preservation projects, then restoration, then maintenance type projects.

The Historic Review Commission reserves the right to deny any grant application or to provide only partial funding for a project.

Following approval of an application by the Historic Review Commission, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie will issue a grant award agreement stating the terms of the award and the reimbursement process.

Grant funded projects must be completed within one year from the date of the Historic Review Commission meeting at which the grant was awarded. Failure to comply with the grant period may result in the award being revoked. The Historic Review Commission reserves the right to allow a reasonable extension of this time limit upon receiving a written request from the applicant explaining the need for the extension and the revised project timeline.

Property owners may submit additional applications to the Historic Building Improvement Grant Program following successful completion of awarded projects.

Reimbursement

Prior to the release of any funds, a project completion report must be submitted by the grantee to the City of Erie Historic Preservation Planner to demonstrate that the grant funded project has been successfully completed. The report must include before/during/after pictures to support that the standard of care has been met. In addition, copies of all bills, receipts, and canceled checks associated with the project must be provided in the report. Project work must meet with approval from city inspectors and the Historic Preservation Planner before payment will be issued.