



Business Signage Grant Program



Downtown Partners, Inc.

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SUMMARY

Downtown Partners is sponsoring a Business Signage Grant Program, which is intended to stimulate improvements to the exterior of Downtown commercial buildings.

The Business Signage Grant Program was made possible through the Partnering for the Future II campaign of the Greater Burlington Partnership.

Who is eligible: Owners and/or tenants of existing commercial buildings within the SSMID (Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District) project area. Tenant applicants are required to submit written evidence of building owner's approval of the application.

Maximum grant amount: \$250, requiring a 1:1 match (at least 50 percent of the cost of the project must be paid for by the owner). Only one grant may be awarded per business.

DETAILS

I. Program Statement

DOWNTOWN PARTNERS WANTS TO ASSIST YOU IN IMPROVING YOUR PROPERTY OR BUSINESS.

Downtown Partners, Inc. is a member of the nationally successful Main Street Program that coordinates activities in the areas of organization, promotion, design, competitive management techniques, business recruitment and the effective re-use of vacant space. The ultimate success of Downtown Burlington however, is dependent upon the private sector commitment. Merchants, building owners, residents, professionals and investors can all benefit by improving the condition of their buildings and therefore the general condition of Downtown.

The program is intended to stimulate improvements to Downtown commercial buildings by providing an innovative financing mechanism. This program represents an opportunity for Downtown Partners to provide and successfully implement signage improvements that will result in a more attractive Downtown Burlington, and therefore a stronger community as a whole.

II. Purpose of Grant Program

The purpose of the Business Signage Grant Program is to stimulate signage improvements which stress the historical significance and uniqueness of Downtown structures. **Specifically, it is designed to encourage the use of custom designed "blade" signage that extends perpendicular to the face of the building.**

III. Grant Use

1. Grants provided by this program are to be used for blade signage for existing commercial businesses within the SSMID (Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District) – see attached map. New businesses must have been open with regular hours for two months prior to eligibility. **Funding is limited; please contact Downtown Partners prior to beginning any work to make sure funds are available.**
2. All signage is to be approved by the Downtown Partners Design Committee in accordance with the Downtown Partners, Inc. design guidelines. Applicants who deviate from the approved application may jeopardize their grant eligibility.
3. The structure must not be slated or under consideration for demolition by any government agency, developer, or property owner.
4. **All work done shall comply with City codes, particularly regarding vertical encroachment over public right-of-way and commercial signage. THIS IS A GRANT REQUIREMENT.** Contact the Development Department, 319-753-8158; sign and encroachment permits can be found on the City’s website at <http://www.burlingtoniowa.org/2152/Permits-Applications>.
5. Successful applicants should preserve and repair historic original materials wherever possible.
6. In accordance with sustainable practices, removed materials should be recycled wherever possible.
7. **FUNDS PROVIDED BY THIS PROGRAM SHALL NOT BE USED FOR MATERIALS PURCHASED OR WORK BEGUN PRIOR TO GRANT APPROVAL. DOING SO WILL DISQUALIFY YOUR APPLICATION.**
8. Eligible expenses are:
 - Design
 - Fabrication
 - Installation
 - Permit feesIneligible expenses include, but are not limited to:
 - Debris disposal
 - Grant recipient labor
9. Grant funds will only be disbursed within the same calendar year that the application is submitted; grant awards cannot be carried over from one year to the next.

IV. Design Requirements

This program has been created to encourage the use of traditional blade signage. Signs **must** be:

- Constructed of durable material
- Professionally crafted
- Mounted at least eight feet above the sidewalk as measured from the bottom edge of the sign
- Mounted at least two feet back from the curb as measured from the outside edge of the sign

In addition, **custom designed neon signage is eligible**. Neon signage may not be a standard “off the shelf” design.

Signs **cannot** include:

- Internal lighting (however, external “gooseneck” style lighting is allowed and is an eligible grant expense)
- Fluorescent colors
- More than four different colors
- Reader-boards or electronic messaging systems
- Vinyl banners or other signage on a flexible substrate

V. Grant Policy

Approved signage will conform to the Downtown Partners Design Guidelines. The Downtown Partners Design Committee will not use ethnicity, nationality, sex or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability or disability, or religion as grounds for refusing a grant to an eligible applicant.

VI. Program Implementation

1. Application process:

- a. Review these Guidelines and complete the Application below. Downtown Partners can provide photo examples of the kinds of signage eligible for the grant.
- b. Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to contact Downtown Partners to receive free sign design and placement consultation through Main Street Iowa.
- c. Return completed applications, plans, cost estimates and construction schedules to the Downtown Partners office for review by the Design Committee. You could be asked to attend the Design Committee meeting to discuss the project, and changes may be suggested or required in order to receive funding.
- d. Submit copies of the completed vertical encroachment and signage permit applications and proof of payment to Downtown Partners with the grant application (see III.4 above).
- e. The Downtown Partners Design Committee will decide whether to approve the application. If approved, you will receive a grant award letter.
- f. If not approved, Downtown Partners will explain by letter to the applicant the reasons for rejection and what, if any, steps can be taken to receive approval.
- g. Individuals with approved applications will be notified by Downtown Partners.
- h. Upon completion of the project and inspection by Downtown Partners, grant monies will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Copies of all applicable invoices and proof of payment must be submitted before reimbursement.

2. Post-Application Procedure

- a. The Downtown Partners Executive Director will monitor the progress of the project.
- b. Changes in approved work specifications must be approved by the Downtown Partners office. The Downtown Partners Executive Director may approve or reject such changes; however, the Director may defer such action to the Downtown Partners Design Committee.

- c. Approved changes in work verifications will be attached to the original applications, dated, and signed by the Downtown Partners Executive Director.
- d. The applicant and the Downtown Partners Executive Director will conduct a final inspection before the final payment will be made to the applicant.
- e. Deviation from an approved plan may disqualify the applicant from this grant program.**

VII. Program Amendments

The details of the Downtown Partners Business Signage Grant Program may be amended subject to the formal approval of a majority of the Downtown Partners Board of Directors.

DOWNTOWN PARTNERS, INC
BUSINESS SIGNAGE GRANT PROGRAM
Application Form

Name of Applicant: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Project Address and Name of Business: _____

Does the applicant own the building? Yes _____ No _____

If not, please attach a letter from the owner expressing approval of the project.

How long has the business been open? _____

Will you be using the services of a graphic artist for signage? Yes _____ No _____

If so, who? _____

Estimated Project Cost (**attach estimates**): _____

Proposed project start date: _____

Proposed completion date: _____

Please attach a copy of the project design.

The undersigned applicant affirms that:

- A. The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge.
- B. I (we) have read and understand the conditions of the Downtown Partners Business Signage Grant Program and agree to abide by its conditions and guidelines.

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

Downtown Burlington Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District

