



Elk River Trail Foundation

Façade Program and Application

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Façade Program will help business owners improve the outdoor appearance of their properties to encourage tourism and economic development associated with the "Trail Towns" along the Elk River Trail and the Elk River Water Trail. The Program consists of two parts. The first will provide architectural services to guide renovation planning. Those who complete the design phase may then apply for grant funding for eligible improvements. The Elk River Trail Foundation's Façade Program will apply only to Clay and Kanawha Counties. The *Braxton County Façade Program* will be handled by the Braxton County Commission.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

Priority will be given to buildings in the Clay and Clendenin communities and in close proximity to the Elk River Trail and the Elk River Water Trail. The Foundation has retained an architect to ensure rehabilitation that is appropriate to the scale and character of the surrounding area. Grants will be evaluated based primarily on their economic impact on the community.

a. Eligibility Requirements

- All grant funds must be used for commercial property.
- Applicants must be current on property taxes, utility bills, and any required business licenses.
- Grant funds cannot be used to correct existing code violations created or caused by existing property owners or tenants, for property damage by collision, acts of nature, or occurrences covered by insurance.
- Abandoned commercial buildings that are privately owned may apply with the intent of returning them to productive use with a written summary of plans for obtaining new business.
- Work must be approved by the project's architect and the Façade Committee designated by the Foundation to approve applications.
- Work paid for with grant funds must begin soon after the grant has been approved and completed by the Foundation's deadline.
- All work must comply with all relevant permits and inspections that are required.
- Only one grant will be awarded per business entity or property owner.
- The property owner must be the applicant or sign a letter approving the application for the leasing business.
- If applications exceed the funds available, the Façade Committee will evaluate the applications and choose those that will receive grants.

b. Ineligible Properties:

- New construction and national franchises
- Government-owned properties
- Work begun or materials purchased before grant approval
- Properties in litigation, condemnation, or receivership
- Properties that have outstanding taxes, fees, penalties, or delinquencies with federal, state, or local governments, or not current with their business license
- Improvement to residential spaces (BnBs are not considered residential)

c. **Eligible Improvements:** All applicants must work with the project's architect to receive architectural plans and recommendations for some or all of the following improvements:

- Awnings appropriate for the façade improvement and architecture
- Exterior painting consistent with other downtown buildings
- Murals that enhance downtown character and align with community standards
- Signs that are compatible with other buildings on the block
- Exterior masonry repair
- Repairs to exterior facades that face the street or corners in which one side faces the street
- Sign removal, replacement, or repair
- Repair or replacement of cornices, windows, decorative detail, doors, awnings, or window display lighting
- Exterior lighting structures and hardware on the street-facing side of the building
- Addition or modification to entryways that allow for greater access for people with disabilities
- Reconstruction of features that were part of the original structure and can be documented
- Removal of historically inappropriate elements or features

d. **Ineligible Improvements:** New construction projects, government properties, and national franchise properties are not eligible to participate. Other ineligible items include:

- Interior improvements
- Roofing
- Paving
- Structural improvements
- Security systems/equipment
- Loading docks
- Parking entrances
- Removal of structurally important features.

GRANT PROCESS:

- PHASE 1 - APPLICATION. Applicants may submit properties for initial consideration via a Phase 1 Application to the Façade Committee by email to the Elk River Trail Foundation at executivedirector@elkrivertrail.org or by mail to Elk River Trail Foundation, 107 Koontz Avenue, Suite 109, Clendenin, WV 25045.
- The Façade Committee will review Phase 1 applications and advise the applicant whether the proposal is eligible for Phase 2 architectural assistance.
- PHASE 2 - ARCHITECTURAL PLANNING PROCESS. Selected applicants must meet with the project's architect to outline the scope of work and obtain the architect's recommendation. The architect will ensure that renovations are appropriate to the historic or architectural context of the area. If appropriate, the architect will provide a recommendation, conceptual sketch, scope of work, and opinion of construction costs for the suggested renovation for inclusion in a Phase 3 Application.

- Applicants may receive up to \$1,500 in design/architectural services to guide their renovation planning, paid for by the Foundation directly to the architect. No funds will be paid directly to an applicant.
- PHASE 3 - CONSTRUCTION GRANT APPLICATION. Those who complete the design phase may then apply for a grant in an amount not exceeding \$20,000 for construction of the renovations. Final award amounts will be determined by the Facade Committee based on available funds and project scope.
- Phase 3 applications may be submitted by email to the Elk River Trail Foundation at executivedirector@elkrivertrail.org or by mail to Elk River Trail Foundation, 107 Koontz Avenue, Suite 109, Clendenin, WV 25045.
- The Facade Committee will review the applications and approve or deny. If the number of applications exceed the funds available for construction grants, the Facade Committee will select those to receive grants.
- PHASE 4 - CONSTRUCTION. The applicant will be notified of the Facade Committee's decision and the timeline for advertising the project for bid. The architect will prepare permit applications, construction plans, specifications, and bidding documents; provide assistance during bidding; perform construction administration services, including coordination with the Foundation and the WV Department of Economic Development; and provide construction inspection services.
- Projects cannot proceed until the architect provides authorization to begin construction.
- Work will be performed by a contractor or contractor selected by the Foundation following prescribed guidelines. The applicant must also execute the construction contract and be responsible for costs incurred that exceed the amount of the grant award.
- Property owners will not receive funding directly. The project's architect will review bids and provide oversight during construction. Upon completion of work, and with approvals from both the architect and property owner, the Elk River Trail Foundation will make payments not to exceed the grant amount directly to the contractor or supplier upon presentation of invoices and the architect's certification that the work has been satisfactorily completed. The applicant will be responsible for costs exceeding the amount of the grant award.

Application & Award Process

- Once the application period closes, all eligible submissions will be reviewed and scored by the Facade Committee using established evaluation criteria. Based on those scores, applicants will be selected to move forward in the program.
- Applicants selected for Phase 2 architectural support are anticipated to be notified in May.
- Following the announcement, the program architect will contact each awarded business to begin the design phase. The architect will meet with each business owner at least twice to review, discuss, and refine proposed design concepts. This design and review phase is expected to take approximately two to three months, depending on project scope, regulatory requirements, and applicable federal review processes.
- Once designs are finalized and cost estimates are developed, business owners will be required to submit a Phase 3 application if they wish to pursue a construction grant. This phase confirms agreement with the proposed designs, scope of work, and associated costs and allows the project to move forward to the bidding phase for contractors.
- Pending final approvals, the program anticipates beginning construction and facade improvements in the fall season. However, the use of the funds available for the facade renovation project are generally subject to oversight by governmental agencies and federal requirements, such as the possibility of an environmental review for a particular project. As a result, Elk River Trail Foundation cannot make any commitments as to the amount of time it may take for any particular project to commence or to be completed



Elk River Trail Foundation: Façade Improvements

PHASE I APPLICATION

In order to be considered for grant funding, you must work with the project's architect to develop a scope of work and agree to construction being completed by the selected contractor following appropriate bidding procedures.

Are you willing to move forward? Yes No

1. Name of Applicant: *(Must be the Property Owner or Business Occupying the Building)*

2. Property Address: _____

Tax Map #: _____ **Parcel #:** _____

3. Are you the property owner? Yes No

(If no, you will need to attach a signed letter from the property owner authorizing this application.)

4. Is the property located in downtown Clay or Clendenin or within 2 miles of the Elk River or the Elk River Trail? Yes No

5. Applicant's Contact Information:

Telephone: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Mailing Address: _____

6. Classification of proposed property: *(select all that apply)*

Commercial Property (Please Specify: Retail, Restaurant, Office, etc.)

Mixed-use Building (Commercial floor w/ residential above)

Abandoned Commercial Building (Attach a summary of plans for obtaining new business)

Other (Please specify)

NOTE: Non-Residential only. National franchise, government-owned, or tax-exempt properties are not eligible for this program.

7. Does the property have any existing code violations? Yes No
(If yes, please explain.)

8. Does the renovation propose to repair damage caused by: *(Select all that apply)*

Existing property owners or tenants Collision

Acts of nature Occurrences covered by insurance

None of the above

9. Briefly describe your intended improvements.

10. Briefly describe how this project will enhance the downtown area and/or trail community?

11. Do you have available funds to commit to the project? Yes No

(If yes, please explain.)

Please provide the following attachments:

- Current photos of the property
- Historical photos of the property, if available

Submission Details and Disclaimers:

Submission of a grant application does not guarantee funding.

Expenses incurred prior to the grant award and authorization to commence construction will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Federal Funding Disclaimer:

If selected for funding, please be advised that this program is supported by federal funds and must comply with all applicable federal policies, procedures, and environmental review requirements. As a result, project approvals and implementation may experience delays beyond the control of the Elk River Trail Foundation.

Submission:

Applications must be submitted either online or by submitting a paper application to be either emailed to Madison Stone, Executive Director of the Elk River Trail Foundation at executivedirector@elkriverval.org or by mail or hand delivered to Elk River Trail Foundation at 107 Koontz Avenue, Suite 109, Clendenin, WV 25045.

