



Elk River Trail Foundation

Façade Program

Frequently Asked Questions

The questions below address common topics that may arise during the Façade Mini Grant Program application, review, and implementation process. This section is intended to help applicants better understand eligibility requirements, priorities, timelines, and program guidelines.

Priority will be given to commercial buildings located in the Clay and Clendenin communities and surrounding areas in close proximity to the Elk River Trail and Elk River Water Trail, and buildings where new or expanding businesses plan to locate. For construction grants, additional consideration will be given to applicants willing to provide matching funds.

To ensure high-quality and context-sensitive improvements, the Elk River Trail Foundation has retained an architect to guide rehabilitation efforts that reflect the scale and character of surrounding downtown areas. Grant applications will be evaluated based on their potential economic impact and contribution to community revitalization.

Eligibility

Q1: Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

A: Commercial property owners or business tenants (with owner approval) located in Clay and Kanawha County are eligible, with priority given to those in the Town of Clay and Town of Clendenin or properties near the Elk River Trail corridors.

Q2: Can a tenant apply for a façade grant?

A: Yes, tenants who provide business services may apply with written approval from the property owner.

Q3: Can residential property owners apply?

A: No, the program is for commercial properties only.

Q4: Can I apply if my property has existing code violations?

A: If the violations were caused by the current owner or tenant, the project is not eligible. If they are unrelated or inherited, please contact us for guidance.

Q5: Can I apply if I do not have a building?

A: No. The Façade Mini Grant Program is intended for improvements to permanent commercial buildings. Applicants must own or operate a business located in a fixed structure within the program's designated service area. Mobile or temporary business operations—such as food trucks, trailers, pop-up locations, or other non-permanent structures—are not eligible for this program. The goal of the Façade Mini Grant Program is to support long-term exterior improvements that enhance downtown areas and commercial corridors in Elk River Trail communities.

Q6: If I own a vacant commercial building, can I apply for the Façade Mini Grant Program?

A: Yes. Owners of vacant, brick-and-mortar commercial buildings are eligible to apply for the Façade Mini Grant Program. Improving the exterior appearance of vacant buildings can play an important role in attracting new businesses, supporting downtown revitalization, and encouraging economic activity in Elk River Trail communities. By investing in façade improvements now, property owners can help create welcoming, market-ready spaces that appeal to future tenants and contribute to the overall vitality of the area. However, priority will be given to existing businesses if the number of applicants exceeds available funding.

Funding & Matching

Q7: Is there a required matching fund amount?

A: Matching funds are not required.

Q8: What is the maximum construction grant amount available?

A: Construction grant award amounts vary depending on project scope and funding availability. The maximum amount granted is to not exceed \$20,000. The applicant will be responsible for any costs exceeding the grant award.

Q9: Can I be reimbursed for work I already started?

A: No. Work must not begin until after grant approval and authorization from the program architect and all work must be completed by the contractor who is hired to perform the work.

Q10: Can I use my own contractor or have someone I know complete the work if they offer a lower price?

A: No. Because the Façade Mini Grant Program is funded through a federal grant, all work must follow strict procurement and compliance requirements. All façade improvements must be completed using designs approved by the program's architect and carried out by the contractor selected through the program's competitive process. Any work completed outside of the approved scope, design, or contractor—including work performed by an applicant, a friend, or an unapproved contractor—will not be eligible for reimbursement or coverage under the grant. These requirements help ensure fairness, quality, and compliance with federal funding regulations.

Project Scope

Q11: What types of improvements are eligible?

A: Eligible improvements include exterior painting, signage, awnings, lighting, masonry repair, window and door restoration, mural installation, and accessibility improvements. A full list is included in the program guidelines.

Q12: Are interior renovations or roof repairs eligible?

A: No. Interior work, roofing, paving, and structural changes are not eligible.

Q13: Does my project have to be historically accurate?

A: Projects must be appropriate to the scale and character of the surrounding area. The program architect will work with you to ensure design compatibility and may offer historically inspired recommendations.

Application & Review Process

Q14: What is the application process like?

A: The process has four phases. In Phase 1, you submit a short application for initial consideration. If selected, in Phase 2 you'll work with the project architect. Once designs are prepared and approved upon by both parties, the applicant will submit a Phase 3 Application to apply for a construction grant. If selected for a construction grant, Phase 4 involves moving forward with a contractor selected by the Foundation to perform the work.

Q15: Who reviews the applications?

A: Elk River Trail Foundation's Façade Committee, composed of individuals from each Trail Town, in partnership with the program architect, reviews applications based on readiness, impact, design, and eligibility.

Q16: How are contractors selected?

A: After approval, the project will be advertised for competitive bids. The Elk River Trail Foundation and the architect will manage the bidding and selection process.

Q17: When will I receive the grant funds?

A: Funds are paid directly to the contractor or supplier after invoices are submitted and work is verified.

Q18: Why is the application and review process taking longer than expected?

A: We understand that waiting can be frustrating, and we appreciate your patience. The Façade Mini Grant Program is primarily funded through an Appalachian Regional Commission grant, which requires multiple reviews, approvals, and compliance steps to ensure all regulations and guidelines are properly followed. While this process can take time, these protocols help ensure fairness, accountability, and long-term success for both applicants and the communities we serve. The Elk River Trail Foundation is committed to keeping applicants informed throughout the process. If delays occur, we will provide clear updates explaining the reason for the delay and an estimated timeline for next steps whenever possible. Our goal is to move the program forward as efficiently as possible while meeting all required funding and compliance standards.

Other Question

Q19: Can I get help filling out the application?

A: Yes! Contact Madison Stone, Executive Director, at executivedirector@elkrivertrail.org for support or to set up a consultation.

Q20: Where do I send my completed application?

A: The easiest way to submit your application is by completing the online application available on our website at elkrivertrail.org.

If you prefer not to apply online, paper applications are also available and may be completed and submitted using one of the options below:

How to obtain a paper application:

- Download the document from the Elk River Trail Foundation webpage, elkrivertrail.org and print yourself.
- Pick up an application at the Clendenin Mayor's Office
Located at: 103 1st Street, Clendenin, WV 25045
- Pick up an application at Clay County Courthouse (Town Clerk's Office)
Located at: 246 Main Street, Clay, WV 25043

Submitting your completed application:

- **Email:** Scan and email the completed application, along with all required attachments listed in the program guidelines, to executivedirector@elkrivertrail.org
- **Mail or Hand Deliver:**
Elk River Trail Foundation
107 Koontz Avenue, Suite 109
Clendenin, WV 25045

Please be sure all required attachments are included with your application to avoid delays in processing.

For any other questions not addressed in this document, please reach out to Madison Stone, Executive Director of Elk River Trail Foundation, Inc.

Email: executivedirector@elkrivertrail.org

Cell: (304) 619-6466