



Program Overview

The **Business Façade Improvement** program provides annual grant funding for municipalities and regional districts located within the Northeast, Prince George, Cariboo-Chilcotin/Lillooet, and the Northwest regions that participate in the combined regional development accounts. Annual funding of up to \$20,000 is available to each municipality and regional district to enhance economic development by encouraging private sector investment in businesses façade improvements. Municipalities and regional districts applying to the program are required to develop and submit their business façade improvement plan/guidelines, which will give direction to local business owners on the eligibility criteria to obtain the business façade improvement grant

Features and benefits of the program:

- Enhanced economic viability and vibrancy of northern and central B.C. communities by supporting visual improvements such as facades, signage, murals, architectural features, siding, lighting and awnings
- Private sector investment in local business improvement
- Increased assessed values and tax base as a result of improved properties
- Attractiveness of community to enhance community pride as well as tourism experience
- Improved community appearance to support recruitment of new businesses and/or residents

Objective

To support economic development through leveraged private sector investment in local business façade improvements

Application Intake Deadlines

Funding applications are accepted to this program on an annual intake cycle. Applications will be accepted in the last quarterly intake of each year (November) to allow approval by the regional advisory committee in time for the following fiscal year

If a municipality or regional district has been approved for business façade improvement funding for the previous year, complete reporting must be provided to Northern Development prior to January 31st of the following year.

- Applicants can click on the image to download the Business Façade Improvement reporting form, or visit Northern Development’s website to download it at <http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/funding-programs/community-development/business-facade-improvement/>



Program Eligibility

Eligible organizations

- Municipalities
 - Regional districts
- + Applicants must be a municipality or regional district located within the Northeast, Prince George, Cariboo-Chilcotin/Lillooet, and the Northwest regions that participate in the combined regional development accounts*

Eligible costs

- Direct project labour costs
- Contractor fees
- Rental of tools and equipment for construction work
- Project related materials and supplies

Ineligible costs

- Operational costs and staff salaries
- Purchases of construction equipment and tools
- GST and PST

Required project and funding application features

- The project is aligned with the requirements and mandate of the funding program
- The project will create new economic activity
- The funding request is supported by local government through a resolution
 - Municipalities and regional districts must provide a copy of the resolution of support to Northern Development before a funding decision can be made
- The funding request is supported by the regional advisory committee through a resolution
- Completed applications are forwarded by Northern Development to the appropriate regional advisory committee that recommends project decisions to the board of directors
- Applicants must submit business façade improvement plan/guidelines with their application. Samples of existing business façade programs are available from Northern Development. The submitted business façade improvement guidelines must include the following:
 - Purpose of the program
 - Design guidelines
 - Eligible properties (as defined within a specified area within the municipality or regional district)
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Eligible façade improvements
 - Eligible grant amount (50% to a maximum of \$5,000 per façade improvement project)
 - Application process
 - Evaluation process
 - Reporting and reimbursement

Funding terms

- Municipalities and regional districts located within the Northeast, Prince George, Cariboo-Chilcotin/Lillooet, and the Northwest regions that participate in the combined regional development accounts may apply for one rebate grant of up to \$20,000 (50% to a maximum of \$5,000 per façade improvement project) each calendar year to support a local business façade improvement program
- Applications will be accepted in the last quarterly intake of each year (November) to allow approval-in-principle by the regional advisory committee in time for the following fiscal year
- Program guidelines would be required to show a minimum 1:1 leveraging from the private sector
- Private sector in-kind labour or material donations may be considered on an extraordinary exception basis. Please contact Northern Development if this is contemplated for your program
- Program administration can be managed by the local government administration or delegated to the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association, Tourism Association or Economic Development Association
- The municipality or regional district will submit a report on the results of their business façade improvement program using [Northern Development's project reporting form](#) at the end of each calendar year verifying the following:
 - Business façade improvement applications received
 - Business façade improvement applications approved
 - Amount applied for by project
 - Amount approved for by project
 - Amount disbursed by project
 - Private sector investment by project
 - Value of improvements by project
 - Description of projects and community impacts
 - Before and after photos for each business façade improvement project
 - Business testimonial from each participating business
- Funding applications to the Northern Development business façade improvement program for subsequent years may be approved-in-principle in advance of year end; however, formal approval is subject to receipt and review of complete reporting from the previous year's program by Northern Development staff

Application Assessment

Northern Development staff undertake comprehensive due diligence of each funding application received, which may include contacting relevant agencies and organizations as part of the review process

Application Process

1. Local government applicant contacts the Director, Business development at Northern Development to discuss alignment with the Business Façade Improvement program
2. The local government applicant completes a funding application and submits the application to Northern Development
3. Once Northern Development confirms alignment between the application and the Business Façade Improvement program, the local government applicant submits the complete application with a resolution of support
4. Northern Development staff conduct due diligence of the application, and forward the funding request to the appropriate regional advisory committee for recommendation
 - The regional advisory committee determines whether to support the funding request
 - Once a recommendation supporting the funding application is provided by the regional advisory committee, Northern Development staff finalize due diligence, incorporate any regional advisory committee recommendations and present the funding request to the board of directors
5. Following board approval, Northern Development staff will notify the applicant of the funding decision by phone. A formal letter is mailed to the applicant
6. Northern Development staff will review and verify complete reporting for the year and, based on acceptance, a grant reimbursement is issued to the municipality or regional district. Complete reports are required prior to January 31st of the following calendar year. The reporting form is available on Northern Development's website: <http://www.northernddevelopment.bc.ca/funding-programs/community-development/business-facade-improvement/>

For program
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