



FINKSBURG FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Guidelines

a. What is the Facade Improvement Program?

The Facade Improvement Program (FIP) offers grant funds to eligible property and business owners in Finksburg to improve the appearance of building facades and signs, and to make other visually impactful exterior improvements. Goals of the program are to:

1. encourage renovation of building facades and signs,
2. improve the appearance of the Finksburg Corridor,
3. leverage private improvements by making revitalization efforts affordable and community based, and
4. preserve and enhance economic vitality of commercial services.

The FIP offers an incentive dollar amount of up to 80% of the total cost of facade improvements in return for the owner's 20% or greater investment in facade improvements. The grant award amount is based on available funds, the number of qualified applicants, and other evaluation criteria. Work Completed prior to award is not eligible for funding. The grant will be offered on a rolling basis as funding permits. This is a reimbursement program.

Grant funding is provided through Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's State Revitalization Programs. The FIP is administered through Carroll County Government, specifically the Department of Planning.

b. Greening incentive

Owner will be reimbursed up to 100% of their investment for FIP projects coinciding with approved greening or landscaping improvements visible from MD 140.

c. Who can apply for funding?

Commercial or industrial zoned properties within the Finksburg Designated Sustainable Community that front MD 140 or are adjacent to a property that fronts MD 140. To determine if your property is eligible, view the [Finksburg FIP – Eligible Applicants Map](#). Property owners, as well as building owners, tenants, and business owners with authorization from the property owner, can apply for funding.

Those eligible for the FIP are also likely eligible for the Gateway Renovation Tax Credit Program (Tax Credit). The Tax Credit is granted for improvements that significantly improve the overall appearance of the property and is based on the percentage of the improvement cost compared to the current assessed value of the property. More information on the Tax Credit can be found on Economic Developments website, Carrollbiz.org.

d. What activities are eligible for funding?

Eligible projects should be visible from MD 140 and include but are not limited to:

- awnings, lighting, siding, hardscaping
- masonry repair & repainting
- door/window repair & replacement
- removal of inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes
- exterior beautification, pressure washing
- curb appeal enhancements
- exterior cleaning, painting and/or paint removal
- signage repair, replacement, & removal of inappropriate or outdated signage
- plant boxes, landscape islands, etc.

e. What activities are ineligible for funding?

Ineligible projects include but are not limited to:

- improvements not visible from MD 140
- improvements made prior to grant approval
- general business operations expenses - salary, inventory, payroll, taxes, utilities, etc.
- interior renovations
- rear facades
- residential properties
- payment for applicant's labor
- property acquisition - acquiring title to a structure of a property
- new construction - creation of a new structure or facility where none exist at present, or the total replacement of an existing structure with a new one, or a substantial addition to an existing building
- legal, insurance, and permit expenses - legal fees, and personal properties premiums, licensing and permitting fees (for building permits, etc.) related to grants for eligible activities
- architectural and engineering services - providing the design, architectural renderings, and site plans, listing work items, estimated cost of construction, and related professional services for the projects is an applicant's responsibility and are not eligible for grant funds.

f. Are there any design guidelines?

Yes. Projects should conform, in so far as possible, to the Finksburg FIP - Design Guidelines.

g. How does the application process work?

Applicants submit a completed Finksburg FIP - Checklist & Application in full to the Program Administrator at the Carroll County Department of Planning. Applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis. County review of applications is a joint effort between the

- Carroll County Department of Planning,
- Carroll County Department of Economic Development,
- Carroll County Department of Land & Resource Management (as needed),
- Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, and a
- Local Architect.

The above County agencies will provide comments and/or recommendations to the Program Administrator. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the state to ensure no project will have a negative effect on historic sites. State review of applications is a joint effort between the

- Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, and the
- Maryland Historic Trust.

Applications will be reviewed on a timely basis, and the applicant will be notified in writing of the approval. The Program Administrator will issue an Award and Acceptance Agreement Form to the applicant if approval is granted. The form will include the specific amount granted and any conditions of approval, as well as the expiration date. The amount of the grant award is set out in the Award and Acceptance Agreement Form and will not be changed after project initiation. The applicant shall sign and return the form, which will represent acceptance of its terms.

h. How are projects selected for funding?

Once a completed application is submitted, the application will be reviewed based on how well the project meets the

1. goals of the Finksburg FIP (above),
2. objectives of the [Finksburg FIP - Design Guidelines](#), and the
3. vision and goals of the [2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan](#),

at the full discretion of the Program Administrator and review agencies.

i. What happens after a project is selected for funding?

Work selected for a grant must be completed within eight months of the award acceptance date. The first two months may be reserved to acquire permits and approvals. Depending on the scope of the work, extensions may be requested.

The applicant is responsible for acquiring all building permits and any other approval required by Carroll County and is expected to complete the project in accordance with all applicable codes, ordinances, and standard engineering practices. The applicant is responsible for conformance with all applicable safety standards and conditions.

j. How do I get reimbursed for my project?

Grant funds are issued on a reimbursement basis and cannot be issued until the project has been completed. Before a check is issued, the applicant will need to submit proof of payment for completed work which may include but is not limited to invoices, receipts, canceled checks, credit card statements, etc. The Program Administrator will review the completed project to determine that the work performed is consistent with the work approved. The County will then issue a reimbursement check for the agreed amount to the awardee within 30 days.

k. Maintenance of improvements

As part of the award acceptance and agreement, the applicant shall agree in writing for a period of three years following the date of completion of the facade improvement project, to maintain all improvements made per the approval in their finished state.

l. Other useful documents can be found at FinksburgFIP.org

- Finksburg Facade Improvement Program – Eligible Applicants Map
- Finksburg Facade Improvement Program – Checklist & Application
- Finksburg Facade Improvement Program – Design Guidelines
- 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan