



# **Façade Improvement Incentive Program**

**Administered by:**

**Rockdale Municipal Development District**

**January 2019**

## **Summary and Program Description**

The purpose of the Façade Improvement Incentive Program is to provide an incentive to existing business and/or property owners to encourage renovation and rehabilitation of the exterior of buildings in the City of Rockdale and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Funding for the program is provided by the Rockdale Municipal Development District (MDD). This program aims to improve the aesthetics within the City of Rockdale and its ETJ as attractive building façades positively impact the marketability and perception of the city. Thus, the Façade Improvement Program consists of a one-dollar to one-dollar match of up to \$10,000.00 for approved improvements. Incentives will be awarded for facade improvements that restore, rehabilitate, enhance or beautify a structure.

The program will be administered by the Rockdale MDD. An application form is to be submitted with a description of the work to be completed. Applications will be reviewed by the MDD Board of Directors (Board).

## **Program Goals**

- 1) Revitalize and improve the appearance of Rockdale buildings to positively impact the aesthetics, marketability, and perception of the City of Rockdale and its ETJ
- 2) Serve as a catalyst for continued private sector investment through visible improvements
- 3) Offer the private sector an incentive program to invest in Rockdale buildings

## **Eligible Applicants**

Property owners and tenant/business owners of properties located within the City of Rockdale and its ETJ area are eligible to participate in the program. Business owners/tenants must have been at the location for at six months or submit a written Business Plan and have the property owner's express consent for the proposed improvements. To participate in the Program, Applicants must complete and submit the Program application form provided by the MDD along with the required attachments. Retroactive applications for improvement work that has already been completed will not be accepted. Property taxes must be current, and participants must represent that to the best of their knowledge they have no debts in arrears to the City when a commitment letter is issued. Further, the Applicant must certify that there are no current code enforcement actions pending against the property that would not be mitigated by the project.

## **Eligible Costs**

The Façade Improvement Program is a matching funds program, which means that matching funds must be matched dollar for dollar (1:1 ratio) by the Applicant for qualified expenditures. The maximum incentive amount under the Program is \$10,000.00 for approved improvements per project. Incentive funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis only. Labor, design, and material costs are eligible costs. Further, permit fees associated with the proposed renovation/rehabilitation and fees for architectural design and engineering for the project are eligible program costs. In-kind, donated, "sweat equity" or similar no cost to the Applicant improvements, services, or materials will not be matched and are ineligible costs under the Program. Costs incurred for alternations or improvements completed prior to receipt of formal written approval by MDD Staff and issuance of the "Notice to Proceed with Improvements" are not eligible for reimbursement.

### **Eligible Improvements**

Subject to application approval and funding availability, incentives will be awarded for façade improvements that restore, rehabilitate, enhance or beautify a structure. Any and all Improvements must be permanently affixed to the structure.

Eligible improvements include:

- Signs (new, repairs, replacement, removal)
- Grate and grate box removal or conversion of solid grates to an open mesh style
- Awnings
- Lighting
- Paint
- Removal/replacement of inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes or materials
- Recessing/reconfiguring entrances
- Removal of extraneous elements
- Door/window replacement or repair
- Exterior cleaning
- Historical architectural elements

### **Design Requirements**

Applicants are encouraged to promote historic preservation, energy efficiency, and accessibility standards in designing improvements, to the extent that they are financially feasible or required by law. All improvements must conform to applicable city building codes, zoning ordinances, local and state laws.

### **Funding Availability**

Funding is limited and incentive awards will be subject to funding availability; Project Applicants will be prioritized on a first-come, first-serve basis. A commitment letter allocating the project funds for a particular approved project will be issued and a commitment period established so that if funds are not used within that period, program funds can be reallocated for other eligible projects.

### **Application Process**

An application with the following information, at a minimum, is to be submitted for consideration:

- Property address
- Applicant and Property owner name(s), address(es) and signature(s)
- Proof of ownership or if tenant, copy of lease or other property agreement and written consent of Property owner to complete the proposed improvement
- Verification that property taxes on the property are paid and current
- Project Scope description, to include a detailed plan and sketch
- Hard copy and digital photograph of existing building façade
- Project budget (detailed estimated costs by materials, labor, services and fees)

The required application forms are available at the offices of the Rockdale MDD. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the Applicant without consideration. The Board will review and approve applications and select Incentive recipients on a first-come, first served basis.

The Rockdale MDD will be primary staff for processing applications and for facilitating the process. Specifically, Rockdale MDD staff will conduct an initial review of the submitted application to determine whether the application is complete and will meet with Applicants as necessary. Applicants may be invited to present their applications before the Board.

The Board will evaluate applications based on the following Review Criteria and

Funding Priorities:

- Awards shall be based on a point system. Complete evaluation form is at the end of this document.
  - Appropriateness of Project
  - Creativity
  - Timeliness
  - Community Impact
  - Permanent, Tangible Improvements
  - Economic Impact
  - Preservation
  - Rehabilitation
  - Location and Visibility
- Preference is given to commercial buildings with operating businesses.
- Substantial visible improvement to the appearance of the building, as determined by the Board
- Projects that have significant architectural and/or historical elements must preserve or restore these elements to be eligible for funding through this program.

Applicants will be notified in writing as to whether his/her application has been rejected or approved by the MDD Board of Directors via a commitment letter issuance that allocates funds to the project if approved. Upon approval, the Applicant must enter into a reimbursement agreement with the MDD regarding the terms and conditions of his/her participation in the Program and receipt of the reimbursement funds, to include the following:

1. Project scope and property location and attachment(s) identifying the specific improvements to be undertaken;
2. Maximum amount of the allowed reimbursement incentive;
3. Work commencement date;
4. Submission of building permit(s) and other applicable permits or approvals;
5. Acknowledgment of the reimbursement claim procedure and requisite supporting documentation for reimbursement processing to the MDD (W-9 and/or Vendor List required);
6. Monitoring and right of final inspection by the Board and MDD staff;
7. Acknowledgment of change order procedures;
8. Compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws;
9. Promotional Rights to the MDD;
10. Maintenance Requirements and Repayment Penalty for Removal of Improvements within two years and;
11. The City's and the MDD's standard contract terms and provisions (e.g., liability, indemnification, termination, and insurance requirements)

The project must begin within 45 consecutive business work days from the date of the approval by the MDD Board and must be completed within 180 consecutive business work days, except where the MDD Board of Directors have granted in writing the Applicant's written request for an extension stating a reasonable cause for the delay. As appropriate, Rockdale MDD staff and/or authorized City personnel will monitor the construction process. The Rockdale MDD must approve in writing any change orders to the proposed improvement work.

Requests for reimbursement will only be processed after the rehabilitation/improvement work is completed and approved following a final field inspection by Rockdale MDD staff and/or the Board in order to verify compliance with the project scope. All expenses must be paid by check or Credit/Debit Card. Reimbursement claims must be accompanied by the following supporting documents: proof of payments (e.g., cancelled checks, paid invoices/receipts of eligible expenses), statements from architects, contractors and/or subcontractors acknowledging that all payments have been received, notarized final lien waivers from all contractors and/or subcontractors, if applicable, proof of final City inspections and a hard copy and/or digital "after" photograph of the facade improvements. Applicant must complete, sign and submit a request for reimbursement in order for disbursement of funds per the Rockdale MDD guidelines. A photocopy of all Credit/Debit Card receipts and/or the front and back of all cancelled checks must be submitted for reimbursement along with an invoice marked "paid." All invoices must clearly indicate the work that was performed, the amount of the invoice as well as the corresponding Credit/Debit Card receipt(s) and/or check number(s). All payments are subject to the review and approval of the Rockdale MDD. Please allow up to 10 business days for receipt of the reimbursement check.

#### **Maintenance Requirements**

By accepting Incentive funds, the Applicant commits to properly maintain all facade improvements, clean and free of graffiti for a minimum of 2 years at the Applicant's own cost and expense. Any damage to the facade is to be repaired immediately by the Applicant so that the property remains in good condition and positively contributes to the City of Rockdale and its ETJ. Applicant will be strongly encouraged to touch up painted areas and perform any other repairs needed on an ongoing basis and to maintain building appearance including the cleaning of any awnings at least once a year

#### **Promotional Rights**

By accepting Incentive funds, Applicant authorizes the MDD to promote the project and property including, but not limited to, displaying a sign at the site during and after construction indicating participation in the Program, and using photographs and descriptions of the project and property in the MDD's printed promotional materials, press releases, and websites.

**APPLICATION FORM**

**ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
ROCKDALE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Rockdale MDD  
114 E. Cameron Ave.  
Rockdale, TX 76567  
512-446-2111

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>1. Applicant Information</b>	
A. Applicant's Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
B. Business Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
C. Address of Project Site	
D. Applicant's Tax ID #	
E. Name of Property Owner	
F. Type of Entity Applying for Award	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual(s) <input type="checkbox"/> General Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Other
G. Type of Business (Retail, Service, etc.)	



**4. Conditions and Acknowledgements:**

This Façade Improvement Incentive Program is subject to change or cancellation at any time by a vote of the Rockdale MDD Board of Directors. In addition, any policy or procedure described herein may be waived by official action of this same committee. The MDD reserves the right to reject any and/or all applications.

*If I am successful in obtaining a Rockdale Façade Improvement Incentive from the MDD, I am obligated to maintain the funded improvements for a minimum of 2 years from the time I receive reimbursement. If the improvements are removed or changed prior to the 2 year timeline without prior approval, I agree to reimburse the Rockdale MDD for the entire amount of the Incentive, this will be guaranteed through a promissory note.*

*I have read, understand and will comply with the criteria described in this application, as well as the timeline, and I certify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I am current with all local, state and federal taxes and business fees. I hereby acknowledge my application for an Incentive, and do authorize MDD to obtain verifications from any source named in this application.*

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Approvals (MDD use only)**

Received by MDD: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by MDD: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice to Proceed: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Completion: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please indicate any of the following attachments:***

- Drawing, Rendering, Sketch
- Cost estimates
- Letter of consent from Landlord
- Photos and paint samples
- Any additional information provided by the applicant

**SCORE SHEET****\_\_\_ Appropriateness of Project (1-10)**

Does the proposed project comply with *The Rockdale MDD Strategic Economic Development Plan*? Does construction, renovation or exterior changes compliment the nature of the street/block where the property is located? Is the proposed new construction or improvements complimentary to the neighborhood or the historic era of the building? Does the applicant show that he or she worked with neighboring businesses or community organizations when formulating the project plans?

**\_\_\_ Creativity (1-5)**

Was the environment considered for the new or renovated improvements? Are eco-friendly materials proposed? Do the aesthetic enhancements chosen demonstrate cooperation with the neighborhood or City at large?

**\_\_\_ Timeliness (1-5)**

Are the appropriate professionals (engineers, architects, etc...) ready to do the proposed work? Is there a timeframe submitted with the project?

**\_\_\_ Community Impact (1-10)**

Did the applicant create an improvement plan which benefits the overall neighborhood? Does the project benefit the community as a whole? Will the applicant hire local (Rockdale / Milam County) contractors?

**\_\_\_ Permanent, Tangible Improvements (1-10)**

Is the proposed construction or improvements permanent, in that they will increase the value of the property? Will the proposed construction or improvements become affixed to the property in a way that if the property is sold, will remain with the property or structure? Do the enhancements to the property demonstrate significant return on investment?

**\_\_\_ Economic Impact (1-10)**

Will this project result in any economic growth (i.e. support existing business, add local employment, increase number of local customers or frequency of patronage, encourage commercial occupancy of a vacant space, increase in building value, etc.).

**\_\_\_ Preservation (1-10)**

Does this new construction or existing building reside within a designated historic district (National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Trails System or National Register of Historic Places)? If it is an existing building is the individual building recognized as a contributing historic structure by the National Register of Historic Places? Does the Rockdale community at large recognize this structure as having historical significance to the community? Is it located in The Rockdale Downtown Historic District (Belton Street on the North – South to Milam, First and Pear Streets, West from Wilcox to East on Green Street)? Is this building older than 50 years?

**\_\_\_ Rehabilitation (1-15)**

Does the condition of this property inhibit its use as a contributing commercial structure? Does this property have a history of vacancy? Is there a history of frequent tenant turnover? Is this property adjacent to distressed properties?

**\_\_\_ Location & Visibility (1-25)**

Is this property positioned in a high-traffic or highly-visible part of Rockdale and clearly not meet the building standards of the area? Is this property located on a “gateway” street into Rockdale or in the Downtown District as recognized by the master plan commissioned by the Rockdale Downtown Association?

**\_\_\_ Total Score**

Utilizing the Rockdale Facade Improvement Incentive Scorecard, projects will be considered under the following rating system.



0 – 59 Poor      60 – 69 Fair      70 – 79 Average      80 – 89 Good      90 – 100 Excellent

\*\* The MDD Board of Directors retains the right whether or not to support any project regardless of rating.