

West Town Special Service Area Façade Rebate Program Guidelines and Application

* Completed applications must be submitted at least 5 business days before a Monthly SSA Commission meeting to be considered. *

Program Description

The Façade Rebate Program is offered through the West Town Special Service Area (29-2014), a special taxing district whose overall purpose is to maintain and improve the shopping, dining, and nightlife within the SSA boundaries by providing a cleaner, safer, and more attractive commercial environment for consumers, residents, and business owners. The Façade Rebate Program is designed to help property owners and tenants within the West Town SSA beautify the front of their buildings by providing eligible projects a rebate of up to \$15,000.

Type of Assistance

A building owner (or tenant with building owner approval) who plans to make at least \$500 of exterior improvements may receive a 50% financial reimbursement (rebate), up to a maximum of \$15,000.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis in the order that they are received until all the Façade Rebate Program funding is disbursed for the fiscal year. To maximize the number of eligible projects that receive assistance, the SSA Commission reserves the right to award a rebate at an amount less than the allowable maximum. There is no guarantee that funding will be available upon request of rebate.

If there are multiple applications, or the list of applications received before the next SSA Commission review exceeds the amount of funding for the program, a lottery will be held to determine the order in which the projects will be funded and a wait list for available funding will be created.

Program Eligibility

- Applicant Requirements
 - Building must be located within the West Town SSA boundaries:
 - Chicago Ave. (Halsted to Western)
 - Division St. (South side only from Milwaukee to the Kennedy Expressway)
 - Damen Ave. (Chicago to Huron)
 - Ashland Ave. (Division to Chicago)
 - Milwaukee Ave. (Erie to Augusta [both sides] and Augusta to Division [east side only])
 - Ogden Ave. (Fry to the Kennedy Expressway)
 - Building must have proof of proper zoning and city permits.
 - Building must be owner occupied, or tenant must have written consent from the owner of the property.
 - Project may be started but must not be completed at the time of the application. If the applicant moves ahead with a project before receiving approval, the applicant accepts the risk that the project may not be approved for a rebate.
 - Applicant must fully and timely comply with all the requirements and deadlines set forth in the application.

- Applicants must pay for the improvements.
- If the owner or tenant is supplying their own materials or labor for the improvements, profits and overhead are not eligible expenditures for the rebate.
- The Department of Planning and Development has declared that SSA Commissioners are eligible to participate in the Façade Rebate Program, provided they meet all other Program eligibility criteria and abstain from reviewing and voting on ALL Façade Rebate Program applications during the period beginning when their application is submitted until their rebate check is approved and processed.
- Applications are eligible for a maximum payout of \$15,000 per address within a 5-year period.

Eligible Improvements

- Improvement must be visible from the public right-of-way and have a positive impact on the building's front appearance.
- Improvement must be compatible with building and zoning regulations.
- Examples of improvements include:
 - Signs or graphics
 - Window/door replacements
 - Tuck pointing
 - Landscaping and flower boxes
 - Exterior lighting
 - Awnings
 - Improvements to sidewalk(s) directly in front or to the side of a property
 - Installation of appropriate anti-graffiti material in conjunction with full façade improvement project.
 - Installation of additional bike parking racks
- Preference shall be given to:
 - Applicants who show a need for funding assistance to complete the façade improvements.
 - Applicants and buildings that have not previously participated in the Façade Rebate Program.
 - Projects that will have a significant impact on the area's beautification.
 - Projects that are sympathetic to the vintage character of the building.

Ineligible Improvements

- Once a building owner or tenant has received a rebate of the \$15,000 maximum amount for a property, that applicant is no longer eligible for the Façade Rebate Program for 5 years from date of rebate payout for the property. If ownership, tenancy, or applicant changes, the address may be eligible for additional funds at the discretion of the SSA Commission.
- Examples of ineligible projects include:
 - Any roofing improvements
 - Rear, side, alley, or secondary improvements not visible from the public right-of-way
 - New construction or additions
 - Interior improvements
 - Improvements that are considered regular building upkeep or maintenance

- Improvements planned for new buildings (constructed less than 5 years before application date), except for awnings and/or signage
- Temporary furniture, such as tables and chairs.
- Parking lot improvements that face side streets, alleys or are not visible from the public right-of-way
- Rebate requests will not be granted for façade improvements that were completed before the application is received and approved.
- If the same façade improvement project already received funding from a different grant or incentive program it is ineligible for additional funding through the Façade Rebate Program. Businesses may apply for two West Town SSA grants simultaneously as long as the projects themselves are separate.

Application Process

To apply for funds through the Façade Rebate Program, applicants must complete and submit the attached application via email to ssa29@westtownchamber.org, or send a physical copy of the application to:

West Town SSA Program Director
 West Town Chamber of Commerce
 1819 W. Chicago Ave. Chicago, IL 60622

Along with the application, applicants must submit:

- Photographs of the existing building and the proposed project area.
- Detailed plans and specifications for the proposed project.
- A list of applicable City permits to be obtained
- At least three detailed estimates for the proposed improvement project; specifying the preferred contractor. If the applicant plans to do their own construction, the applicant must submit three outside estimates in addition to their own estimate.
- The Summary of Total Project Costs attached to the application.

Applications must be complete at time of submission and received by the SSA Service Provider Agency at least 5 business days before a monthly SSA Commission meeting to be considered. The SSA Commission reserves the right to reject any questionable estimates, as well as implement additional Program rules and regulations or request additional information and documentation.

If unforeseen circumstances arise during the construction process that would incur additional costs, the applicant must submit an explanation in writing to the SSA Program Director. Additional costs will then be voted on for potential reimbursement up to the limit of the original \$15,000 cap. If an applicant moves ahead with the project before a vote is made, they take the risk that reimbursement of additional costs may not be approved.

If any change in ownership of the property or business participating in the Façade Rebate Program occurs during the improvements, eligibility for the Façade Rebate Program will be suspended until SSA Service Provider Agency staff and new ownership meet and approve in writing any changes to the original application. There is no guarantee that new ownership will be approved for the same rebate amount as the previous owner. All such applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Review Process

Applicants will receive a response regarding the project's approval within approximately six weeks of submitting a completed application. The West Town SSA Commission will review each application as it is received based on the preference and eligibility criteria listed in the application. The applicant may be asked to clarify design elements. The SSA Commission reserves the right to deny any Façade Rebate Application for any reason.

Construction Process

After the SSA Commission has approved a project, the SSA Service Provider Agency will send the applicant an approval letter. Approved applicants must submit:

1. A schedule showing estimated start and end dates of the project. Significant delays in the project will require a written explanation from the applicant, with a revised schedule.
2. If city permits are required for the project, the applicant must submit proof that City permits have been applied for within 30 days of receiving the approval letter.
3. Copies of the approved City building permits, when received. If the City permits have not been received within 120 days after the permit has been applied for, the applicant must send a written request to the SSA Program Director requesting an extension. Failure to apply for permits within 30 days of the date of the Approval Letter, or failure to submit a request for an extension if or when needed, may result in the project being dropped from the program.

The SSA Program Director will contact the applicant for status of the project to report back to the SSA Commission.

Reimbursement Process

Once the project is completed, the applicant should contact the SSA Program Director to arrange an inspection to verify that the work was done in compliance with program guidelines and pre-approved plans.¹ The applicant should also submit copies of paid invoices for the project and photographs of the completed work at this time. A reimbursement check will be sent to the applicant within six weeks of the inspection and submission of paid invoices and photographs.

¹ The SSA Program Director's inspection is limited to a review of the completed improvements only in connection with the applicant's application under this Program, and in no way shall be deemed an inspection as to whether or not the repairs were completed in good order and satisfactory condition. It shall be the applicant's responsibility to verify adequacy of all repairs, and applicant's failure to verify the repairs shall not relieve applicant of any expenses or responsibilities resulting from such failure, nor shall the SSA or its representatives have any liability or obligations to applicant arising from such failure.

Façade Rebate Program Application– West Town SSA 29-2014

Proposed Project Address

(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Applicant Name _____

Applicant Address _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Applicant is: (please mark any that apply)

___ Property Owner ___ Business Owner ___ Tenant
___ Not for Profit Organization ___ Individual Resident

**If applicant is not the property owner, please supply property owner information:

Owner Name _____

Owner Address _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Project Description (please attach photos, plans, etc.)

Statement of Need (please describe why this proposed project and funding is necessary to your business and the community)

Has this property received any rebates through this or any other program before?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please describe:

Statement of Understanding

The applicant (undersigned) agrees to fully and timely comply with the guidelines and procedures of the West Town SSA29-2014 Façade Rebate Program and the outlined specifications as agreed to by the applicant and the West Town SSA Commission. It is understood by the applicant that three cost estimates, copies of building permits, contracts, insurance, and invoices are required documentation, and that they have read the entire Façade Rebate Program Guidelines and Application and agrees to be fully bound by the terms and conditions.

APPLICANT RELEASES AND AGREES TO DEFEND AND INDEMNIFY THE WEST TOWN CHICAGO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (TOGETHER WITH THEIR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND AGENTS), THE WEST TOWN SSA29- 2014 COMMISSION, AND THE CITY OF CHICAGO FROM ALL CLAIMS AND CAUSES OF ACTION OF ANY KIND (KNOWN OR UNKOWN) IN CONNECTION WITH THIS FAÇADE REBATE PROGRAM.

Applicant Signature/Date

Applicant Name (Please Print)

Statement of Ownership

I, _____, certify that I am the owner of the property located at _____.

Owner Signature/Date

***If the applicant is not the property owner, the following must also be completed by the property owner:*

I, _____, authorize the applicant to apply for reimbursement under the West Town SSA29-2014 Façade Rebate Program and undertake the approved improvements.

Owner Signature/Date

Summary of Total Project Costs and Total Bid Costs

Bid #1 (preferred bidder) _____ \$ _____

Bid #2 _____ \$ _____

Bid #3 _____ \$ _____

Material and Labor Costs (preferred bidder)

Materials/Supplies List and Price (itemized cost)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

Total Project Cost (preferred bidder) \$ _____

Application Checklist

Ensure all the following items are completed and submitted with the application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

- Completed Application Form
- Project Description
- Photos of Existing Building
- Project Plans
- Cost Estimates from at least 3 contractors.
- Any supplemental documents (listed here):

- Owner's Written Consent (if applicable)
- Applicable City Permits (listed here):
