



Storefront Improvement Program – Norwalk, CT

ABOUT THE STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (SIP)

The purpose of the Storefront Improvement Program is to encourage businesses and property owners within commercial corridors to improve the front exterior of their commercial properties, making these areas more attractive to shoppers and growing their vitality and economic performance.

City of Norwalk property owners or tenants can access financial resources to renovate or restore commercial building exterior facades through the Storefront Improvement Program. A total of \$50,000 of grant funding will be available each program year which begins on July 1st of each respective year.

The program works as a matching grant where the applicant covers 20% of the costs and the grant matches 80% of that cost. For example, if the project costs \$10,000, the grant will pay \$8,000 and the applicant would be responsible for \$2,000. The maximum amount available for any business is a \$20,000 project total (\$16,000 in grant funding) within any 4 year period.

The program is a first-come, first-serve model.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One – Is your project eligible? Are there funds available?

1. Email schurch@norwalkct.org or call 203-854-7948, to find out if your project is eligible and if funding is still available.
2. If it is eligible and there are available funds, you may move on to step two.

Step Two – Apply

1. Once you are ready to apply you will need
 - Color, digital photographs of your storefront and immediate surroundings
 - Illustrations showing the proposed improvements (if applicable)
 - Contractor estimates
 - Letter granting permission from property owner if different from the applicant

- Completed application

2. Send your application by email to Sabrina Church at schurch@norwalkct.org or by mail to 125 East Avenue, Room 202, Attn: Sabrina Church, Norwalk, CT 06851.
3. **Applications will be reviewed for completeness and design (if applicable). The City has full discretion on all applications.** Application review usually takes 2-4 weeks. You will be notified that the application has been received and whether anything is missing. Incomplete applications will not be considered. You **MUST** wait for approval before beginning work or purchasing goods.

Step Three – Begin work and purchase goods

1. Receive approval letter then sign and return W-9 and Reimbursement Requirements forms
2. Get quotes and estimates from at least 3 contractors or retailers if the ask is \$10,000 or more, 2 if over \$1,000 but less than \$10,000, and 1 if less than \$1,000.
3. Hire a contractor (if needed) or purchase goods (planters, seating, etc.)
4. Obtain building, zoning, and Redevelopment Agency permits/approvals (if needed)
5. Approved applicants have up to six (6) months to complete proposed improvements
6. Complete installation/improvements

Step Four – Receive funds

1. Submit completion documents:
 - Copies of final invoices from contractors showing payment in full
 - Proof of payment in the form of copies of cancelled checks (front & back), credit card statements, or money orders. If you pay your contractor in cash we will be unable to reimburse you.
 - Copies of any required permits
 - Color photographs of the completed work
2. Allow 2-4 weeks for your reimbursement check to arrive



PART 1 - APPLICANT INFORMATION

BUSINESS LOCATION

Address of Property Being Improved _____

APPLICANT NAME – Applicants must be the owner of a commercially occupied property or an operating tenant business.

Applicant Name (person or company applying for rebate) _____

Applicant’s Mailing Address (if different than above) _____ ZIP Code _____

Contact Person & Title _____

Contact Phone # _____ Fax # _____ Email _____

Are you a Woman on Minority Owned Enterprise? Yes No

BUSINESS INFORMATION – Applicants must be operating legally, properly registered, licensed with the City of Norwalk, and current with all city taxes, including but not limited to taxes, licenses, and utilities. Eligible properties must be occupied by a business. Describe the business below. Unoccupied properties may be considered but must be occupied to be eligible for reimbursement.

Name of Business in Property Being Improved _____

Type of Business _____ Number of Employees _____

EIN or SSN _____

PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION – If the applicant is not the property owner, then a letter granting permission from the property owner must be included with this application.

Legal Name of Property Owner _____



PART 2 – STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

Describe your proposed improvements in the box below. Improvements must be made to the exterior and visible to the public and preserve and enhance the historic and architectural integrity of buildings. Typical projects include:

- Masonry/Brick pointing
- Cornices
- Exterior painting
- Windows/glazing
- Benches or seating
- Exterior doors
- Exterior façade lighting
- Planters
- Art Installations
- See-through security grills
- Signage and awnings

DESIGN REVIEW (if applicable) – Applications will be reviewed by staff who may suggest changes or require specific changes to the proposed work for the application to be approved and be eligible for reimbursement. In areas with local design guidelines and processes, applicants should consult the local guidelines and seek feedback on their proposal from their local organization first. These exist through the Redevelopment Agency and apply to South Norwalk and Wall Street West Avenue.

HISTORIC DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS – Projects within areas with special design controls or within historic districts must comply with those requirements.

INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS – Program funding cannot be used for new construction or on work already completed. Projects which use solid security grates, vinyl awnings, reduce the size of masonry openings/eliminate windows, or cover previously uncovered masonry (e.g. brick, stone, limestone, etc.) with paint, stucco, siding, etc. are NOT eligible.

Describe the improvements you plan to make to your storefront.



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Costs

PART 3 – STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Use this form to itemize costs of the improvements planned for your storefront. You must also attach the estimate from your selected contractor(s) and the appropriate required other quotes from contractors not selected.

CONSTRUCTION

PRE-DEVELOPMENT COSTS – these costs are eligible for up to 80% re-imbusement up to the total grant amount.

Service	Costs
Design/architecture services	\$
Permits and associated fees	\$
SUBTOTAL	\$

CONSTRUCTION COSTS – these costs are eligible for up to 80% re-imbusement up to the total grant amount

Improvement Type	Total Costs
Façade masonry/ Brick pointing	\$
Cornices	\$
Exterior Painting	\$
Windows/glazing	\$
Exterior doors	\$
Exterior façade lighting	\$
See-through security gates	\$
Signage	\$
Canopies/awnings	\$
Handicapped ramps	\$
Window boxes	\$
Demolition	\$
Other:	\$
SUBTOTAL	\$
TOTAL COST (Predevelopment & Construction)	\$

MERCHANDISE/GOODS

Item	Total Cost
Planters	\$
Benches	\$
Seating	\$
Other:	\$
Other:	\$
Other:	\$
Other:	\$
TOTAL COST	\$



PART 4 – APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS

CHECKLIST -Please attach the following:

1. Color digital photographs of your building sent via email clearly showing the following:
 - Areas that will be improved;
 - The **entire front facade** of your building; and
 - The views down the block to the right and left of your building.
2. An illustration of the work you would like to do. Any of the following are acceptable:
 - A hand drawn sketch of the front of your building OR
 - a printed-out digital picture with written notes OR
 - a photo with post-it notes attached OR
 - an architect's rendering

NOTE: if your project includes signs or awnings, please ask your contractor to prepare a picture of the new sign or awning showing all dimensions, materials, colors, and lettering.
3. Estimates from at least 3 contractors or retailers if the ask is \$10,000 or more, 2 if over \$1,000 but less than \$10,000, and 1 if less than \$1,000 are required.
4. Letter from building owner (if different from applicant) granting permission for the proposed work is also required.

Additional Program Requirements

- Applications submitted after construction has begun will not be considered.
- The amount that this program is able to approve for reimbursement will not always be equal to 50% of the eligible costs or the maximum amount due to availability of funds and restrictions in how program funds can be spent.
- Improvements to buildings occupied by or owned by churches, schools, colleges and universities, government offices, and elected officials are not eligible.



PART 5 – CERTIFICATION FOR COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

I certify that:

1. The information contained here is accurate.
2. The business and property owner(s) are current with all City obligations, including but not limited to taxes, licenses, water revenue billings etc. All permits, licenses, environmental and historical requirements associated with the above work will be complied with.
3. I have read and will comply with the requirements outlined in this application.

APPLICANT OR DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE

Name _____ Signature _____
 Title _____ Date _____

Submit your completed application to Sabrina Church, or e-mail to schurch@norwalkct.org,
 or mail to Norwalk City Hall, 125 East Avenue, Room 122, Norwalk, CT 06851.

You will receive a notification by e-mail when your application is received.

Application questions can be directed to Sabrina Church, Director of Business Development & Tourism