



District of Wells

Business Façade Improvement Program *2025 Guidelines*

Photo Credit: Ember Harper-Fedirko

Program changes for 2025:

- Funding will be allocated based on project eligibility and availability of program funds. Funding will be committed on a first-come, first-eligible basis.
- Applications will be accepted until all funds are expended.

Program Purpose and Goals

To provide businesses with the opportunity to improve the aesthetics of their business which will in turn improve the appearance and attraction of the overall business district of the community of Wells.

Funding for the District of Wells Business Façade Improvement program is provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of commercial areas.

The District of Wells will provide a percentage to a maximum of 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of up to \$5,000 per project to improve the facades of commercial buildings.

Each building is eligible for an annual grant to a maximum of \$5,000. Each year a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1,000.

Application deadline is May 31, 2025.

The Business Façade Improvement program is offered by the District of Wells with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Eligible Areas

- Appropriately zoned properties (please contact the District if you have questions about zoning)
- Must have an operating business on the property
- Must be within the District of Wells boundaries

Eligible Applicants

- Applicant must be either the property owner or business owner (if the applicant is the business owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant)
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants)
- Home based businesses which are zoned commercial, have a storefront and are within the specified area

- Home based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current
- Current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt)
- No outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding
- Subject building has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements

Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the commercial area
- Apartment buildings
- Government owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal, even if they have business tenants)
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in Eligible Areas)
- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)

Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement)
- Exterior architectural features
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims etc.)
- Windows (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone window replacement)
- New siding
- Façade painting
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement)
- Awnings
- Signage
- Wayfinding signage (*sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway*).
 - Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaws and regulations
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Patios

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs

- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Interior/internal improvements
- Improvements not visible from the public right of way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Eligible Costs/Expenses

- Direct project labour costs
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to facade only)
- Contractor fees
- Rental of tools and equipment
- Project related materials and supplies
- Shipping and/or freight
- PST

Ineligible Costs/Expenses

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Duties
- Permit fees
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Façade improvement expenses started prior to application approval
- GST

Design Guidelines

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project.

Grants for projects meeting eligibility requirements will be awarded on a first come, first eligible basis.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Projects must be as consistent as possible with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area.

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Business Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

Business Application & Project Approval Process

- Complete project applications are submitted to the District of Wells no later than **May 31, 2025**
- Completed applications can be submitted by email to general@wells.ca or can be mailed or dropped off at the District Office (Po Box 219, 4243 Sanders Avenue, Wells, BC, V0K 2R0)
- Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by District staff to ensure projects meet the program eligibility criteria. District staff may contact the applicant to discuss the application, if required.
- Funding will be allocated based on project eligibility and availability of program funds. Funding will be committed on a first-come, first-eligible basis.
- All applicants will be advised in writing as to whether their application has been approved, denied or approved with conditions.
- For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding will be sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the District
- The Owner/Tenant will acquire any required permits and complete the project.

Submitting an application does not necessarily mean your project or a specific grant amount will be approved. All project proposals are subject to a comprehensive review, must meet high quality standards, and must reflect the spirit and intent of the Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.

Project Reporting & Business Reimbursement Process

- 1) Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided Expense Reporting Form
- 2) Owner/Tenant provides the Certification of Completion on the Expense Reporting Form signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval is complete and has been paid in full, as well as before and after photos, and any other supporting documentation.
- 3) Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final permit inspections (where required) and meets all building standards and codes (where required)
- 4) District staff verify that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement. The project must meet the Program Guidelines and Letter of Understanding.
- 5) Applicant is issued a payment as outlined in the Letter of Understanding.

Please note: Projects/funding cannot carry over from one calendar year to the next. Approved projects and reporting must be completed before year end — December 31, 2025