

## Newton Downtown Improvement Grant

**Purpose:** To assist property and business owners with building improvements that will enhance the downtown experience and community aesthetics while preserving the historic character of the buildings.

**Eligibility:** All commercial buildings and businesses in the Main Street District are eligible. The applicant must demonstrate ownership of the building or obtain written permission from the building owner.

All projects must meet the recommendations specified within the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines as approved by the Newton City Council.

### Program Activities:

- Sign or Sign Removal: Maximum award amount is \$750. A property or business may receive one award for sign removal and one award for new sign installation.
- Non-historic Façade Removal: Maximum award amount is \$2,000. A property or business may receive one award for non-historic façade removal.
- Façade Rehabilitation: Maximum award amount is \$5,000. May receive one award per street or alley façade.
- Painting or Paint Removal: Maximum award amount is \$1,500. A property or business may receive one award for paint removal and one award for painting.
- New Awning or Awning Removal: Maximum award amount is \$2,500. A property or business may receive one award for awning removal and one award for new awning.
- Architectural fees: Maximum award amount: 7.5% of the total project costs, not to exceed \$3,750. Architectural fees are only eligible for grant funds when the rehabilitation project's total cost equals or exceeds either 50% of the assessed building value (not including land value) or \$50,000, whichever is less. A property or business may receive one award for architectural fees.

**Match Required:** 1:1, Permit fees are not an eligible expense.

**Application Process:** Applicants must submit the Downtown District Grant Program Application and all required items stipulated within the Application Submittal Checklist. Applicants are strongly encouraged to schedule a consultation with the Main Street Iowa Design Specialists (this is a free service) prior to submitting an application. The Main Street Design Specialists can produce renderings that can be used in the application.

**Review Process:** A Downtown Grant Review Board will review the application against the program criteria. The Review Board will provide Newton City Council with a recommendation to Approve, Deny, or Approve with Conditions. The Application and Review Board's recommendation will be forwarded to Newton City Council for final decision. There is no appeal process. However, an applicant may resubmit an application an unlimited number of times.

**Review Criteria:** The Downtown Grant Review Board will use the following criteria in making their recommendation on grant awards.

- Compliance with the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines
- Finding of no adverse impact on the historic character of the building (In certain cases, the Design Review Board may refer to and incorporate into the review process, National Park Service Historic Preservation Briefs)

***If you are considering applying for grant funds, please contact the Newton Main Street office or the City of Newton Planning and Zoning office early on in your project planning process.***

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