

Watertown Main Street Program Sign Grant Program Overview

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this program is to offer business owners and building owners in the Main Street Program area assistance in enhancing the visual appeal of their business signage. The primary goal of this program is to contribute to and preserve the aesthetics of our historic streetscape. Therefore, signage improvements must further this goal.

Eligibility Requirements

All commercial or mixed-use properties with façades that front Main Street or auxiliary streets in the Main Street Program area are eligible for this program, excluding publicly-owned properties and religious institutions. The signage improvements must be in accordance with the City of Watertown ordinance Chapter 13, Building Code. Applications are processed and considered on a first come, first served basis within a calendar year.

Grant terms

Matching sign grants are available for up to half the project cost up to \$500 as funds are available. **The commission has the authority to determine the level of grant funding for each individual project.** A primary consideration for funding will be a project's visual impact on the downtown as a whole. Due to limited grant funds, no additional sign grants will be awarded for the same property within a 24-month period after the grant payment is made. However, an exception can be requested if the property changes ownership.

Eligible Expenses - Grants from this program shall only be used for the placement of signs and appropriate lighting complying the City of Watertown ordinance Chapter 13, Building Code.

Ineligible Expenses - The following expenses are not eligible under this grant program:

Free-standing (sandwich board) signs

Awnings (see façade grant program)

Internally lit electric signs

Window signs

Banners

Signs not in compliance with the City of Watertown ordinance Chapter 13, Building Code.

Signs completed prior to receiving final approval of the grant request.

Signs not previously approved by the Historic Preservation/Main Street Design Review Commission

Guidelines:

1. Applicants must contact the Main Street Program Manager to obtain a sign grant application and to have their project placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Watertown Historic Preservation and Downtown Design Commission. Please contact the Main Street office at 920-261-5185 or watertownmain@sbcglobal.net.
2. Applications must be received at the Main Street office with all necessary supporting documentation to be qualified for consideration. *Original applications are maintained in the Main Street office for board review. Copies are given to the Design committee for application approval.*
3. Once the Historic Preservation and Downtown Design Commission approves a project the applicant may obtain a sign permit. The applicant agrees to commence work within 45 days and complete sign work within 90 days of the Commission's approval date. If the project can not be completed in that time, the applicant must apply to the commission for an extension.
4. Tenant applicants must submit written evidence that the building owner is aware of and approves of the planned project.
5. The Main Street Program Board of Directors must approve all proposed sign grants. The signage must comply with the City of Watertown ordinance Chapter 13, Building Code.
6. Commission approval does not guarantee grant funding will be awarded. Final decision rests with the Main Street Program Board of Directors, which will render its decision when all receipts are submitted to the Main Street Manager, and funding approval has been placed on the agenda of the Board of Directors monthly meeting.
7. Applicants are encouraged to buy materials and services locally and to use local contractors/labor.

Sign Grant Application Procedure

1. Contact Main Street Office to inform them of intent to apply for sign grant.
2. Application for a sign permit must be made at the Building Inspection Department, located in City Hall, 102 Jones Street, 2nd floor.
3. Get your project on the agenda of the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting.
4. Completed applications should be submitted to the Main Street Manager.
Completed applications must include:
 - Estimates covering all costs of project **(required)**
 - Current photo of façade with proposed sign location identified.
 - If applicant is a tenant, two copies of a letter of permission from the building owner
 - A copy of this page, signed and dated.
 - Description/artists' rendering of the proposed signage, including font style and color choices.
5. If your project is not approved, the Commission will explain in writing the reasons for rejection and steps necessary to receive approval.
6. Any changes to the approved plan must be submitted in writing and approved by the Commission prior to work being completed. Should an applicant deviate from the approved plan, the Watertown Main Street Program reserves the right to withdraw Grant approval and retain the awarded grant money.
7. Invoices totaling the entire cost of the sign project must be submitted to the Main Street Program Manager.
8. The Historic Preservation Commission will conduct a final inspection upon completion of the project. Final inspection sign-off will be noted on the sign grant application.
9. When all conditions are met under the Grant Award and Reimbursement section, the applicant will receive a certificate of completion.
10. Grant checks will be issued ONLY AFTER the Watertown Main Street Board approves the payment.
 - Grant monies will be paid to applicant within 30 days. (You may be asked to participate in a publicity photo for the Daily Times.)

I have read and agree to follow the above guidelines:

Signature: _____

Date: _____