

CAMBRIDGE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Commercial

2025

All projects must be within the Sustainable Community District. Verify your property at:
<https://portal.dhcd.state.md.us/GIS/revitalize/index.html>

PROGRAM MISSION

The City of Cambridge Façade Improvement Program encourages commercial property owners and business owners to improve the appearance and historic appeal of building exteriors within the Sustainable Community Areas through the Maryland Façade Improvement Program. The goal of this program is to create visual changes which contribute to the overall community development process and support our local Sustainable Community Action Plan (https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Approved%20Sustainable%20Communities/Cambridge_app.pdf).

PROGRAM ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Commercial property owners and renters within the Sustainable Community Area are encouraged to apply for projects that advance the Façade Improvement Program mission.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior work that significantly improves the appearance of facades and other visible sections of building exteriors, with priority given to projects that restore a building's historic appearance and enhance the visual appeal of the Sustainable Community Area in Cambridge. Improvements such as roofs, sidewalks and landscaping may be eligible only if part of a larger project and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Business signage, awnings, exterior lighting, and other additions or improvements that add to the visible exterior appeal of retail, service, office, and other non-residential buildings; interior improvements that enhance the visual appeal of building exteriors, such as storefront windows.
- Upgrades consisting of new lighting that will both enhance a building's exterior appearance after dark and brighten the downtown streetscape.

PROJECT APPLICATION

The City of Cambridge application form and any required attachments or supporting information must be submitted in its entirety for the project to be considered.

Properties within the Cambridge Historic Preservation District must first get approval from the Cambridge Historic Preservation Commission and then the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development for final approval/rejection. (This process includes approvals sought by DHCD personnel from the Maryland Historical Trust and the DHCD Codes Administration office).

Please note: The applicant is responsible for making certain that all required local approvals, permits, notifications, and other legal requirements, including contractors' licenses, are met. Failure to do so could result in the rejection of any reimbursement request.

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APPLICATION REVIEW

Application packets must be submitted to the City of Cambridge Economic Development Department. Once received, applications will be reviewed by a designated Cambridge Façade Improvement Program Committee for:

- ✓ A recommendation on local approval/rejection
 - ✓ Submission to the MD Department of Housing and Community Development for final approval/rejection. This step in the process also includes approvals led by DHCD personnel from the Maryland Historical Trust and the DHCD Codes Administration office
- Get information and the form at: https://mht.maryland.gov/projectreview_howtosubmit.shtml

PROJECT FUNDING LIMITS AND GUIDELINES

The Cambridge Façade Improvement Program provides 50% funding reimbursement (limit \$7,500).

- Grants awarded to eligible commercial property owners and businesses within the Sustainable Community Area for projects with a total cost of at least \$500 and up to \$15,000 (for a maximum reimbursement level of \$7,500).
- No funds are provided in advance of project completion. All invoices for the entire project must be paid by the grantee and then submitted to the City of Cambridge for reimbursement at the eligible percentage rate. The city will request reimbursement from the state. Upon approval work must begin within 90 days and be completed within 180 days. Final receipts must be submitted within 45 days of completion to ensure program funds are efficiently distributed. RECEIPTS FOR CASH PAYMENTS WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT.

Please be aware that getting checks cut at the state level can take some time.

- The City reserves the right and authority to approve projects outside of the project-cost limits and eligibility rules outlined above, on a case-by-case basis, at its discretion and with prior consent of the Mayor and City Council and DHCD.

All work must comply with all applicable permitting, licensing, and code requirements. Funds will not be reimbursed until the building permits office within the Department of Development, confirms in writing that all necessary permits have been obtained and all work has been completed according to code.

The following business types are not eligible for Façade Improvement funds:

Adult bookstores, adult video/book shops, other adult entertainment facilities, check cashing/gambling facilities, gun shops, liquor stores, massage parlors, pawn shops, tanning salons, or tattoo parlors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Cambridge Economic Development
410-221-6074
ced@choosecambridge.com

Applications must be submitted to the City of Cambridge Economic Development Department.