



Business Facade Improvement Program 2020

Building a Better Community

Village of Queen Charlotte

Business Façade Improvement Program 2020

Purpose

The Village of Queen Charlotte is a community set between the oceans and mountains of Haida Gwaii. Our local businesses form the social, cultural, and commercial heart of the community, and the character of their buildings is a significant factor in the quality of life of our residents.

The Village has been investing in community improvements such as Spirit Square, the Sea Walk, the Boat Launch facility and the development of park and community spaces. Improving the function, appearance, character, charm and vitality of our retail and commercial storefronts will enhance and maximize these efforts.

This document outlines the eligibility and quality standards for the types of improvements that will qualify for funding. The Business Façade Improvement Program is made possible with the financial support of the Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Program

The Village of Queen Charlotte NDI Business Façade Improvement Program has three sub-streams for 2020, in response to COVID-19.

1.
 - a. The Façade Improvement Stream provides funds for exterior improvement costs, up to a **lifetime maximum of \$5,000 per building**.
 - b. Way-Find Signage Grants: These are available for home occupations to fund up to 100% of signage costs to a **lifetime maximum of \$500 per applicant**.
2. The COVID-19 Retrofit Stream, for 2020 only, is a separate grant for fittings to meet WorkSafeBC requirements. There is a **\$2,000** grant available per building for exterior and interior COVID-19 retrofits.

Applicants must choose one of the streams for their initial application. Initial applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Should an applicant wish to submit a second application for a second stream, this application will be placed at the bottom of the list, in order to enable new applicants to enter the program. Likewise, buildings that have previously received grants and are re-applying will be placed at the bottom of the list and will be only considered after June 15, 2020.

❖ **Stream 1: A: Façade Improvement**

For 2020, Façade Improvement Grants are available for **up to 100%** of improvement costs to a **maximum of \$2,000*** per building to improve the exterior of retail and commercial buildings within municipal boundaries. For 2020 only, the requirement for matching funds is removed. Projects must have a **minimum total cost of \$500**.

**Note: Grants issued this year will count towards the lifetime maximum of \$5,000 under the regular Business Façade Program.*

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❖ **Stream 1: B: Way-Find Signage Grants**

Way-find signage grants are for home occupations who do not have a store front and/or are not in a commercial zone. These can fund **up to 100%** of signage costs to a **lifetime maximum of \$500** per applicant. Way-find signage refers to signs located on the business property (i.e. bottom of driveway) directing customers to the business.

❖ **Stream 2: COVID-19 Interior and Exterior Retrofit Grants**

The announcement of a world-wide Pandemic on March 18, 2020 by the World Health Organization set in motion a public health emergency in the Province of BC. The Council of the Haida Nation declared a local state of emergency on April 24, 2020, placing restrictions on non-essential travel. Many businesses have been negatively affected by the resulting slow down in the local and global economy.

Until a vaccine can be created and widely distributed, most businesses will have to re-assess how they can meet the new WorkSafeBC requirements for operating in the interim. This will mean reimagining spaces and how the public interacts with staff.

For this reason, COVID-19 grants are available for **up to 100%** of safety improvement costs to a **maximum of \$2,000*** per building to add interior or exterior improvements that will address the new WorkSafeBC COVID-19 operational requirements for retail and commercial buildings within municipal boundaries. Projects must have a **minimum total cost of \$500**.

**Note: This is an entirely separate stream. Grants issued under Stream 2 will not count towards the lifetime maximum of \$5,000 per building. This grant is for 2020 only.*

General Guidelines

❖ **For Stream 1: A: Façade Improvement Grant**

These must be primarily focused on the physical appearance of the buildings and their relationship to the street, and all improvements must be visible from the public right-of-way. The character and design of the building along with the businesses contained within attract shoppers both for goods and services that they provide, and for the experience of walking around an interesting and unique business area. Should village staff or Council deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact to the streetscape the application may be denied or require a resubmission.

❖ **For Stream 1: B: Way-Find**

Way-find signage refers to signs located on the business property (i.e. bottom of driveway) directing customers to the business. This are primarily with home occupations in mind.

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❖ For Stream 2: COVID-19 Retrofits

For 2020, an exception has been granted to allow COVID-19 interior or exterior retrofits to help businesses adjust their operations to ensure the safety of staff and customers. Improvements must focus on helping staff and customers limit face-to-face interactions, follow physical distancing and personal hygiene guidelines for the industry. Interior improvements that are purely cosmetic will not be eligible for reimbursement. Projects must be clearly defined and aligned to this stream and separated from any Stream 1/façade costs.

Eligibility Guidelines

❖ Eligibility by Business Type

Established for-profit and not-for-profit businesses with building tenancy are eligible for the program. In the case of rented or leased space, written approval from the building Owner must be included in the application. This may result in more than one project/grant per building. In the case of a joint project between businesses in the same building, each separate business must submit a separate application for grant funding with a cover letter that explains the nature of the partnership.

New businesses may apply for the grant with the stipulation that they need to be able to demonstrate that they are open and operating for at least two months of the year in which they receive the grant.

Commercial Use: In the Village Zoning Bylaw, a commercial use is defined as a use providing for the selling of goods or services, for personal services, or for the servicing and repair of goods; includes retail uses, personal service, wholesaling in conjunction with retail sales, commercial and governmental offices, service stations, tourist accommodations, recreation facilities, commercial schools, household services and all associated repairs; and excludes manufacturing, salvaging, warehousing, the selling, servicing and repair of heavy industrial machinery.

Home Occupation: In the Village Zoning Bylaw, a home occupation is defined as an accessory use within a dwelling unit or accessory building for a small professional or home-based business, including but not limited to artist studio, workshop, bookkeeping, legal services and small-scale home sales.

❖ Eligible Applicants:

The following applies to all grant streams:

- Property owners or business owners (***if the applicant is NOT the property 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 societies or enterprising non-profit organizations occupying commercial storefronts (tenants); and

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- Home-based businesses which are zone commercial, have a storefront and are within the specified area (**eligible for Stream 1:A (Façade Improvements) and Steam 2: COVID-19 Retrofits**)
- Home-based businesses without a commercial storefront (**eligible for Stream 1:B (Way-finding signage)**)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current.
- No outstanding building permits, stop work orders or development permit condition requirements outstanding.
- The subject building has not received previous grants under this program that total \$5,000.

❖ Ineligible Applicants

The following applies to all grant streams:

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

❖ Stream 1 A: 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 improvements)
- New siding
- Façade Painting
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger improvements)
- Awnings
- Signage (affixed to the building)
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building (only if part of larger improvements)
- Way-finding signage (Sign located on the business property, i.e. at the bottom of a driveway)- signs are eligible for a maximum of \$500

❖ Stream 2: Eligible COVID-19 Retrofits

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Addition of plexi-glass shields between staff and public areas
- Interior signage related to safely using services, floor signage to indicate appropriate physical distance and flow of traffic
- Installation of hand cleaning stations

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- Creation of covered exterior space to provide additional seating that meets physical distancing standards
- Applicants are encouraged to contact the Village to discuss other ideas specific to their business

The following applies to all grant streams.

❖ Ineligible Improvements

- Routine maintenance or structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping, paving, fencing
- Interior / internal improvements
- Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines
- *Façade only:* Any improvements not visible from the public right of way
- *Façade only:* Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- *COVID-19 only:* Interior improvements made for cosmetic purposes

❖ 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

- Owner/applicant wages and/or benefits related to project labour, or other costs related to supplies or administration
- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- GST / Permit fees / Duties
- Expenses related to improvement to the business façade not visible from the public right of way
- Any and all project expenses started prior to application approval

Application Requirements

❖ Stream 1: A: Façade Improvement Grant Application Requirements

Applications **must** include:

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- 'Before' picture(s) and a design drawing (front elevation) showing the 'after' with the proposed improvements including color choices.
- A project budget estimate and or contractors quote for the proposed project clearly delineating costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building Owner providing written approval and/or a cover letter explaining a joint project partnership.

Designs need not to be done by a professional architect or designer but it is strongly encouraged that the business/property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that that grants will be awarded based on merit of design and visual impact to the streetscape. The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our streetscape.

❖ **Stream 1: B: Way-Find Signage Grant Application Requirements**

Applications **must** include:

- 'Before' pictures, a design drawing showing the details of the sign, its location, color scheme and content, and a brief description of why signage is necessary for way-finding.
- A project budget estimate and or quote for the proposed project clearly delineating signage costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building Owner providing written approval.

❖ **Stream 2: COVID-19 Retrofit Grant Application Requirements**

Applications **must** include:

- 'Before' picture(s) and a design drawing showing the 'after' with the proposed improvements including color choices and wording of signage.
- A project budget estimate and or contractors quote for the proposed project clearly delineating costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building Owner providing written approval and/or a cover letter explaining a joint project partnership.

Designs need not to be done by a professional architect or designer but it is strongly encouraged that the business/property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that that grants will be awarded based on merit of design and visual impact to the streetscape, and COVID-19 retrofits based on how safety will be improved. The objective of this added flexibility is to assist businesses impacted by the pandemic to become safe, resilient and sustainable.

Application Process:

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 Program Guidelines.

1. Owner/Tenant contacts the Municipality to determine if the building qualifies for the Program, discuss your project, and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
2. Owner/Tenant submits complete application as outlined in the application requirements.

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3. Village staff review the application and proposed façade or signage improvements to ensure that program guidelines have been met.
4. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) accepts or rejects the preliminary applications and submits the qualified applications to the Village Council for decision.
5. The Village Council reviews the qualified applications and issues final approvals.
6. Approval or rejection of each application is communicated to the applicant by email or letter.
7. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the Owner/Tenant and the CAO.
8. Owner/Tenant completes renovations.
9. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenditures with the following:
 - **Copies of ALL** invoices or receipts;
 - Copies of cleared cheque/bank statements/credit card statements confirming payments;
 - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable);
 - Pictures of the completed facade improvement or signage installation; and
 - A short statement about how the program has benefited the business.
10. Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passes final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
11. Village staff verify that the improvements meet the terms as stated in the Letter of Understanding and provide confirmation to the CAO.
12. The CAO approves the reimbursement and cheque is issued to the project proponent.

Application Time Frame

The Village must apply to the Northern Development Initiative Trust to initiate this program each year and we will be advised if we are successful by February 21, 2020. Therefore, the application intake period will begin **March 1, 2020**.

Applications will be reviewed monthly on a first-come-first-served basis.

To be eligible to receive funding, applications must be approved by the Village Council **PRIOR** to starting any improvements.

For established businesses, once accepted, the Owner/Tenant has **until December 15, 2020** to complete the project as indicated on the signed letter of understanding.

For new businesses, once accepted, the Owner/Tenant must also demonstrate **by December 15, 2020**, that they have been open and operational **for at least 2 months of 2020** (i.e. must be open for

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business by **October 15, 2020** at the latest). Proof of operational status can be demonstrated with a grand opening flyer, dated sales receipts, or other form of documentation acceptable to the Village.

Project Evaluation and Selection

Projects will be reviewed and prioritized based on the following ranked criteria:

1. Age and condition of building i.e. buildings in poor condition have greater likelihood of project approval.
2. Impact on streetscape or COVID-19 Improvement to safety.
3. Quality of the design.

Projects will be recommended by the CAO for final approval by Council.

Appeal Process

In the event that an application is declined, the applicant may request a meeting with the CAO to discuss the application with the purpose of:

- a) Seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the program guidelines; and/or
- b) Providing additional information in order to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

Additional information

Buildings proposing structural improvements must apply to the Village for appropriate permits prior to construction. Home-based businesses seeking signage funding must adhere to signage bylaws and/or regulations.

An applicant could be granted for Stream 1: A: Façade improvements and Stream 2: COVID-19 Retrofits. Should they be granted the maximum \$2,000 for each stream, they could receive up to \$4,000 for 2020. Each grant of \$2,000 must be fully separated: it is not permitted to access the second grant to cover outstanding expenses for the first.

In 2021 we expect to return to the regular NDIT Business Façade Program, as per previous years.

- The requirement for matching funds will be reinstated.
- The maximum project spend will be increased to \$5,000
- Stream 2: COVID-19 Retrofits will be removed.