

Historic Preservation Grant Program Guidelines

Last Revised: 12/11/2015

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the City of Aurora's Preservation Commission is the conservation and revitalization of the City's historic neighborhoods. Key to this effort is the preservation of the City's unique heritage as exemplified through historic and architecturally significant residential structures. The City of Aurora has set aside funding in order to help property owners achieve these objectives.

This is a reimbursement program. Grants will provide financial assistance towards paying a contractor OR for the reimbursement of building materials if the property owner performs the rehabilitation work themself. If using cash as match, the grant can be used to pay up to half of a contractor's services in an amount up to but not exceeding the total grant amount approved by City Council thru a grant agreement. If using labor as match, the grant can be used to reimburse property owners for the cost of supplies up to but not exceeding the total grant amount approved by City Council thru a grant agreement. The amount awarded per grant agreement will be determined by the City Council with a Staff recommendation based on multiple cost estimates submitted as part of the application process and the recommendation of the Preservation Commission.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Structure Eligibility:

The eligibility of a structure for the grant program will be determined by the Loan Committee of the Aurora Preservation Commission based upon the following:

- 1) Structures located within local historic districts, those designated as historic landmarks within the City of Aurora, or those listed on the National Register of Historic Places shall be eligible. Exceptions may also be made if the property is in the process of receiving one of these three designations; and
- 2) Properties listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or that contribute to a National Register Historic District must become locally designated as historic prior to the disbursement of any grant funds; and
- 3) The structure must be of local historic and architectural significance as determined by the Aurora Preservation Commission; and
- 4) The structure must consist of at least one (1) but not more than two (2) living units unless originally built with more; and
- 5) The structure must comply with its Zoning District Standards. (Structures not meeting these standards will be reviewed on an individual basis); and
- 6) The structure must not be scheduled for demolition in the foreseeable future and must be consistent with the land use designation on the City's Comprehensive Plan.

B. Recipient Eligibility:

1) Ownership:

The recipient must meet one of the following criteria:

- a) The recipient must be the owner of the property as determined through a title search. Owners must be able to verify ownership before beginning application process. Applicants shall attach proof of ownership to application form (i.e. property warranty deed, most recent property tax form, land contract registered with the respective county).
- b) The recipient must be the purchaser of the property under a land-sales contract, in effect at least one year. The following special conditions apply to Land Sales Contract Purchasers:
 - i. Purchasers must provide the City with a copy of a current signed contract; and
 - ii. Purchasers must accept financial responsibility for rehabilitation and property improvement work; and

- iii. Purchasers must provide written consent from the title holder for rehabilitation work; and
- iv. Purchasers and titleholders must agree to record the land contract with the Kane County recorder.
- v. Purchaser must close on the property prior to the disbursement of any grant funds.

2) Special conditions of qualification for all recipients:

- a) All work must adhere to the standards set forth in the City of Aurora Historic Districts & Landmarks Guidelines; and
- b) Recipients must allow the city staff to determine appropriate treatments – i.e. determine original conditions, restoration vs. replacement, and monitor ongoing rehabilitation work for compliance with the Historic Districts & Landmarks Guidelines and the terms of a grant agreement; and
- c) Recipients must have all rehabilitation work performed by licensed contractors. In some instances, the owner may be qualified to perform the rehabilitation work themselves. The City will determine qualifications of owner(s) to perform work; and
- d) Recipients must select a contractor within a reasonable time after the financing has been approved; and
- e) All exterior work will require an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and if necessary, approved building permit. COAs and building permits can be applied for at the Division of Building & Permits, 65 Water Street, in Downtown Aurora.
- f) Recipients must convey to the City the right of disbursement of funds upon certified completion of the rehabilitation work. This is a reimbursable program. Funds will not be disbursed until work is complete. All work must be in accordance with the conditions of the approved COA, building permit (if required), and any special conditions outlined by a grant agreement. A final historic inspection and final building inspection (if required) must be passed before any grant funds will be disbursed; and

3) Application

In order to be eligible the owner must submit to the City a complete and executed application for the Preservation Matching Grant Program.

C. Revocation:

The City reserves the right to recall the grant if any of the eligibility requirements is violated.

III. GRANT FINANCING & CONDITIONS

- 1) In order to establish an accurate grant amount to be awarded, two bids shall be obtained per architectural feature to be rehabilitated.
- 2) Owner contribution may be cash or in-kind labor contribution. The City shall determine owner qualification for performing work. The City must receive proof that owner's match obligation has been satisfied before funding will be disbursed. Examples of proof include: cancelled checks, receipts/invoices marked paid, labor time log (if using owner's labor as match).
- 3) Due to the limited amount of funding available, applications will be considered in the order the City receives them.
- 4) All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and recommendations on grant approval will be made by the Grant Committee of the Aurora Preservation Commission and City staff. Subsequent to Grant Committee and staff recommendation, City Council approval is required.
- 5) Applications that have been deemed ineligible by the Grant Committee may be appealed to the full Aurora Preservation Commission for reconsideration.
- 6) Grant recipients must attend a Grant Planning Meeting with City staff prior to commencement of rehabilitation project. Owner(s) must sign a grant agreement which will outline the project scope and any special conditions.
- 7) The grant agreement shall specify the date of grant's expiration. At the end of the grant's eligibility period, all unspent monies will be returned to the preservation grant fund.
- 8) All work must be completed in accordance with state, federal and local regulations.
- 9) The grant is taxable. The owner will be issued a 1099 form for the amount of the grant. This form must be submitted prior to approval of a grant agreement.