



Alleyway Improvement Grant Guidelines – April 2021

Background

The Alleyway Improvement Grant Program is developed by the Design Committee of Charlevoix Main Street (CMS) and the CMS Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors.

Program Purpose

The purpose of the Alley Improvement Grant Program is to provide financial incentives for private investment to improve the sides of commercial buildings facing the alleyways in the 200, 300, and 400 blocks of Bridge Street. Specifically, the program is intended to promote improvements that are consistent with the [2018 Downtown Alleyway Corridor Vision](#) developed with the services of the Sustainable Built Environment Initiative at Michigan State University. We believe these improvements will convert the alleyways to avenues of commerce and improve the economic vitality of Charlevoix's downtown. Additionally, this program aims to improve walkability and accessibility of our downtown.

Grant Funding

This program is funded by Charlevoix Main Street DDA. The number of projects receiving grants in a fiscal year is based on the program budget, with a new funding cycle beginning April 1. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis, if funds are available. Awarding of grants is at the sole discretion of the Charlevoix Main Street DDA. Grants reimburse 50% of eligible project costs up to \$5,000.

Grant Timing

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis beginning April 1, 2021. The Design Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month at 4pm to review. Then the recommendation is given to the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Board at their meeting on the fourth Monday at 5:30pm. If the applicant is not present at the Board meeting, they will be notified of the result within 7 days by phone, email, or mail.

Program Target Area

The target area for the Charlevoix Main Street Alleyway Façade Incentive Grant Program is the Charlevoix Downtown Development Authority District. (See Exhibit A)



Eligible Applicants

1. Owners of commercial buildings that are in the Downtown Development Authority district, used for commercial purposes, and conform to applicable zoning requirements are eligible to apply for grant funds.
2. Tenants of eligible buildings may request grant funds if they submit a notarized letter of permission from the property owner with their application.

Eligible Improvement Projects

1. Exterior brick or wall surface cleaning using gentlest means possible (no sandblasting).
2. Re-pointing of brick mortar joints.
3. Patching and painting of walls.
4. Window and/or door repair or appropriate replacement.
5. Cornice repair or appropriate replacement.
6. Other exterior improvements of a structural nature or for historical restoration purposes.
7. Interior Improvements related to providing access to a new rear entry.
8. Exterior Lighting.
9. Business Signage.
10. Awnings.
11. HVAC system relocation.
12. Trash receptacle screening.

Ineligible Projects

1. Maintenance or furnishings.
2. Landscaping.
3. Building additions.
4. Roof repair.
5. Painting unpainted brick.

Ineligible Project Expenses

1. Financing or refinancing debt, loan origination fees.
2. Property acquisition.
3. Building permit fees or development review fees.
4. Property appraisals.
5. Legal fees or architectural fees.
6. Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or relatives of the owner/applicant.



Funding Guidelines

1. Applications for projects must be approved by the CMS DDA Board of Directors prior to commencement of the work for which funds are requested.
2. All rehabilitation projects must meet City of Charlevoix zoning and building codes as well as all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes, ordinances, and administrative rules, including but not limited to State and Federal historic preservation laws.
3. In general, the Design Committee encourages repair and preservation of existing historic features of façades encourages appropriate changes to alterations to these facades. Designs should be compatible with the building's historic character and/or the [Downtown Charlevoix Design Guidelines](#).
4. Any grant for surface cleaning must ensure that best management practices shall be used, and all applicable environmental permits are obtained if removing lead-based paint or discharging paint materials into the City's storm sewer. Projects where cleaning methods are used that damage the historic building materials, particularly sandblasting, shall not be awarded grants.
5. Projects should not remove, alter, damage, or cover up significant architectural features of the building which are original, or which reflect a major alteration that is itself architecturally significant.
6. Projects may partially or fully restore the historic appearance of the building based on actual evidence, including photographs, written documentation, data on the building or site or other data.
7. Projects funded by grant monies must be completed within one year of the date that the grant application is approved. An extension may be approved at the sole discretion of the CMS Design Committee under significant special circumstances.
8. All applicants must have all property (real and personal) taxes paid to date.

No grant funds will be released until 100% of the approved work is complete and final inspections of the work show that all program requirements have been met. This grant is awarded on a reimbursement basis with funds released only upon provision of adequate proof of payments to contractors and waivers of lien.

Step-by-Step Application Process

1. A complete grant application must be submitted to the Charlevoix Main Street DDA office. Since funds for this program are allocated based on



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funding availability, estimates for the façade work to be performed must be submitted on letterhead from licensed contractors that can perform the work. Two estimates are required unless it is infeasible for applicant to obtain more than one estimate (for example, if there is only one contractor who can reasonably perform the work). The exact amount of funding being requested shall be based on the estimate selected by the applicant and outlined on the application. If the cost of the project exceeds the initial estimate selected in the application, the applicant only receives the original grant amount approved.

2. If an applicant is requesting funding for more than one building, the applicant must complete a separate application for each building. Each eligible building will be considered a separate project for purposes of grant funding.
3. Proof of project funding must accompany the completed application form. The applicant must also sign a statement indicating that they are not presently indicted or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity, and has not, within a three-year period preceding the application, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense for the commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.
4. Charlevoix Main Street staff will forward the application to the City of Charlevoix Planning Department to make sure the work proposed complies with the City's zoning and building codes. If it complies, it will be returned to the Charlevoix Main Street staff. If the work does not comply, the applicant will be contacted for a meeting with the Planning Department to resolve the zoning and building code issues. A revised application may be required. No grant application will proceed that does not meet City of Charlevoix Zoning Ordinances and the Michigan Rehabilitation Code. This preliminary review will not replace City requirements for obtaining zoning approval or building permits.
5. Once a compliant application is returned to Charlevoix Main Street staff, it will be reviewed by the Charlevoix Main Street Design Committee at their next grant cycle meeting (the applicant or applicant's representative may attend). The Design Committee will use the Alley Improvement Grant Rating Scale (Exhibit B) to decide which applications to recommend for grant awards. Recommended applications will then be forwarded to the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Board of Directors for the final grant decision.



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6. Once an application has been approved, the applicant will be notified in writing by Main Street staff on behalf of the Board of Directors, and the amount of the grant will be clearly stated in the letter.
7. The Design Committee must approve of any changes in the drawings and work specifications made after the initial approval of the application, subject to approval by the CMS DDA Board. Deviations from an approved plan may disqualify the applicant from the grant program.
8. “Before” and “After” pictures must be taken by the applicant and be submitted to the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Office upon completion of the project. “Before” pictures must be taken before the commencement of the work.
9. When a project is completed and “Before” and “After” pictures are submitted, the project will be examined by Charlevoix Main Street staff, and, if necessary, a licensed architect, builder, or code official hired to serve as grant inspector, to ensure that the work has been completed as specified in the grant application which was approved by the Design Committee and Main Street DDA Board.
10. Once staff and grant inspectors have verified completion of the alleyway improvement project, the applicant must submit copies of invoices, receipts, and an itemized statement of the total cost of the project signed by the applicant. All documentation for payment must be provided at one time to Charlevoix Main Street for one payout. Receipts must be provided no later than 60 days after completion of the project unless an extension for extenuating circumstances is approved in writing by the DDA. After receipt and verification of the information, Charlevoix Main Street will release the grant money to the applicant. The grant is awarded on a reimbursement basis. Late submittal of receipts will disqualify applicant from reimbursement.
11. Applicant is solely responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and ensuring that the proposed work complies with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes, ordinances, and administrative rules. Applicant shall be required to return grant funds to the Charlevoix Main Street DDA if it is determined that the work performed does not comply with any applicable law or regulation, or if it is determined that applicant knowingly or willingly presents false information to the DDA for the purpose of obtaining the grant funding.
11. Upon release of the grant funds, the applicant releases the DDA from all claims against the DDA arising under the grant. Release of the grant funds shall not constitute a waiver of the DDA’s claims against applicant.



12. The applicant may not assign any funds to any other person or entity without the prior written consent of the DDA.

Project Rating and Approval Criteria

All complete applications meeting the eligibility and guidelines above will be reviewed and rated by the Design Committee using the Alleyway Grant Rating Scale (Exhibit B) which is based on the goals and priorities of Charlevoix Main Street DDA. Each project will receive points from the following categories:

1. Charlevoix Downtown Alley Corridor Vision

- Does the project meet the following Design Considerations which were a part of the Charlevoix Downtown Alley Corridor Vision provided by the Sustainable Built Environment Initiative (SBEI) out of Michigan State University?

2. Revitalization:

- Encourage renovation and revitalization of the back side of businesses to enhance the corridor space.
- Maintain the charming historic vernacular architectural style of Charlevoix.
- Add rear shop entrances to provide alternative access to buildings and update or repair building facades.
- Provide more lighting in the alley for aesthetic appeal as well as safety.
- Add cultural or artistic elements to provide points of interest along the alley corridor.

3. Project Scope

- Does the project improve multiple aspects of the building?

4. Design Guidelines/Appropriateness

- Does the project:
 - i. Follow Downtown Charlevoix Design Guidelines
 - ii. Comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Exhibit C)
 - iii. Preserve, repair, or enhance significant architectural features of the building which are original, or which reflect a major alteration that is itself architecturally significant.
 - iv. Partially or fully restore the historic appearance of the building.
 - v. Have a design that is compatible with the buildings historic character and with the adjoining buildings?



5. Need

- Is the building considered an eyesore?
- Is the building in danger of being lost or compromised due to deferred maintenance?
- Has an inappropriate change in the past left the building with an undesirable appearance?
- Are windows, bricks, or cornices in danger of falling off the building?
- Is the building in danger of demolition?

6. Significance

- Is the building:
 - Contributing to a National Register historic district or listed individually?
 - Individually eligible for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places?
 - More than 50 years old?

Each application is rated by the individual members of the Design Committee. The high and low ratings are removed and the remaining ratings are averaged to come up with an average rating for each application. The applications are ranked in order from the highest rating to the lowest rating. The Design Committee recommendation to the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Board of Directors will be that funding be awarded to the projects in the order they are ranked until funding is exhausted. Projects must receive a minimum rating of 20 points to be eligible to receive funding.

Program Amendments

The details of the Charlevoix Main Street Alleyway Improvement Grant Program may be amended at any time during the fiscal year, subject to the formal approval of the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Board of Directors.

All decisions of Charlevoix Main Street Board of Directors are final. There is no appeal process in place therefore there will be no appeals accepted.

Indemnification

The Applicant hereby agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless to the fullest extent permitted by law the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Board, and any and all other employees, agents, directors, volunteers, successors in interest and/or representatives (the "Indemnified Persons") from any and all suits, actions, legal or administrative proceedings, claims, liabilities, damages, personal injuries, requests for reimbursement



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or other such requests for payment arising out of or in connection with the project referenced in this Agreement. The parties agree that the Applicant's duty to defend and indemnify is intended to be interpreted in the broadest possible sense, except that the If any suit, action or proceeding is brought against any Indemnified Person, it shall be defended by counsel provided by the Applicant. In any such proceeding, the Indemnified Person shall cooperate with the Applicant and the Applicant shall have the right to settle, compromise, pay or defend against any such claim on behalf of such Indemnified Person, except that the Applicant may not settle or compromise any claim if the effect of doing so would be to subject the Indemnified Person to criminal penalties, unless such Indemnified Person gives its consent. The Applicant shall not be liable for payment or settlement of any such claim or proceeding made without its consent.

Applicant shall not be obligated to indemnify and reimburse any Indemnified Person if a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the liability in question was caused by willful misconduct or gross negligence of the involved Indemnified Person(s), unless the court determines that, despite the adjudication of liability, but in view of all circumstances of the case, the Indemnified Person(s) is (are) fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for the expenses which the court considers proper.

Contact Information

For questions or to apply for the Alley Improvement Grant Incentive Program, contact the Charlevoix Main Street DDA Office.

Charlevoix Main Street DDA

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