

WPB Façade Rebate Program Policy

Intent

WPB SSA #33, the Special Service Area for the Wicker Park and Bucktown neighborhoods, is interested in preserving the character of the commercial streets, particularly as it relates to historic buildings and pedestrian-scale architecture. The WPB Façade Rebate Program is intended to provide funds to help building/business owners improve the overall physical appearance of the exterior of their buildings/businesses. By improving individual storefronts, the program will help to revitalize and beautify the entire WPB commercial district, enhance the pedestrian-scale streetscape and ensure that exceptional design solutions are introduced within the district, while preserving the unique character and qualities of the WPB district. The Façade Rebate Program is administered locally by the WPB Chamber of Commerce, the SSA Service Provider agency, and under the oversight of the Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development.

Program Eligibility

Owners and tenants (with owner's written consent) of street level commercial/retail property, located within WPB SSA #33's boundaries, may apply (map included at the end of this document). Owners and tenants of non-commercial/non-retail property with an SSA PIN shall be considered for eligibility on a case-by-case basis. All applicants must submit property PIN to verify eligibility.

Each physical address or PIN is eligible for one façade rebate in any five-year period. If a business owner applies for and receives a rebate at one address and then relocates within the district, any subsequent applications under the WPB Façade Rebate Program will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If any change in the ownership of the property or business participating in the program occurs during improvements, the application will be suspended until a meeting with WPB staff and new ownership is completed and any changes to the original application are approved in writing. There is no guarantee that new ownership will be approved for the same rebate amount as the previous owner. All such applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 1. Rebate requests will not be granted for façade improvements that were started before the application is received and approved.**
- 2. The application must be approved by the SSA Commission before construction can begin. If the applicant moves ahead with the project before**

- receiving the approval the applicant accepts the risk that the project may not be approved for a rebate.
3. Applicant must fully and timely comply with all the requirements and deadlines set forth in the Application.
 4. Applicants must be the entity paying for the improvements.
 5. If applicant is a tenant, written consent of the property owner is required.
 6. Only owners and tenants of street-level property located within the SSA boundaries are eligible for the Program.
 7. The property must be free of liens and legal questions as to ownership of the property, excepting any mortgage liens.
 8. Applicants must have proof of proper zoning and City permits for the improvements.
 9. To the extent that the owner or tenant is supplying their own materials or labor for the improvements, profits and overhead are not eligible expenditures for the rebate.
 10. Applications are considered on a rolling basis through the calendar year. There is no guarantee that funding will be available upon request of rebate.
 11. If multiple applications are received before the next available SSA Commission review AND the combined rebate requested in all applications exceeds the available Program funding, a lottery will be held to determine the order in which the projects will be funded and a wait list for rebates as future funding becomes available.
 12. The Department of Planning and Development has declared that SSA Commissioners are eligible to participate in the Façade Rebate Program, provided they meet all other Program eligibility criteria and abstain from reviewing and voting on ALL Façade Rebate Program applications during the period beginning when their application is submitted until their Rebate check is approved and processed.
 13. If any change in ownership of the property or business participating in the Façade Rebate Program occurs during the improvements, eligibility for the Façade Rebate Program will be suspended until a meeting with the SSA Service Provider agency staff and new ownership is completed and any changes to the original application are approved in writing. There is no guarantee that new ownership will be approved for the same rebate amount as the previous owner. All such applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 14. Properties that received a Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) grant in the previous 3 years or are currently enrolled in the SBIF program are ineligible from applying to the Façade Rebate Program.

15. If the same façade improvement project already received funding from a different grant or incentive program it is ineligible for additional funding through the Façade Rebate Program.

Projects should be completed within one year from the date of approval by the WPB SSA #33 Commission. If an emergency extension is needed, please contact WPB staff immediately before one year from the approval date has expired.

If unforeseen circumstances are to arise during the construction process that would result in the improvements not being completed, an extension to the deadline may be granted. If the applicant does wish to request an extension if a project is not completed within one year—due to delays in construction, unforeseen circumstances, changes to project scope, contractors, or costs, etc.—the applicant must submit an explanation in writing to the SSA Commission, requesting approval for changes. Changes to the approved scope, contractors, and award amount, as well as deadline extensions may require approval by the SSA Commission. Construction deadline extension requests must be submitted with an estimated date of completion. The SSA Commission’s decision as to grant an extension or changes to previously-approved work shall be in its sole and absolute discretion. If the applicant moves ahead with the project before a vote is made, he/she takes the risk that the project may no longer be eligible for a rebate.

Eligible Improvements

Eligible Improvements	Ineligible Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Façade Renovation b. Historic Preservation c. Historic Signs and Restorations d. Powerwashing of Exterior Façade e. Sandblasting f. Billboard Removal g. Removal of Security Gates or Fences h. Tuck-pointing and masonry i. Exterior Lighting j. Window/door replacements k. Improvements done to vacant buildings. l. Improvements to residential structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Roofing improvements b. Interior improvements c. Rear, side, alley, or secondary improvements not visible from the public right-of-way d. New construction or additions e. Improvements that are considered regular building upkeep or maintenance f. Improvements planned for new buildings (constructed less than 5 years before application date), except for sidewalk cafes, awnings, and/or signage g. Flower boxes and planters h. Sidewalk café furniture considered temporary in nature, such as tables and chairs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Parking lot improvements that face side, streets, alleys or are not visible from the main shopping street. j. Billboard Installation k. Awning Installation l. Signage (Removal and Installation of New)
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All proposed improvements and rehabilitative work will be subject to a review and approval process by the WPB Guide Development Committee and the SSA #33 Commission. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all the proposed improvements are reviewed by appropriate City of Chicago departments to assure compliance with zoning and building code requirements, and any other local and state laws and ordinances if applicable. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to secure all necessary permits; copies of all permits are required as part of the program.

Eligible Expenditures

Approved applicants who plan to make building/storefront improvements are eligible for a rebate of up to 50% of the approved costs, not to exceed \$5,000 provided the location is within WPB's boundary and the improvements are covered under this Program. City permit fees may be included in the total storefront improvement cost. The improvements must have a *positive impact* on the commercial area and improve the aesthetic appearance of the storefront and/ or building. **Work must not have commenced before the rebate application has been received and approved.**

The program will concentrate primarily on street-level improvements, but upper-level improvements may be approved if they have significant impact on the street appearance. This will be subject to approval by the WPB Review Board and WPB Commission. In the case where the applicant serves as the contractor, two additional estimates from other contractors will be required for the cost evaluation of the project. Associated costs due to the applicant

being the contractor or supplier of goods are not eligible expenditures and will not be considered in the rebate estimate.

Application Process

An application will only be reviewed after receipt of all application materials, listed below. **Applications will be considered incomplete and WILL NOT be reviewed until all of the following information is received:**

1. Application form completed in its entirety. The application must be submitted in hard copy and digital format along with completed checklist and Rebate Work Summary Worksheet. Application, checklist and worksheet can be obtained at the Wicker Park-Bucktown Chamber of Commerce office or online at www.wickerparkbucktown.org.
2. **Detailed cost estimates from at least two contractors for each Improvement task. Specify which contractor you prefer for each task. The Commission reserves the right to reject any questionable estimates, as well as implement such additional Program rules and regulations as it deems reasonable. If the applicant plans to complete construction themselves, they must submit two estimates in addition to their own.**
3. Photos of the existing building and area surrounding the proposed project.
4. Design drawings, which graphically indicate the proposed improvements. Drawings must include all elevations, dimensions and other appropriate measurements and information.
5. A written authorization from the property owner, if different from the applicant. The authorization must state that the applicant has the authority of the building owner to make the proposed improvements and participate in the program. Property owner must initial drawings or sketches indicating approval of suggested improvement.
6. Project specifications, including color samples, designs for awnings and/or signs.
7. Timeline for project completion and/or completed Work Summary Worksheet if applicable.

Applications can be submitted digitally (preferred) to info@wickerparkbucktown.com or in hard copy to:

Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce
Attention: WPB Façade Rebate Program
1414 N. Ashland
Chicago, IL 60622

Review Process

1. WPB staff will verify the application is complete and that the work proposed is eligible for rebate. The applicant will be notified within (5) five business days of receipt of application. **Applications will be considered in the order that they are received until all the Façade Rebate Program funding is disbursed for the fiscal year. If the list of applications received before the next SSA Commission review exceeds the amount of funding for the program a lottery will be held to determine the order in which the projects will be funded and a wait list for funding should it become available.** In order to maximize the number of eligible projects that receive assistance, the SSA Commission reserves the right to award a Rebate at an amount less than the allowable maximum.
2. If application is complete and eligible for rebate, WPB staff will arrange a meeting (if needed) to review application and project scope. This meeting will take place within (15) fifteen business days of receipt of complete application. If application is found to be incomplete or not eligible for rebate, WPB staff will notify the applicant within (5) business days of incomplete application and corrective actions if necessary.
3. After meeting with WPB staff, application materials will be forwarded to the Guide Development Committee of WPB. If application is not approved, a notification letter including feedback of reasons will be sent to the applicant within (5) five business days of the decision. If the application is approved, it will then be forwarded to the WPB SSA #33 Commission for final approval. Applicants will be notified of the decision within 5 (five) business days of Commission meeting where the application was voted upon.

Inspection Process

Upon completion of the work, the applicant is to send WPB staff:

1. An up-to-date Work Summary Sheet, including specifying the date on which each task or job was completed; and
2. Copies of required permits, invoices, cancelled checks, and a notarized contractor's affidavit and waiver of lien.

If the documentation is in order, WPB staff will conduct a field inspection. The inspection ensures the applicant's compliance with the WPB Façade Rebate Program Policy as well as the original information submitted in the application.

Rebate Process

Upon satisfactory inspection, including receipt of all information listed above, WPB will authorize a rebate check for the participant. Because funds for a project cannot be reserved indefinitely, rebate will be subject to cancellation if not completed by the deadline indicated in the application. A check will be issued and mailed within (15) fifteen business days of successful inspection, commission approval, and document review.

PLEASE NOTE: Individuals receiving a rebate must submit a W-9 to the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce. Rebates will not be paid until a W-9 form is received. The form is available for download here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>.

Program Definitions and Additional Guidelines

Positive Impact

Changes that are apparent from the commercial street that improve the aesthetic appearance of a storefront and/or building which in turn create a cleaner, more inviting look to the commercial district. Some examples include, but are not limited to: changing windows or door style to create a more open and inviting entryway or reconfiguring traffic pattern of an entry way; installing or upgrading outdoor lighting; removing brick that was previously installed over windows.

Storefront

Any commercial retail business front within WPB's boundary that has direct and immediate pedestrian access from the public way.

Façade

The façade is the entire exterior front surface of a building from sidewalk grade to the roofline. (Material used for the renovation of the façade should match and complement the design of the building.) Avoid mixing materials and avoid imitations of materials. Solid or permanently enclosed or covered storefronts are prohibited, as are window treatments that significantly decrease the amount of window area. All damaged, or otherwise deteriorated elements of storefronts, display windows; entrances, upper façade or upper signs should be repaired or replaced. Additions to a building should use materials similar to those used in the existing building (i.e., matching size, color and texture or original materials). Each building unit, whether existing or proposed, should be an integral element of the total site design. It should reflect and complement the character of the surrounding area.

ADA Compliance

In order to insure people's access to purchase goods and services, all applicants who participate must meet, at the minimum, accessibility standards

as put forth by the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA) prior to receiving rebate.

Cleaning Masonry

Brick and stone are not to be sandblasted since these materials are porous and can be damaged. Such materials should only be chemically cleaned or steam cleaned and meet EPA standards or higher. Specifications regarding the cleaning of historic buildings shall be submitted as part of the contractor's proposal.

Tuckpointing

Masonry surfaces should be properly tuckpointed to avoid moisture seepage and excessive wear on the masonry. New mortar should be compatible with color/texture and form of original mortar. With historic buildings, specifications must be submitted with the contractor's proposal.

Exterior Lighting

The use of lights to illuminate building facades is highly encouraged and may be done with projecting, or concealed, fixtures. Such fixtures should be inconspicuous and harmonious with the building's design. All fixtures, receptacles and equipment should be in accordance with the City of Chicago Building Code and Public Way Ordinance, and all required permits must be obtained by the applicant.

Signs

A sign's major purpose is to identify a business and not advertise its merchandise and services. Signs should not be large and overbearing, or cluttered with excessive information. They should be simple, and should be coordinated with neighboring signs. Portable signs, large signs on upper facades, monument, neon, and halogen signs are generally not approved under this Program. Rooftop signs on or above the parapet or cornice of the building, billboards, and other outdoor advertisements signs painted or mounted on structures, except as otherwise described, are prohibited. Exceptions of an aesthetic or historic nature shall be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies can be attractive improvements to a storefront, and a good location for the store's name. They also provide shelter from the sun and rain. All awnings must be approved by the appropriate City Departments.

Windows and Doors

Windows and doors should be tight and have sashes of proper size and design. Window frames with rotten wood, broken joints or loose mullions should be replaced. All broken and missing windows should be replaced with

new glass. Display windows, entrances, signs, lighting, sun protections, etc., should be compatible and harmonious with the original scale and character of the structure. No storefront should be covered or boarded up. No security gates of any kind will be allowed. If existing exterior security gates or bars are present, they will need to be removed. **WPB and the Chicago Police Department recommend electronic security systems, plus anti-graffiti and/or anti-smash film for windows.** Applicants can also apply for the WPB Neighborhood Safety Rebate program here:
<http://www.wickerparkbucktown.com/ssa/forms-applications/>

Parking Lots

Parking lots facing shopping streets and serving adjacent stores may be eligible for landscaping, lighting and decorative fences along the edges that screen or buffer the area from pedestrian shoppers. Such lots must receive special approval from the WPB Review Board and Commission to participate in the program. Parking lots facing side streets only, or not visible from the main shopping street, are not eligible under the program.

Wall Murals and Graphics

Wall murals and graphics can be attractive improvements to a building and also to an overall shopping area. Murals and graphics also can help establish a unique identity. If the side of a building, proposed for a graphic or mural is highly visible from the main shopping street, such artwork may be considered an eligible expenditure.

Permit Information

Note: Information on permits is subject to change. Please consult the City of Chicago and/or a licensed architect/contractor for official information about permits. SSA Service Providers and their agents accept no responsibility for information that is no longer accurate.

https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bacp/sbc/building_permits.html

Building Permits

Building permits are issued by the Department of Buildings, City Hall, Room 900, 121 N. LaSalle St. 312-744-3600. To apply for and access permits online, visit:

<https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bldgs.html>

Barricade Permits

Construction that will impact the public way requires a permit issued by the Chicago Department of Transportation. For more information, visit:

http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/supp_info/regulations_for_construction_in_the_public_way.html

Awning Permits

Awnings and canopies that extend two feet or more over the public right-of-way require a Public Way Use permit from the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), 121 N. LaSalle St., 8th Floor, (312) 744-6060. **After securing a canopy permit application from BACP and obtaining the signature of the local alderman, the applicant submits the completed application to the Department of Revenue for further processing. These permits can only be issued after the passage of an enabling ordinance by the City Council. Allow twelve weeks for issuance of the permit.** A permit for an awning that extends LESS than two feet over the public right-of-way can be issued by the Department of Buildings. For more information, visit:

http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bacp/provdrs/public_way.html

Tuckpointing and cleaning of brick masonry normally do not require a permit, but if public safety is involved, a barricade permit should be secured.

Sidewalk Café Permits

A permit is required to operate a sidewalk café during the sidewalk café season of March 1 to December 1. For more information, visit:

http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bacp/provdrs/public_way.html

Electrical Permits

Electrical permits are secured by a licensed electrical contractor for light fixtures, neon signs and lighted window displays (For more information, contact the city of Chicago at 312-744-3449).

Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies that extend over the public way necessitate a permit from the Compensation Unit of the Department of Revenue, 333 South State Street, Room LL30, 312-747-3819. After securing a canopy permit application from the Bureau, and obtaining the signature of the local alderman, the applicant submits the completed application to the Department of Revenue for further processing. These permits can only be issued after the passage of an enabling ordinance by the City Council. Allow twelve weeks for issuance of the permit. A permit for an awning, or canopy, that extends less than two feet over the public right of way, can be secured through the Department of Buildings.