

2025 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT & SIGN GRANT PROGRAM



Downtown
HACKENSACK
Main Street Business Alliance

About Us

The Hackensack Main Street Business Alliance (MSBA) is a public/private partnership formed as an alliance between the business community on Main Street and the city of Hackensack. Its mission is to address the issues facing the business community on Main Street with the goal of improving the local economy and the overall business climate.

The MSBA management organization is governed by an Board of Directors, comprised of commercial property owners and business owners who are elected by the members of the district, along with liaisons from the Hackensack Chamber of Commerce and the City Council.

The Main Street Business Alliance, created in January 2004, focuses on issues such as clean and green programs, business promotion, creative placemaking, special events, visual improvements, business recruitment and retention, and more. Grants are reviewed and awarded by the MSBA's Visual Improvement Committee according to the budget approved by the City Council.

Why fund storefront improvements?

The Main Street Business Alliance has identified a need to provide façade and signage improvements to assist commercial property owners and businesses located within the Hackensack Special Improvement District's boundary to (1) promote the physical and economic revitalization of the Hackensack business district (2) create an aesthetically pleasing shopping environment and (3) create a defined and complementary streetscape/street retail environment through the improvement of facades and signage.

Who is eligible to apply?

- A commercial property or business located within the boundaries of the Main Street Business Alliance Special Improvement District is eligible to apply for grants;
- Applicants must follow the guidelines in this brochure;
- Funding amounts are determined at the discretion of the Visual Improvement Committee, based on our budget;
- Grants are paid on a reimbursable basis after proof of payment and work is inspected.

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John T. Peters
Executive Director,
Main Street Business Alliance



Lighting

Gooseneck lighting is preferred, although we will consider well-planned lighting and signage systems.



Awnings

Retractable awnings, cloth or canvas with open sides are desirable. Lettering should be limited to the business name.



Signage + Lettering

Locate signage within a distinctive signage band. Use high contrast lettering consistent with business' brand.



Entryway

Locate street number at Entry Door for easy way finding. Avoid unnecessary signage on the doorway.



Window

Let your merchandise speak for itself by minimizing window signs. Ensure only up to 20% of the window is covered.



Amenities

Greenery, sandwich boards and outdoor seating is welcome where space allows and doesn't block pedestrians.



UNDESIRABLE

DESIRABLE



Undesirable- Facade is overcrowded. Windows are covered.

This program is administered through the Visual Improvement Committee of the Main Street Business Alliance and covers storefront improvements including façade, signage, and awning improvements.

Proposed signage and storefront designs must be approved by the Visual Improvements Committee before applying for Zoning permits. Designs and materials must follow the current Hackensack Downtown plan.

Funding Source:

Program funding will be allocated through the MSBA budget, as approved by the City Council. Applicants will complete a simple application, which will be reviewed by the MSBA Visual Improvement Committee. Funds will be awarded to approved projects on a first-come, first-served basis. Not all applications are approved.

Key Program Points:

- Eligible properties include commercial properties or businesses located within the boundaries of the Downtown Hackensack Special Improvement District.
- Funds are provided at the discretion of the Visual Improvement Committee according to our budget. This is not a 100% grant.
- The grants are reimbursable after proof of receipt and inspection of completed work that exactly matches the application and related details and renderings.
- No funds will be contributed to completed projects without prior application.
- The approving body must sign off on the application and any change orders.
- Box signs are not permitted on Main Street.
- Blinking and window-frame lights of any type are prohibited, even after an approved sign has been installed.

Grants Funding:

Business and property owners within the Downtown Hackensack Special Improvement District are eligible to apply. Storefront improvements and sign grants may be funded at the discretion of the Visual Improvement Committee according to our budget. In all cases, the applicant will be responsible for a portion of the spend. This is NOT a 100% grant. Storefront design must be approved in advance of installation or purchase. Property owners are eligible to apply for multiple grants not to exceed the number of units within the building. Projects will be considered on a project-by-project basis. Awning and sign designs must meet the strict criteria as established by the Main Street Business Alliance. Certain vinyl awnings and box signs are prohibited. Light lettering upon a dark background is recommended for awnings. Sign composition, letter, and size must be approved before installation or purchase. Any signage adhered to the awning must be approved by the Main Street Business Alliance and follow the signage requirements of the City of Hackensack's Zoning Codes and Ordinance. Storefront changes may require a building permit from the Building Department.

Reimbursement Procedure:

All funding is discretionary and grants are on a reimbursement basis. The Main Street Business Alliance may award grants in an amount less than the amount requested. Reimbursement will take at least 30 days after the work is finalized, with submission of pictures of "before" and "final" project, and approval of invoices.

Application Review:

The Main Street Business Alliance Visual Improvements Committee (VIC) will judge projects on a project-by-project basis. The committee normally meets monthly to review applications and make decisions or, when needed, make recommendations to the Main Street Business Alliance Board of Trustees. The annual overall program budget varies according to the budget approved by the City Council.



Considerations For Façade, Signage and Awning Grants:

- Applications must be approved by the Visual Improvements Committee in order to receive grant funds.
- The quality of the design and its general compatibility, arrangement, materials election, and colors will be considered individually and with regard to the adjacent buildings
- The application's relevant impact on the building and the District
- The compatibility of the project to the overall streetscape
- The sign's overall design, use of color, materials and placement must be complementary and/or compatible with the host building and the adjacent buildings. NO blinking or flashing lights of any type are permitted in the sign, on the sign, or on or in the window frames. No window border lighting.
- Any and all grant applications must follow all requirements of the City of Hackensack's zoning codes and ordinances.
- Applicant must give approval to the Main Street Business Alliance to display their signage as the sponsor of the program during the construction.

Applications must include (to be sent in ONE email with all attachments):

1. Three (3) photographs of the building as it exists. Where site work is involved, photographs should include existing ground conditions around site, adjacent buildings, trees, benches, trash containers, etc.
2. Written description of the project;
3. Design drawings of the proposed work, indicating materials, accurate scale and colors;
4. Minimum of two written estimates from contractors of construction (or work) prior to award of grant. Estimates shall be provided by licensed contractors;
5. Written authorization from the landlord to perform the work;
6. Documentation that all Main Street Business Alliance assessments are paid prior to award of grant;
7. Plans and projects must comply with City of Hackensack's regulations.

Zoning Procedures:

After approval of the proposed design by the MSBA Visual Improvements Committee, and before applying for a façade improvement, awning, or sign installation permit, the applicant **must first obtain zoning approval**. This is done by filling out a "Zoning Sign Permit Application FORM E2" which is available online at www.Hackensack.org. The application should contain sufficient information to ensure compliance with the City's Land Use Ordinance. Once zoning approval is obtained, the applicant must apply for permits through the Building Department. Generally, a "Building - Electric" application is required along with three sets of signed and sealed plans prepared by an architect. Include as much information as possible in order to expedite the plan review process. It is critical you list "This application is under review by the Main Street Business Alliance" on any City applications.

For questions regarding procedures for obtaining Zoning Approval or applying for permits, please contact the City of Hackensack at (201) 646-3920.

**Please note: Not all grant requests will receive approval.
Please read this entire document to avoid delay.
Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

**For questions regarding this program, please contact John T. Peters, Executive Director,
at jpeters@DowntownHackensack.ORG or (201) 498-1690**





Main Street Business Alliance

2025 Storefront Improvement & Sign Grant Application

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Anticipated Construction Date(s): _____

Property Owner Name: _____

Your application must include the following in one submission with all documentation:

- Three (3) photographs of the building as it exists. Photographs should include existing ground conditions around the site and adjacent buildings.
- Sketch, renderings, and/or design plans
- Sign design with lettering and detail
- Minimum of two (2) written cost estimates (before the time of award).
- Property Owner’s Approval - in writing
- Color chips, paint swatches, and material samples, if applicable
- Written description of intended storefront improvement plans.

Property Owner Signature

Date

Applicant Signature - Indicates acceptance of the terms herein

Date

Please note: Incomplete applications will not be considered. All application information and documentation must be submitted at one time, in one email. For questions regarding this program, please contact John T. Peters, Executive Director, at jpeters@DowntownHackensack.ORG or (201) 498-1690