



RICHLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CP&D DEPARTMENT | PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Neighborhood Improvement Program
COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
2023 GUIDELINES

Mailing Address:	Contact:	Physical Address:
Richland County Community Planning & Development Neighborhood Improvement Program P.O. Box 192 Columbia, SC, 29204	Neighborhood Improvement Program Email: NIP@richlandcountysc.gov Phone: (803) 576-1340 Fax: (803) 576-2182 Website: http://www.richlandonline.com/Government/Departments/Planning-Development/Neighborhood-Planning	Richland County Community Planning & Development Neighborhood Improvement Program 2020 Hampton St, 1 st floor Columbia, SC 29204

Please thoroughly read the entire Guidelines before applying.

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ABOUT

The Richland County Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) has developed a Commercial Façade Improvement Program (CFIP) for designated corridors to encourage businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings, storefronts and signage. This program provides up to **\$14,999** per activity in funds to finance exterior improvements to a property owner or tenant's commercial building.

The program is designed to retain and attract businesses, strengthen the commercial corridor, increase utilization of existing businesses, restore economic vitality, and enhance property values.

Funding is limited and not guaranteed by simply submitting a completed application. NIP will begin accepting applications on **April 17th 2023**. The last day to submit applications is **April 28th 2023**.

Application Period: April 17th 2023 – April 28th 2023.

Applications that are incomplete or late will not be processed for consideration.

APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants:

Any business located in Richland County with frontage along the designated corridors listed below is an eligible applicant.

1. 911 – 201 Bush River Road
2. 813 – 1223 St. Andrews Road
3. 2768 – 1615 Decker Boulevard
4. 1001 – 1909 Percival Road
5. 10149 – 10617 Two Notch Road

Applicants must be either the owner or tenant of a commercial, retail, or professional business/property with a current structure. If you are a tenant, a copy of the lease along with a Letter of Agency must be signed by the owner of the building with approval for exterior improvements to be completed. Applicants of multiple buildings/businesses may receive funding for more than one building/business, though they must complete separate applications for each. Likewise, all applicants must be currently registered and licensed with the Richland County Business Service Center with all County taxes up to date.

All awardees will be assessed for compliance with the program conditions for a **three [3] year period**. If the awardee closes, sells, or moves the business location for any reason, to include property sale, foreclosure, lease termination and/or any other legal action, within the three-year period of the receipt of the program funds, the applicant will be considered in default of the program agreement. The awarded businesses/properties will be



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required to maintain a current business license throughout the three-year period, as well as, keeping all taxes non-delinquent. Awarded businesses/properties must undertake proper maintenance of their site and are not to receive any type of building, zoning or code enforcement citations or violations during the **3-year period** which are not brought into compliance. Property owners who are awarded must make tenants aware and shall not increase rent for current tenants during the three-year period. Awardees shall not make any changes to the façade improvements undertaken without written consent and approval from NIP during the three-year period. Richland County Government reserves the right to request immediate repayment of the entire funded amount, or any portion thereof, deemed fit from the awardee who defaults on the program conditions.

Ineligible applicants:

Any business that is **not** a locally owned or nonprofit organizations.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Corporations not SC based
- Franchises not SC based
- Schools/Universities
- Religious organizations
- Umbrella organizations
- County wide organizations
- College/University Greek Organizations
- Political groups
- Public agencies

FUNDING

The program provides for a one-time maximum funding of \$14,999 of County investment per project/improvement for businesses and properties. Eligible projects do not require a funding match, with the County providing 100% of possible funding up to \$14,999. Payment will be issued to approved vendors upon receiving invoices on a business letterhead. Richland County will be responsible for all procurement processes. NIP shall pay the approved vendor directly on behalf of the applicant for eligible improvement expenses not exceeding the approved amount. The Commercial Façade Improvement Program funds shall not be applied retroactively to work started prior to the start of the program nor can it be applied to costs accrued as part of the application submittal process.

Improvements

Improvements are meant to improve functionality, aesthetics, and security of the applicants business. Projects must have a direct effect on the exterior of the building and projects must comply with applicable Federal, State, County, and, where applicable, municipal codes, and be achievable by **June 16th 2023**. Before determining a project, consider the following:



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Eligible Improvements:

Combination of eligible improvements are permitted.

Business Beautification: *Projects that improve the overall aesthetic of the business.*

- ✓ Exterior Signs
- ✓ Landscaping
- ✓ Exterior painting
- ✓ Parking lot space painting
- ✓ Pressure Washing Clean-up
- ✓ Lighting improvements
- ✓ Awnings

Safety & Health: *Projects that improve the safety and health of staff and customers.*

- ✓ Security upgrade or installation
- ✓ Gates/Locks
- ✓ Lighting improvements
- ✓ Parking lot resurfacing or repaving
- ✓ Building Maintenance (brickwork, roofing, wood repair, windows)
- ✓ Handicap Access (ramps, railings, parking spaces)

Considerations for specific project types:

*Plants cannot be more than 4 feet tall at maturity

Ineligible Projects & Expenses

Richland County prohibits grantees to use county funds for the following:

- × Major infrastructure improvements (*i.e. sidewalk improvements*)
- × Property purchases
- × Travel and travel expenses
- × Personal equipment (*computers, lawn mowers, etc.*)
- × Alcohol, weapons or drugs
- × Awards/gift cards/coupons/prizes/raffles
- × Tables, chairs or umbrellas
- × Operating expenses (*rent, utilities, insurance, etc.*)
- × Fundraising or scholarships
- × Statues and fountains
- × Equipment for businesses, schools, or government departments
- × Funding towards savings accounts
- × Benches and trash receptacles
- × Funding towards schools, public agencies, and other non-profits
- × Vinyl letter signage (windows)
- × Salaries/honorariums
- × Mailboxes
- × Reoccurring maintenance expenses
- × Home repairs for personal property
- × Interior improvements
- × New construction/additions to property, beyond façade repairs or reconstruction or signs;
- × Flags or banners



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PROCESS

Application Phase

The program shall be open for submittal during the application period as determined by NIP.

1. Applicants will submit a completed application and other relevant forms available from NIP.
 - a. Applications can be obtained from:
 - i. NIP office located at 2020 Hampton St, 1st Floor, Columbia, SC 29204, or
 - ii. **Email:** NIP@richlandcountysc.gov,
 - iii. **Phone:** 803-576-1340
 - iv. Department webpage:
<https://richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-Development/Neighborhood-Planning>
 - b. Completed applications should be returned to NIP either via email a NIP@richlandcountysc.gov.
 - c. Applications will be accepted and reviewed **Monday 4/17/23 to Friday 4/28/23** or all funds are expended, whichever occurs first.
 - d. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - e. Applications missing any required documentation will be given a conditional denial until all submittal elements are received, as they would be otherwise incomplete.
 - i. Applicants have three **(3) days** to submit missing documentation from the date of notification.
2. Following review, the applicant will be notified of approval or denial, or conditional approval, via email.
 - a. If the applicant has been given conditional approval, they will be required to submit additional materials needed to fulfill the application process to move forward in the award process.
 - i. Applicant will be given three (3) days to submit additional documentation from the date of notification.
 - b. Conditional approval does not guarantee approval and awarding of funding, as priority will be given to completed applications as they are submitted.
3. Once the applicant has been notified of their award status, a project agreement form will need to be **signed and returned to NIP** before moving forward with the façade improvements.
4. Once the agreement is completed, the applicant will be provided notice of an approved vendor(s) to begin the necessary improvements up to the awarded amount.
5. Once the work has been completed, an invoice will be submitted for the approved funding amount, along with photo documentation of the improvements.
 - a. Owner / applicant will approve submitted work.
 - b. The invoice will be paid by NIP to the vendor on behalf of the applicant.



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Required Application Documentation

The application must include, but not limited to the following elements for submittal:

1. Completed **CFIP Application**.
2. Completed **Improvement Details Sheet**.
3. **Photos** of the business front and photos of specific concerns or requests.
4. **Current proof of ownership** (If applicant is the owner of the building)
 - a. Letter of Agency and copy of current lease (If applicant is a tenant of the building)
5. **Proof of good standing:**
 - a. Copy of current **Property Tax Receipt** (as applicable)
 - b. Copy of current **Business License**
 - c. Copy of **Property and Liability Insurance** for site

DATES AND DEADLINES

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until the date below or all funds are expended, whichever occurs first. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Application Submission **Opens – April 17th 2023**
- Application Submission **Closes – April 28th 2023**

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are preferred to be sent via email to NIP@richlandcountysc.gov. Other options are fax, mail, and in-person drop off. Mail received **after April 28th 2023** will be considered late and will be denied. Only one application per organization will be considered.

Applications are available here:

1. **NIP office** located at 2020 Hampton St, 1st Floor, Columbia, SC 29204, or
2. **Email:** NIP@richlandcountysc.gov,
3. **Phone:** 803-576-1340
4. **Department webpage:** <https://richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-Development/Neighborhood-Planning>



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Commercial Façade Improvement Program APPLICATION FORM

Name of Business: _____

Project Address:

Address

City

State

Zip

1. Building Owner Applicant Information: [\(if you own the building, complete this section\)](#)

Name

Address (if different than above)

City

State

Zip

Daytime Phone Number

Cellular/Evening Phone Number

Email Address

Are you the sole owner of this property? ____Yes ____ No (Include proof of ownership in your Application Package)

How long have you owned or been an owner at this property? _____ (Round Down in Terms of Years)

Is (Are) there an existing business(es) in operation at this address? ____Yes ____ No

If yes, how long? _____ (Round Down in Terms of Years)

Indicate type of business: (Clothing, Dry Cleaner, Restaurant, etc.)

If yes, how many persons are currently employed? Full-time ____Part-time ____

Is your property currently insured? ____Yes ____ No (Provide Copy of Insurance Policy(s))





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2. Tenant Applicant Information: (if you are a Tenant and lease your business space, complete this section)

Business Name _____ Operator's Name _____

Type of Business _____ Number of Employees _____ F/T ____ P/T ____

Length of time in this Location _____

Street Address (if different than above) _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone Number _____ Cellular/Evening Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

How long have you been a Tenant at this property? _____ Yrs (Round Down in Terms of Years)

Is your property currently insured? _____ Yes _____ No (Provide Copy of Insurance Policy(s))

Do you have the **Approval from the Building Owner** to participate in this program? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please attach your Letter of Agency and copy of the lease (included in your Application Package).

3. Project Contact (If different than Applicant (Owner or Tenant) - must be one (1) Individual):

Name and Position _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone Number _____ Cellular/Evening Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

4. Project Description: (Briefly describe proposed façade improvement and complete the **Requested Improvement Details sheet**. Submit a minimum of 3 current photographs of the building/business façade. Include at least 1 photo of each requested improvement. If you have accompanying renderings, site plans, or designs please provide those as well, though they are not required.)



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5. Has the Applicant, or anyone with an ownership interest of the project site:

- a) Received funding from the Commercial Façade Improvement Program before?
___No ___Yes If yes, list date and business:_____

- b) Received assistance, or are now under consideration for assistance, from other federally funded Richland County Government programs?
___No ___Yes If yes, list the property location(s), investment amount(s) and date(s):

- c) Currently have existing, previous, pending contracts or other business relationship with Richland County Government? ___No ___Yes (If yes, please explain)

- d) Is a spouse or immediate family member or business partner, currently employed by Richland County Government?
___No ___Yes If Yes, list the Richland County Government Employee’s name, department and relationship:

- e) Is this property under contract to transfer ownership in the next 12 months? Yes ____ No ____ (if yes, please explain)



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6. Signatures

The Applicant, _____, asserts that the preceding information is true, and correct, and will comply with all local, state, and federal regulations applicable to this program. The Applicant fully understands neither Richland County Government nor the Neighborhood Improvement Program can make any variances to the application process, or requirements, except as authorized in writing.

The Applicant fully understands and agrees that if his/her project at any time fails to meet program requirements or ordinances; he/she will be ineligible for a receiving investment and agrees to forfeit all rights pursuant to the acquisition or recovery of any claims or damages regarding the funds of the Richland County Government and/or Neighborhood Improvement Program.

The Applicant agrees that in the event of its breach of any condition or provision, as described in the application process and found in the program guidelines and program agreement, or whenever it is deemed to be in the best interest of Richland County, the County has the right to terminate this agreement on thirty (30) days notice and to cancel this agreement, without prejudice to any other rights or remedies of Richland County.

If the Applicant is someone other than the property owner, written consent by the property owner must be provided by submitting a Letter of Agency with this application.

Applicant (Print)	Applicant's Signature	Date
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Applicants Social Security Number and/or Company's Federal ID Number

Return to Neighborhood Improvement Program

Commercial Façade Improvement Program

Project Manager:
Matthew Smith

Planning Department
2020 Hampton Street, 1st Floor
Columbia, SC 29204
803.576.1340 or 2063
NIP@richlandcountysc.gov





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Commercial Façade Improvement Program

LETTER OF AGENCY

To: **Neighborhood Improvement Program**

RE: _____
(Property Address)

In connection with the subject property, I hereby authorize the person shown below as my agent for the purpose of filing any applications and required documentation, designing and reviewing plans, obtaining required permits and will be the responsible financial agent, as in reference to the above listed property.

Signature of Property Owner:

Owner's Name (Print):

Owner's Address: _____

Owner's Contact Numbers:

Daytime Number: _____ Nighttime Phone: _____

Owner's E-mail: _____





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Signature of Tenant/Applicant (Agent):

Agent (Applicant) Name (Print):

Agent Address:

Agent's Contact Numbers:

Business: _____ Cell: _____

Agent's E-mail: _____

Witness

Signature: _____

Witness

Printed Name: _____

Notary

Signature: _____

Stamp/Seal:

Notary

Printed Name: _____

Date:

