



Business Façade Improvement Program

2026 Guidelines



NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT

Program Purpose and Goal

The Business Façade Improvement Program provides grant funding to business and property owners to improve retail and building frontages.

Eligible businesses are able to receive a 50% reimbursement up to a maximum of \$5,000 to complete exterior improvements such as building façades, signage, murals, architectural features, siding, lighting and awnings.

The goal of this program is to provide an incentive to business owners to improve the look and feel of their business frontages. Vibrant commercial areas have the potential to attract new customers, clients, visitors and potential investors. The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) is pleased to deliver this program with funding provided by Northern Development.

The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of commercial areas.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako will provide up to a maximum 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of \$5,000 per project/building to improve the facades of commercial buildings.

Each building is eligible for an annual grant to a maximum of \$5,000. Each year a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$2,500

Application deadline is Friday, July 31, 2026.

Eligible Properties

- Appropriately zoned properties (please contact the RDBN if you have any questions about zoning);
- Must have an operating business on the property; and
- Must be within RDBN boundaries, but outside the boundaries of a municipality.

Eligible Applicants

- Property owners or business owners (if the applicant is the business owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant);
- Non-profit Societies occupying commercial locations; and
- Home based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only).

Eligibility Requirements

- All property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current;
- There must be no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding; and

Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the commercial area are not eligible;
- Government owned buildings (even if they have business tenants);
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in the community's program guidelines);
- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening); and
- Apartment buildings.

Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of, but are not limited to:

- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement);
- Exterior architectural features;
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims etc.);
- Windows (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone window replacement);
- New siding;
- Façade painting;
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement);
- Awnings;
- Signage (affixed on building);
- Wayfinding signage (sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway);
 - Wayfinding signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaws and regulations.
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only; and
- Patios (please contact RDBN to discuss eligible patio projects).

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance;
- Structural repairs;
- Roofs or patios;
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.);
- Landscaping;
- Paving;
- Fencing;
- Interior improvements;
- Any improvements not visible from the public right of way; and
- Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval.

Eligible Costs/ Expenses

- Direct project labor costs;
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to facade only);
- Contractor fees;
- Rental of tools and equipment;
- Project related materials and supplies;
- PST; and
- Shipping/freight.

Ineligible Costs/ Expenses

- Staff wages and/or benefits;
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment;
- Utilities (hydro, gas etc.);
- GST (must be excluded from calculations);
- Duties;
- Permit fees;
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way; and
- Façade improvements expenses started prior to application approval.

Design Guidelines

In order to be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project.

Grants for projects meeting eligibility requirements will be awarded on a first come, first eligible basis.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project, and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Building, sign, and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to, or concurrently with, application for this program.

Business Façade Application and Project Approval Process

- 1) Complete project applications are to be submitted to the RDBN no later than **July 31, 2026**.
- 2) Completed applications can be submitted by e-mail to economic.development@rdbn.bc.ca or can be mailed or dropped off at the RDBN office in Burns Lake.
(PO Box 820, 37 3rd Avenue, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0)
- 3) Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by RDBN staff to ensure projects meet the program eligibility criteria. RDBN staff may contact the applicant to discuss the application, if required.

- 4) Funding will be allocated based on project eligibility and availability of program funds. Funding will be committed on a first-come, first-eligible basis.
- 5) All applicants will be advised in writing as to whether their application has been approved, denied or approved with conditions.
- 6) For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding will be sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the RDBN.
- 7) The Owner/Tenant will acquire any required permits and complete the project.

The Project Review Committee will consist of the Regional Economic Development Coordinator and the applicable Electoral Area Director. Applications will be reviewed, and a recommendation made to the RDBN Board for final approval. All eligible applications will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Official Community Plan and Bylaw requirements? (These can be found on the RDBN website.)
- Will the project, once complete, have a noticeable impact on Highway 16?
- Will the renovation offer a noticeable improvement on Highway 16?

Project Reporting & Business Reimbursement Process

- 1) Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided Expense Reporting Form.
- 2) Owner/Tenant provides the Certification of Completion on the Expense Reporting Form signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval is complete and has been paid in full, as well as before and after photos, and any other supporting documentation.
- 3) Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final permit inspections (where required) and meets all building standards and codes (where required).
- 4) RDBN staff verify that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement. The project must meet the Program Guidelines and Letter of Understanding.
- 5) Applicant is issued a payment as outlined in the Letter of Understanding.

Please note:

Projects/funding cannot carry over from one calendar year to the next. Approved projects and reporting must be completed before year end — December 31, 2026.

2026 Business Façade Improvement Program

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

Project Application

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Building Address: _____

(If different than above)

If you are applying as the tenant of a building, please provide the following information and attach a letter of consent from the building owner stating that you are permitted to make these changes.

Owner Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Project Description

Describe the proposed project – Please attach any extra sheets, photos, designs, samples, etc.
Describe the work to be done and materials to be used.

Planned Start Date: _____

Planned Completion Date: _____

Total Project Cost (estimated): _____

Funding Amount Requested: _____

Applicant Checklist

- ___ Property taxes paid
- ___ Utility account paid (if applicable)
- ___ Building owner authorization

Attach to Application

- ___ Photos of existing conditions (before)
- ___ Contractor's cost estimates
- ___ Drawings/designs
- ___ Signed Terms and Conditions

Business Façade Improvement Program

Terms and Conditions

I, _____ of _____
(Applicant) (Business / Building)

have read the complete application and concur with and give my consent to the work proposed in the application.

I assume all responsibility for obtaining appropriate architectural drawings, building permits and inspections, and hiring of contractors as necessary.

I will allow the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and Northern Development to use before and after pictures of the project and testimonials for the purpose of promoting this program in the future.

I agree not to involve the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako or Northern Development in any legal action between myself and any contractors, estimators, employees, workers or agents arising from or out of the façade improvement project.

I give my consent to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako to make all inspections necessary to confirm that the approved plans are implemented in accordance with the expected standards.

Payment of approved grants will be made upon the applicant providing the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako with proof of final completion of proposed improvements along with verification of expenditures and proof of final inspections (when required).

Signature _____

Date _____

OFFICE USE

Application Received by:

Date:

Business Façade Improvement Program

Expense Reporting Form

Applicant Name	
Business Name	

Item	Description	Cost (excluding PST/GST)	Invoice/Receipt Attached?
TOTAL COST			
TOTAL ELIGIBLE GRANT (RDBN USE ONLY)			

I certify that all of the services listed above are complete, and that all invoices have been paid in full.

Applicant Name

Applicant Signature

Date: _____