

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Lewis County Façade & Streetscape Improvement Program Applications Due November 1, 2024

August 21, 2024

OBJECTIVE

Lewis County's downtown districts and public spaces hold central importance for community gatherings, special events, and the success of small businesses. The Façade & Streetscape Improvement Program (FSIP) aims to revitalize the character and attractiveness of villages and hamlets in Lewis County through public and private investment. To encourage and advance revitalization efforts, this program will provide 75/25 matching funds for eligible improvements to mixed-use and commercial buildings and streetscape enhancements in Lewis County's villages and hamlets. Together, these improvements will help business growth and retention, enhance tourism, increase spending in the local economy, and reduce the number of blighted and vacant properties.

Details: The program will provide up to 75% in funding for eligible projects with a 25% applicant match requirement. For Round 4, there is \$150,000 in funding available.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT

Project Eligibility:

- Property owners, non-profit organizations, and businesses with mixed-use and commercial buildings (to include multi-unit dwellings) located in a downtown area of a hamlet or village.
- Aligns with local zoning regulations and/or design standards (if applicable)

Ineligible Projects: Projects within the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Boundaries (Lowville) and New York Forward (NYF) Boundaries (Lyons Falls) will be ineligible for FSIP funding until the Small Projects Funds are depleted/dispensed within the respective Village.

Project Type:

Some eligible project types include the following:

- Awnings & canopies
- Interior display & exterior lighting
- Repair or replacement of façade windows, doors, and paint
- Window boxes and permanent planters
- Entryway improvements
- Signage: wall, perpendicular, free-standing signs
- Awning lettering and/or window lettering

Ineligible Expenses: Engineering and/or design costs associated with the project

STREETSCAPE

Project Eligibility:

- Open to municipal governments
- Improves walkability and/or community aesthetics in a village or hamlet
- Publicly accessible

Ineligible Projects: Projects within the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Boundaries (Lowville) and New York Forward (NYF) Boundaries (Lyons Falls) will be ineligible for FSIP funding until the Small Projects Funds are depleted/ disbursed within the respective Village.

Project Type:

Some eligible project types include the following:

- Permanent public art (murals, sculptures, etc.)
- Gateway & wayfinding signage
- Street furniture
- Public fixtures (kiosks, plaques, etc.)
- Street trees and permanent landscaping
- Bike racks and similar active transportation infrastructure

Ineligible expenses: Engineering and/or design costs associated with the project

PROJECT SELECTION & OVERSIGHT

- This is a competitive funding application. Final applications will be reviewed by a committee of representatives from the Board of Legislators, the Department of Planning & Community Development, the County Manager's Office, Naturally Lewis, and the Lewis County Historical Society. Municipal Zoning Enforcement Officers will participate in the project review process guiding with local zoning regulations.
- Projects not selected for any given funding round will receive feedback on improving their proposal for a future application.
- The Department of Planning and Community Development will lead the day-to-day oversight of project implementation.

For projects involving historic structures, priority will be given to those that align with best practices in historic preservation as outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, downloadable for free at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/>, and in the 2024 Lewis County Downtown Design Guide, found at <https://lewiscountyny.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/FINAL-Lewis-County-Downtown-Design-Guidelines.pdf>

To enhance the application process for both applicants and the review committee, it is strongly recommended that applicants participate in the Pre-Application process this year.

The brief Pre-Application form, available on the Lewis County Planning & Community Development [website](#), will collect preliminary project details to verify eligibility and alignment with program goals. After submission, Planning & Community Development staff will reach out to project sponsors to confirm eligibility and provide guidance for the full application process.

For the first 10 eligible Pre-Applications focused on façade improvements, staff will collaborate with InSite Architecture to provide free project renderings and refine the scope of work in accordance with the Lewis County Downtown Design Guidelines. This service is offered at no cost to applicants; however, applicants will be required to timely cooperate, collaborate, and communicate with InSite Architecture and the developed rendering and scope of work provided will be utilized for the final Application submission in which an award may be granted.

While participation in the Pre-Application process is optional, doing so offers significant advantages. Applicants who complete this step will receive additional points during the submission review process. **The Pre-Application deadline is September 20, 2024. Renderings and scope-of-work packages will be delivered to participants by October 18, 2024, giving applicants two weeks to obtain estimates.** Early submittals are encouraged! A list of Lewis County contractors who would be able to provide quotes for projects can be found on the Lewis County Planning & Community Development [website](#).

If project funding is awarded, the final scope of work will need to be approved by the committee. Expenses incurred before the final scope approval will not be eligible for reimbursement. Depending on the project, a building and/or land use permit may be required. If the project includes signage, the awardee may need to apply for a permit dependent on municipal zoning. Permits are not required to apply; however, they must be in place before any work can begin and before reimbursement can occur.

Funds will be limited to one project per applicant for the entirety of the Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program. Funding will be distributed as a reimbursement once a project is complete and staff has deemed the scope satisfied.

Lewis County Staff will conduct mandatory site visits for each proposal received and will examine observations and findings with the Lewis County Buildings and Fire Codes Department.

ROUND 4 TIMELINE

- Funding Open: August 21, 2024
- Pre-Applications Due: September 20, 2024
- Rendering and Scope of Work packages provided to First 10 eligible façade improvement Pre-Application submissions: October 18, 2024
- Application Due Date: November 1, 2024
- Committee Review: November 13, 2024
- Award Notifications: December 2, 2024

PROJECT COMPLIANCE AND COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Projects must be completed within twelve months of the award notice barring exceptional circumstances. Monthly update forms must be completed and sent to the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department on the last Friday of each month. Once the project has started, photos are required in the monthly updates to prevent failures in scope completion upon final inspection.

Temporary signage acknowledging the participation in the Lewis County Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program will be supplied and required to be displayed at the project sites during the project and upon its completion.

For awards made to historical structures, the Lewis County Historical Society (LCHS) will need to sign off on the detailed scope of work (paint colors, window type, etc.) before proceeding with the improvements. It is the responsibility of the awardee to connect with the LCHS to ensure compliance with the contracted project scope.

Funds will not be distributed until verification of satisfactory work has been completed and all vendors have been paid in full. Upon project completion, proof of payment to the contractor/vendor is required in the form of an invoice and canceled check or credit card statement. **Cash payments are not acceptable and will not be reimbursed.** Personal labor by the business or property owner and sales tax are not reimbursable expenses. Only expenses detailed in the approved scope of work will be eligible for reimbursement and meet the 25% match requirement.

Award recipients agree to properly maintain the property in compliance with local and state property maintenance codes and regulations for five (5) years following the completion of each project. For non-municipal projects receiving FSIP program funds, the property owner must execute a Property Maintenance Declaration. The Declaration Form must be signed, notarized, and filed in the Lewis County Clerk's Office. Awardees will not be reimbursed with FSIP funds before the signed, notarized Declaration is filed with the County Clerk. Proof of filing shall be provided with the final reimbursement request.

The maintenance term, or regulatory period, must be calculated from the date of project completion. The date of project completion is the date of the final inspection and must be documented by a formal, final inspection report completed by Lewis County staff. This date will then be used to calculate the termination date specified on the Declaration Form.

REPAYMENT/RECAPTURE TERMS

The property owner must ensure the improvements are maintained for the minimum five-year term as specified in the FSIP Grant Agreement. Should the property be transferred or sold during the regulatory term, the new owner must agree to assume the responsibility of maintaining the asset by completing and filing an amended Declaration Form, or the grant funds are subject to recapture by the County of Lewis. Property owners will not be reimbursed with FSIP funds before the signed, notarized Declaration is filed with the County Clerk.

For FSIP grants awarded in funding years 2024-present, a five-year maintenance term applies. Required repayment of FSIP funds will be calculated according to the following schedule:

REPAYMENT SCHEDULE	
MONTHS	REPAYMENT DUE
0-12 Months	100%
13-24 Months	80%
25-36 Months	60%
37-48 Months	40%
49-60 Months	20%
60 +Months	0%

RELEASE OF DECLARATION

In the event that a property owner decides to no longer participate in the FSIP Program, and returns the FSIP grant funds, a Release of Declaration will be filed by the County to remove the maintenance responsibilities attached to the Declaration.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications for Round 4 of the Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program are available via fillable PDF or as an online form at <https://lewiscountyny.gov/departments/planning-and-community-development/facade-and-streetscape-improvement-program/>. For a paper version of the application, please contact the Lewis County Planning & Community Development Department and a copy will be mailed to you. Paper applications should be mailed to:

Megan Krokowski, Community Development Specialist
 Lewis County Planning & Community Development
 7660 North State Street
 Suite 324
 Lowville, NY 13367

Once your application has been received, a confirmation email or letter will be sent. **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application has been received.** If no confirmation has been made, promptly reach out to Megan Krokowski.

If you have any additional questions about this program, please contact Megan Krokowski, Community Development Specialist at megankrokowski@lewiscounty.ny.gov or by phone at (315) 376-5423.