

# Storefront Sign and Awning Improvement Grant Program Guidelines

## Grant Details

To encourage commercial property owners to revamp their storefront signs to be clear and effective. The Township would match local cash contributions for eligible improvements up to \$1,000.00 for projects.

Applicants may be eligible to receive up to an additional \$1,000.00 matched cash contribution for projects through the Spruce the Bruce Program. Applicants must apply through Spruce the Bruce and meet their eligibility requirements to be considered for this additional funding. Huron-Kinloss applicants who apply to Spruce the Bruce for storefront sign and awning funding are automatically considered for funding through the Township of Huron-Kinloss' Storefront Sign and Awning Improvement Grant. For more information about Spruce the Bruce, please visit:

<https://brucecounty.on.ca/business/grants>

## Usage of Funds

The Storefront Sign & Awning Grant may be used towards the restoration of an old sign or awning or the design and purchase of a new sign or awning. Applicants may additionally apply for more comprehensive storefront improvement funds through the Façade Improvement Program Grant.

A portion of the funds may be used towards graphic design and business branding expenses. The Township of Huron-Kinloss recognizes the importance of having a logo and brand for your business that will set you apart from competitors.

## Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants must be a merchant or commercial property owner within a CIP designated area.
2. Applicants may be eligible for one sign or awning grant per storefront. Applicants may additionally apply for the façade grant.
3. Projects must not have commenced prior to the awarding of the requested grant.
4. Projects must be completed by October 31<sup>st</sup> of the year the application was submitted. If money is not spent it will be deemed an incomplete project and you will need to reapply next year.
5. Applicants must provide a minimum 50% cash contribution towards the total cost of the project for which they are applying for a grant.
6. Taxes are the full responsibility of the applicants.
7. Eligible Project costs must be actual cash outlay to third parties acting at arms' length and which can be documented through original invoices or proofs of payment.

8. Project's "fit" with the objectives of the Downtown Improvement Program and enhancement of the Community's Brand Identity.

### **Review Criteria**

The Downtown Improvement Grant Committee at the Township will review applications against the following criteria:

- date/timing of the application
- balance of funding available and any previous applications made at the time of application
- project's potential to provide long term economic benefit to the Township
- evidence of the applicant's ability to fulfill responsibilities related to the project installation and maintenance
- project's "fit" with the objectives of the Downtown Improvement Program
- The proposed project's "fit" with the Community Design Toolkit & / or other local municipal direction

### **Application Process**

Applicants must complete an application in order to be given grant consideration. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted. If approved, funds will be allocated following completion of project and proof of eligible expenditures.

Applications require the following:

- Property owner name
- Contact information
- Detailed project description including colours/materials that will be used
- Attach building permit if applicable and any sketches or pictures of proposed project
- If your project includes sign text, please show the text to be included
- The proposed timeline for the work (start date, completion date)
- Quote(s) of the project cost
- Proposed project costs (taxes not included)
- Grant request

### **Guidelines: Signs & Awnings**

The following guidelines focus on design, character, suitability and compatibility issues affecting Storefront Sign and Awning Improvement Grant applications. Keep these guidelines in mind when completing an application:

- Only applications that are submitted prior to purchase, fabrication and/or installation of the sign, awning or façade work will be considered.
- Only grant applications that comply with municipal by-laws will be considered.
- Improvements requiring a variance will not be considered unless unique circumstances (not caused or created by the applicant) exist.
- Signage should add to the character and value of the downtown. You can check your community design toolkit, signage guidelines, façade program guidelines, municipal design guidelines and / or streetscape plan for tips on ways that your project can support the community design vision. The following questions will be considered when reviewing the application: Is the work proposed of the same character as the building and its surroundings? Elements, window spacing, materials and features that reflect building character. If the building is historic - Is the work proposed historic in character and does it use historic elements, colours, shapes, etc. Does this work proposed improve the visual quality and character of the downtown?
- Signs and awnings should be of an appropriate size, scale and character for the building and site. The following questions will be considered when reviewing the application: Are the improvements scaled appropriately for the building and/or site? Does the proposed work fit as an overall element or does it overwhelm or stand out? Are the colours / materials appropriate?
- Since it is difficult to produce backlit plastic panel or molded signs which reinforce the desired atmosphere and / or character of downtown, these types of signs are not encouraged and are not likely to be approved for funding.
- Electronic signs and T.V. signs are not eligible for funding. If the business name is permanently affixed above or below the electronic portion of the sign, this portion of the sign may be considered for funding.
- Applications for signs and awnings that use a variety of styles and materials are encouraged. Creative design and/or what's being sold in the store (as opposed to simply the name of the business) are also strongly encouraged.
- Proposed perpendicular and flat signs and awnings must be appropriately place on the building or site. Wall signs on the building should be placed in the transom area of the building. Ground signs should not obstruct sight lines for autos accessing the street from driveways / alleys. Ground signs should in no way impact site circulation, pedestrians or sidewalk maintenance.
- Applications may include signage lighting that directly illuminates the sign itself.
- The use of a professional designer and / or contractor is encouraged.
- Awnings and projecting signs may require an encroachment agreement with the Municipality (if they project over Municipal property) and may require a construction permit.

Applications to this Program are available at the Township's municipal office or online on the Township's website: [www.huronkinloss.com](http://www.huronkinloss.com).