

The Downtown Jamaica Storefront Improvement Program provides funding to local property owners and businesses to complete exterior building renovation projects. The program reimburses up to 75% of the cost of eligible improvements with a maximum grant of \$20,000 per property.

► HOW IT WORKS

1. Application Period

- Submit your completed application form and required attachments via email to storefronts@sbs.nyc.gov on or before **September 30, 2020**.
- Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Early submissions are encouraged.

2. Review & Selection

- Applications will be evaluated based on the selection criteria (see section heading "Selection Criteria"). You will be notified in 3-4 weeks if your application has been selected to move forward.

3. Contract Execution

- Meet with NYC Small Business Services staff to finalize the scope of work and project design.
- Get detailed estimates, with shop drawings if applicable, from at least two licensed and insured contractors.
- Sign a contract agreeing to follow program requirements. The contract includes the detailed project scope, grant amount, and contractor information.

4. Construction

- Work with your contractor(s) to begin and complete your project as soon as possible but no later than 3 months after contract is signed. If needed, program staff can help you find qualified contractors.
- Program staff make regular site visits to monitor progress and ensure compliance with the agreed-upon design and scope of work. **Projects that do not comply with the agreed-upon scope of work will not be reimbursed.**

5. Grant Award

- Program staff complete a site visit to document the completion of your project, conduct a survey, and collect receipts showing your contractors have been paid in full.
- Program staff process your reimbursement payment in 1-3 weeks.

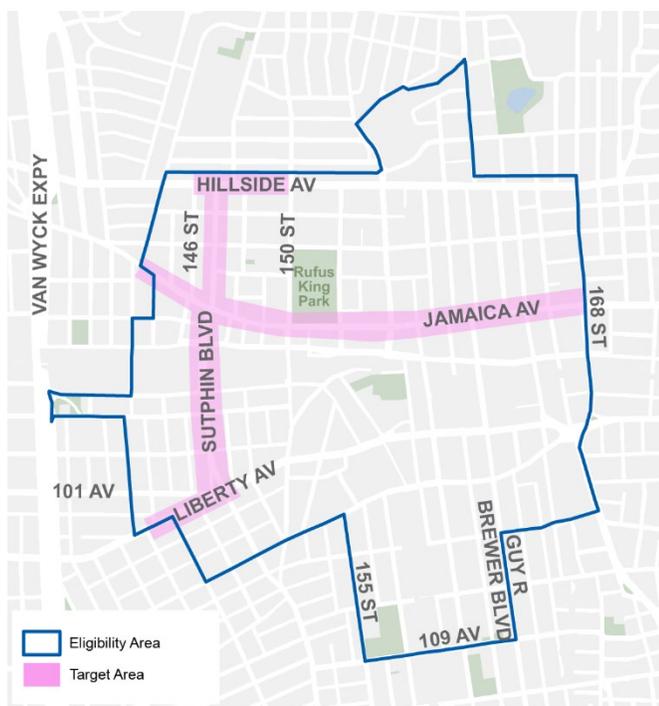
► ELIGIBILITY

The program is open to small businesses and owners of mixed-use and commercial buildings located in Downtown Jamaica. Churches, schools, colleges, universities, government buildings, and non-profit offices are not eligible.

Applicants must:

- Own a small business or property with ground floor commercial space in Downtown Jamaica. (Business owner applicants must have at least 3 years remaining on their commercial lease and employ fewer than 100 people.)
- Secure funding to pay for the total project cost up front, prior to reimbursement.
- Complete and submit the application form with required attachments.
- Demonstrate commitment to program design guidelines.

Eligibility Area



Eligible Improvements

- ✓ Façade restoration and cornice repair
- ✓ Masonry work and brick pointing
- ✓ New signage and awning
- ✓ Installation of open-grill security gates
- ✓ Storefront framing & glass replacement
- ✓ Exterior lighting installation
- ✓ Exterior painting
- ✓ Door repair/replacement
- ✓ Other approved exterior improvements

Ineligible improvements: building demolition, solid-panel security gates, non-permanent fixtures, interior window coverings, vinyl materials, signs that cover architectural details, personal property and equipment, security bars, sidewalks and paving, improvements that do not comply with program design guidelines.

** Applicants located in the target area will have higher priority over other applications however, we encourage any property in the eligibility area to apply*

► DESIGN GUIDELINES

The guiding principle of good storefront design is to keep it simple. Projects funded by the program must follow best practices as described in the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council Design Guidelines and SBS's [Storefront Improvements: A Guide for Neighborhood Commercial Districts](#).

In addition to grants to cover construction costs, large-scale projects that include significant improvements may be eligible for free design assistance from the program architect who can provide professional sketches. Applicants interested in receiving free design assistance can check the appropriate box in the program application. Program staff will determine which projects are eligible to receive these services.

► SELECTION CRITERIA

Impact

Clusters of 3-5 adjacent businesses, buildings with street frontages greater than 20 feet, and/or corner properties will be considered priority projects. This clustering effect has the biggest visual impact.

Capacity

Applicants must be able to pay for the total project cost up front as well as adhere to project deadlines and requirements.

Need

Priority will be given to storefronts in disrepair or in poor to moderate condition.

Project Vision

Commitment to improvements that respect the history and character of the neighborhood and follow the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council Design Guidelines.

► GRANT REIMBURSEMENT

The program provides reimbursement grants and payment will be made upon satisfactory completion of projects. Grantees will be reimbursed up to 75% of the total cost of improvements with a maximum grant of \$20,000 per building. Buildings with street frontages greater than 20 feet and corner properties may be eligible for larger grants. Consider early on how much money you are prepared to invest in your project to meet the 25% owner match requirement.

The following sample projects detail how the matching grant works:

Tier 1 Project

Minor improvements, i.e., new business signage and lighting, and open-grill security gate.

Total Project Cost
\$12,000

75% Grant
\$9,000

25% Owner Match
\$3,000

Tier 2 Project

Larger improvements i.e., Tier 1 + power washing, painting, and façade repair.

Total Project Cost
\$25,000

75% Grant
\$18,750

25% Owner Match
\$6,250

Tier 3 Project

Significant improvements i.e., Tiers 1 and 2 + storefront framing and window replacement, accessibility upgrades, etc.

Total Project Cost
\$60,000

Maximum Grant
\$20,000

Owner Match
\$40,000

* Costs are estimated and can vary widely.

► PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- This is a grant program, not a loan. You will not need to repay the money.
- You must pay the entire cost of the improvements upfront. **You will be reimbursed after your project is completed and SBS program staff completes a closeout site visit. You must provide receipts showing contractors have been paid in full. Cash payments will not be reimbursed.** Business owner applicants are required to have their landlord sign the property owner statement of support in the application form.
- You cannot start construction before the grant agreement is executed. All work plans must be pre-approved and the scope of work will be written into a project contract that you will sign before work begins. **Any projects that do not follow the grant agreement will not be reimbursed.**
- You are responsible for securing licensed and insured contractors who obtain all necessary approvals and permits and abide by all City regulations.
- **You must complete projects that adhere to the program design guidelines. Program staff must approve the final design and any changes to the scope of work.** All projects must receive at least two bids/estimates and all selected contractors must be licensed and fully insured.
- Grantees must agree to release any photos taken throughout the course of the project and complete the grantee survey upon project completion.