DOWNTOWN SIGN AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. PURPOSE

The Program is intended to encourage private investment in Downtown Dwight; preserve and enhance the traditional commercial storefront; improve deteriorated or underutilized publicly visible building elevations; support downtown businesses; and create a coordinated, pedestrian-oriented downtown appearance.

2. ELIGIBLE AREA

The Downtown Sign Grant and Downtown Façade Improvement Grant are available only to eligible commercial properties and businesses located within the Village of Dwight Downtown/IL 47 TIF District Redevelopment Project Area and the DT-1 Downtown Retail Business District. Properties located outside the TIF District and DT-1 Downtown Retail Business District are not eligible for funding under this Program. A "Property" is defined herein as a parcel upon which an existing commercial building or a portion of an existing commercial building is located on a lot having a unique Property Identification Number (PIN) as assigned by the Office of the Livingston County Supervisor of Assessments. Projects supported with Program grant funds must comply with the TIF Act, the Village's Design Review Guidelines, and applicable building codes. Applicant may consult with Village Staff regarding specific requirements and permits.

Pursuant to the TIF Act, no Program Grant Funds shall be used to demolish, remove, or substantially modify a historic resource. Exceptions may be made for a place or structure for which the Village determines no prudent and feasible alternative exists, or the demolition, removal, or modification is subject to review by the preservation agency of a Certified Local Government designated as such by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A "historic resource" for the purpose of this paragraph means (i) a place or structure that is included or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places or (ii) a contributing structure in a district on the National Register of Historic Places.

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Property owners may apply for and receive Program grants for the same property only once during fiscal year 2027. An applicant may be the property owner or an independently operated business tenant occupying an eligible commercial space. A tenant must provide written authorization from the property owner. An independently operated business occupying a distinct leased or owned commercial space within a multi-tenant building may qualify separately from other tenants in the building.

4. GOOD-STANDING REQUIREMENTS

At the time of application, approval, and reimbursement/payment, the property and applicant must be in good standing with the Village. Unless otherwise approved by the Village Administrator for a project that will correct an existing condition, the following must be satisfied:

- Real estate/property taxes applicable to the property must be current.
- The applicant and property owner must not have delinquent debts, fees, utility charges, or other amounts owed to the Village.
- Required Village business or other licenses must be current.
- There must be no unresolved building, zoning, sign, or property maintenance violations, unless the approved project is intended to correct the applicable violation.
- All required permits and approvals must be obtained before work or sign installation begins.

5. APPROVAL BEFORE WORK

No grant-funded work may begin and no grant-funded sign may be ordered, fabricated, installed, or constructed before written Program approval, except where the Village has expressly authorized otherwise in writing. Costs incurred before approval are not eligible for reimbursement.

6. PRIMARY COMMERCIAL FRONTAGE

The Program is intended to preserve Main Street and other established primary commercial storefronts as the principal commercial frontage of Downtown Dwight. For a business having a traditional storefront and business address on Main Street or another established primary downtown commercial street, the primary grant-funded business identification sign shall be associated with that primary storefront and principal business address. A secondary Park Street sign shall not be funded in lieu of an otherwise appropriate primary storefront sign.

7. PARK STREET AND SECONDARY FRONTAGE

A business may qualify for a second grant-funded sign when the business occupies space having frontage or substantial public visibility on Park Street or another separate public street and the Village Administrator determines that the second sign provides meaningful business identification, pedestrian access, or wayfinding. A business shall not receive funding for more than two signs under the Program. The Village Administrator may approve an exception to the primary-frontage requirement when the physical configuration, historic character, or legally established use of the building makes a primary-frontage sign impractical or inappropriate.

8. MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS

Each independently operated business occupying a distinct commercial tenant space may separately qualify for Sign Grant assistance. Each business must have a separate business identity and occupy a distinct commercial space. Businesses operating under the same ownership, lease, or business entity within the same commercial space shall not be considered separate businesses solely for purposes of obtaining multiple grants. A tenant must have property-owner authorization.

9. COORDINATION OF MULTI-TENANT SIGNS

Grant-funded signs on a multi-tenant building shall be appropriately scaled and located in relation to the applicable tenant’s storefront or public entrance. The Village Administrator may require consistent or complementary mounting height, general dimensions, placement, bracket style, or other design elements necessary to maintain a cohesive appearance and prevent excessive visual clutter. Individual businesses may retain their own name, logo, colors, and branding.

10. OTHER FUNDING

Applicants may use other lawful grant or financial assistance programs for the same overall building project, including programs administered by other organizations, provided that the same cost is not reimbursed twice. The applicant shall disclose other public financial assistance associated with the project.

11. DOWNTOWN SIGN GRANT

The Sign Grant is intended to assist eligible businesses with professionally manufactured, permanent business-identification signage that complies with Exhibit B and all applicable Village Code requirements.

- Eligible sign types funded by the Program: wall-mounted signs and projecting/hanging signs meeting Exhibit B.

- The Village Administrator shall review and approve eligible Sign Grant applications, subject to available Program funds. Upon completion of the approved work, the applicant shall submit the required invoices, receipts, proof of payment, photographs, and other required documentation to the Village. Village staff shall verify completion of the work and prepare the necessary TIF reimbursement documentation. The completed reimbursement documentation and payment request shall then be presented to the Village Board for approval. Upon Board approval, the Village shall issue reimbursement directly to the applicant. Grant funds shall not be paid directly to a contractor or vendor.
- The amount of assistance shall be up to **100%** of eligible established sign cost, not to exceed the lesser of the Village's established maximum allowable cost for the applicable sign type or the maximum Sign Grant amount established by the Village Board.
- Eligible sign costs may include professional design and setup, fabrication, graphics, mounting brackets and hardware, and professional installation. Electrical work, masonry repair, structural reinforcement, lift charges, or other unusual installation expenses shall be eligible only when specifically included in the approved application and grant award. Owner or applicant labor is not eligible.
- Final dollar caps are listed in Exhibit E. Type A – Wall-Mounted Business Sign, up to 32 square feet up to $750 and Type B Projecting/Hanging Business Sign, up to 6 square feet per face $1,250. Maximum Sign Grant assistance is $2,000 per business.
- One Sign Grant award may include up to two qualifying signs for the same business when the second-sign requirements are satisfied.
- A sign permit and any other required approvals remain separately required.
- The Village shall waive the Village sign permit fee for a sign approved and funded through the Downtown Sign Grant Program. All permit applications, inspections, and other applicable requirements remain in effect.
- All mounting brackets, mounting hardware, and related permanent mounting components purchased or reimbursed through the Sign Grant Program shall remain the property of the Village of Dwight. If a grant-funded business closes, relocates, or otherwise vacates the premises, the business-identification sign shall be removed, but the Village-owned mounting bracket and hardware shall remain in place for reuse by a future tenant unless the Village Administrator authorizes removal or replacement.
- Relocation Within the DT-1 District. When an eligible business relocates from one location to another within the DT-1 Downtown Retail Business District, mounting brackets or hardware necessary to install the business's approved sign at the new location may be considered an eligible reimbursable expense, subject to prior approval by the Village Administrator. Eligibility shall be limited to mounting components reasonably necessary because of the configuration or condition of the new location. Any Village-owned mounting brackets or hardware installed at the business's former location shall remain in place for use by a future tenant unless removal is authorized by the Village Administrator. Any new grant-funded mounting brackets or hardware installed at the new location shall become and remain the property of the Village.

12. DOWNTOWN FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

The Façade Grant is intended to encourage substantial, visible exterior improvements to eligible downtown commercial buildings.

- Funding level: reimbursement of **50%** of eligible project costs, up to **$5,000** per property per fiscal year, subject to available Program funding.
- Eligible elevations include the traditional primary storefront and qualifying side or rear elevations that are substantially visible from a public street, sidewalk, public parking area, public gathering space, or designated pedestrian corridor, including eligible Park Street-facing elevations.

- Improvement of a Park Street-facing elevation shall complement, rather than replace or diminish, the traditional primary commercial storefront where one exists.
- A property may receive both a Sign Grant and a Façade Grant in the same fiscal year if otherwise eligible.

12A. FAÇADE GRANT APPLICATION AND AWARD PERIODS

- Façade Grant applications shall be due April 1 and September 1 for consideration during the current Village fiscal year. If a due date falls on a day Village Hall is closed, applications shall be due on the next business day.
- The Village shall act on complete applications within 60 days after the applicable submission deadline.
- Funding is limited and awards are subject to available Program funds. Submission of a complete application does not guarantee an award.

13. ELIGIBLE FAÇADE COSTS

- Exterior painting and necessary surface preparation.
- Masonry cleaning, repair, repointing/tuckpointing, and restoration.
- Storefront rehabilitation and restoration.
- Exterior windows and doors.
- Awnings and canopies.
- Architectural trim, cornices, and other character-defining exterior details.
- Exterior lighting associated with the façade improvement.
- Removal or replacement of deteriorated or inappropriate exterior materials when part of an approved façade project.
- Restoration of historic exterior features.
- Accessibility improvements directly associated with an eligible storefront or entrance.
- Minor exterior repairs necessary to complete an approved façade improvement.
- Other visible exterior improvements specifically approved by the Village.

14. INELIGIBLE FAÇADE COSTS

- Interior remodeling, furnishings, fixtures, or equipment.
- HVAC, plumbing, or electrical work not directly associated with an approved exterior improvement.
- Routine roof replacement or structural/foundation work not directly necessary for an approved façade improvement.
- Parking lot resurfacing, ordinary site maintenance, or landscaping unless specifically made eligible under a separate Village program.
- Personal property or business inventory.
- Owner/applicant sweat equity or unpaid labor.
- Work completed or contracted before Program approval.
- Costs reimbursed by another public funding source.
- Any work that does not comply with applicable Village requirements.

15. FAÇADE REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The Village Clerk and/or Village Administrator shall review applications for completeness, eligibility, code status, and available funding. A complete application must include before photographs of the proposed project area, a detailed written description of the proposed project, and an itemized list of the work to be completed and materials to be used. Three competitive bids are not required under this Program. The Village may request

clarification or additional cost documentation when reasonably necessary to evaluate an application. Eligible applications shall be forwarded to the appropriate Village committee for review and recommendation, followed by Village Board approval of the grant award. Awards shall be acted upon within 60 days after the applicable April 1 or September 1 submission deadline. If eligible requests exceed available funding, the Village may prioritize projects based on visible deterioration, restoration of traditional or historic building features, improvement of Park Street-facing elevations, return of vacant space to productive use, amount of private investment leveraged, and overall public visibility and impact.

16. COMPLETION AND REIMBURSEMENT

- All approved façade projects shall be completed within 180 days after the date of award, but in no event later than March 15 of the applicable Village fiscal year, unless an extension is approved in writing by the Village before the deadline.
- Reimbursement will occur only after completion of the approved work and any required inspection. The applicant must submit final photographs of the completed project, itemized final bills/invoices, detailed receipts, proof of payment such as cancelled checks or other documentation acceptable to the Village, and any other documentation reasonably necessary to verify eligible costs. Village staff shall verify completion of the work and prepare the necessary TIF reimbursement documentation. The completed reimbursement documentation and payment request shall be presented to the Village Board for approval. Upon Board approval, the Village shall issue reimbursement directly to the applicant. Grant funds shall not be paid directly to a contractor or vendor.
- Reimbursement shall not exceed actual eligible costs or the approved grant amount.
- The Village may inspect the completed project before payment.
- Any material change in scope, design, contractor, sign type, or cost must be approved before the changed work is undertaken.

17. PROGRAM DISCRETION

Funding is subject to annual appropriation and availability. The Village may amend, suspend, or discontinue the Program; establish application periods; limit awards; or adopt additional administrative procedures consistent with the Program.

18. GRANT AWARD RECORDS

The Village Clerk shall maintain a listing of all grants awarded under the Program. The listing shall include, at a minimum, the applicant or business name, property address, type of grant, amount awarded, date of approval, and date and amount of reimbursement or payment. The listing shall be maintained as part of the Village’s Program records.

DOWNTOWN SIGN GRANT STANDARDS

These standards determine what signage the Village will fund through the Downtown Sign Grant. They do not expand signage otherwise permitted by the Village Code. Where these standards are more restrictive than the Village Code, the more restrictive grant standard controls eligibility for grant funding.

A. GENERAL DESIGN

- Signs shall be permanent, professionally manufactured, pedestrian-oriented in size, scale, and placement, and complementary to the historic character of Downtown Dwight.
- Signs may use the individual business's logo, lettering, shape, colors, and branding.
- Signs shall use durable exterior-grade materials and professional mounting systems.
- Temporary banners, corrugated plastic signs, improvised signs, and similar temporary materials are not eligible.
- Internally illuminated LED or neon signs are not eligible for grant funding. Any grant-funded external sign lighting shall be simple and unobtrusive.
- Signage shall pertain to a use conducted within the building and comply with all applicable Village Code requirements.

B. TYPE A – WALL-MOUNTED BUSINESS SIGN

- Mounted flat or substantially parallel to the exterior building wall.
- Appropriately centered or otherwise related to the individual business storefront or entrance.
- Maximum grant-funded sign area: 32 square feet, or the maximum otherwise permitted by Village Code, whichever is less.
- For multi-tenant buildings, the sign shall be scaled to the individual tenant storefront rather than the overall building frontage.
- Final eligible-cost tiers will be established after standardized vendor pricing is received.

C. TYPE B – PROJECTING/HANGING BUSINESS SIGN

- Mounted perpendicular or substantially perpendicular to the building using a permanent bracket or mounting system.
- Maximum grant-funded sign area: 6 square feet per sign face, subject to all applicable Village Code requirements.
- Round, oval, square, rectangular, or custom-shaped signs may qualify if the sign area remains within the maximum.
- Double-sided graphics may be used where appropriate.
- Bracket, hardware, fabrication, graphics, and installation should be included in the established eligible cost.
- Within DT-1, projecting signs remain subject to the amended downtown spacing and safety requirements in Chapter 310.

D. MULTI-TENANT SIGNAGE

Where two or more eligible businesses occupy the same building, grant-funded signage shall be coordinated so that multiple signs read as part of the same building rather than as unrelated visual elements. The Village Administrator may require adjustment of mounting height, size, placement, bracket style, or spacing to prevent excessive visual clutter. The businesses are not required to use identical logos, colors, fonts, or sign shapes.

E. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SIGNS

The primary grant-funded sign shall identify the business from its primary commercial storefront/address. A second sign may be funded for Park Street or another qualifying secondary public frontage when the requirements in Exhibit A are met. A Park Street sign is intended to supplement, not replace, an appropriate Main Street primary sign.

F. REQUIRED APPROVALS

Grant approval does not replace a sign permit, Certificate of Appropriateness when required, building/electrical approval, or any other permit or approval required by the Village Code.

The Village sign permit fee shall be waived for a sign approved and funded through the Downtown Sign Grant Program; however, the permit application, review, inspection, and all other applicable Code requirements remain required.

Village Ownership of Mounting Components. All grant-funded mounting brackets, mounting hardware, and related permanent mounting components are and shall remain the property of the Village of Dwight. When a grant-funded business closes, relocates, or vacates the premises, the business-identification sign shall be removed, but the Village-owned bracket and mounting hardware shall remain installed for use by a future tenant unless the Village Administrator authorizes otherwise.

Relocation Within the DT-1 District. When an eligible business relocates from one location to another within the DT-1 Downtown Retail Business District, mounting brackets or hardware necessary to install the business's approved sign at the new location may be considered an eligible reimbursable expense, subject to prior approval by the Village Administrator. Eligibility shall be limited to mounting components reasonably necessary because of the configuration or condition of the new location. Any Village-owned mounting brackets or hardware installed at the business's former location shall remain in place for use by a future tenant unless removal is authorized by the Village Administrator. Any new grant-funded mounting brackets or hardware installed at the new location shall become and remain the property of the Village.

SIGN GRANT MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE COSTS

The following maximum eligible costs are established for the Downtown Sign Grant Program. Grant assistance may be provided for up to 100% of actual eligible costs but shall not exceed the applicable maximum listed below.

Sign Type	Maximum Grant Amount
Type A – Wall-Mounted Business Sign, up to 32 square feet	$750
Type B – Projecting/Hanging Business Sign, up to 6 square feet per face	$1,250
Maximum Sign Grant assistance per business	$2,000

Eligible Costs. The maximum amounts above may include professional design and setup, fabrication, business graphics, standard mounting brackets and hardware, and professional installation, consistent with the Program Rules and Downtown Sign Grant Standards.

Actual Cost Controls. Grant assistance shall not exceed the applicant's actual eligible cost. Any cost exceeding the applicable maximum shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

Two-Sign Awards. When a business qualifies for a second grant-funded sign under the Program, the combined Village assistance for both signs shall not exceed $2,000.

Unusual Installation Costs. Electrical work, masonry repair, structural reinforcement, lift charges, or other unusual installation expenses are not included above unless specifically approved as an eligible expense by the Village Administrator as part of the grant award.

Future Adjustment. The Village Board may revise these maximum eligible costs from time to time based upon current sign pricing, available Program funding, or other relevant factors without otherwise amending the Program Rules and Regulations.