

## Portland Main Street/ DDA Sign Incentive Program

The Portland Main Street Program and the City of Portland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) have developed a Sign Incentive Program to improve the quality and appearance of signs throughout the Portland Main Street district and to promote the use of the Design Guidelines for downtown.

### **Objectives:**

This program seeks to bridge the gap in cost between unattractive signage and highly functional, attractive signs that complement downtown Portland's historic buildings and create a more attractive Main Street District. The intent of the program is to support creative, three-dimensional, symbolic, projecting signs. Replacement signs of similar construction and quality, or duplications of existing signs with minimal changes, may not qualify for the incentive.

The Sign Incentive Program will provide a matching grant of 50% of the total cost of an approved sign, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per applicant. Sign incentive awards must be approved by the Design Committee of the Portland Main Street program and the DDA **prior to** sign purchase or installation. The Design Committee and the DDA may reject any or all applications and reserve the right to award incentives for signs which are deemed to be in the best interests of the Main Street program and DDA.

Any business located within the Portland Main Street district may apply for this incentive. Any business that receives a sign grant from the Portland Main Street program/ Portland DDA are not eligible, and may not apply, for another sign grant for a period of five (5) years.

Sign incentives are granted at the discretion of the Design Committee, the Portland Main Street Board of Directors, and the Portland DDA. In order to receive a sign incentive grant, the applicant must submit a sign design that meets the DDA's Design Guidelines, the City's Sign Ordinance, as well as the program's objectives. The Design Committee and the City Manager will review all sign incentive grant applications.

Any property that has a non-conforming sign must bring that sign into conformance with the current sign ordinance before a sign incentive grant application will be considered, unless the application is for a sign which will replace the non conforming sign.

Because awnings were historically important design elements in traditional storefronts, awning signs will be considered for a sign incentive grant. To be considered for an award, awning signs must meet the Design Guidelines for downtown.

### **The Sign Incentive Grant Process:**

*The Sign Incentive Grant will be offered by the DDA based on availability of funding. Grant rounds will be advertised on the Portland Main Street website, [www.portlandmainstreet.org](http://www.portlandmainstreet.org), and in Portland Main Street's monthly newsletter.*

1. Applicants may pick up and review the following items available from the Portland DDA/ Main Street office located on the First Floor of City Hall or on the Portland Main Street website, [www.portlandmainstreet.org](http://www.portlandmainstreet.org):
  - a. Sign Incentive Grant Application
  - b. City of Portland Sign Ordinance
  - c. City of Portland Sign Permit Application
  - d. DDA Sign Design Guidelines

2. Applicants should submit both applications to the Portland DDA/ Main Street office located inside Portland City Hall prior to the announced closing date.
3. The Design Committee will review the sign application and proposed design. Applications will be reviewed on the appropriateness and compatibility of the sign design to the Design Guidelines, sign size, sign color, sign placement on the building/site, relationship to adjacent properties and program objectives as noted above.
4. If the sign design is deemed inappropriate or incompatible with the Design Guidelines, program objectives, or City of Portland Sign Ordinance, the Design Committee may provide a letter to the applicant suggesting changes to the design. If the applicant submits a new sign design based upon Design committee recommendations, the application may be reviewed a second time.
5. The Design Committee will recommend that the DDA approve applications that it deems most compatible with the Design Guidelines and objectives of this program.
6. The approved applicant(s) must obtain a Sign Permit from the City of Portland before sign installation. Permit fees are not eligible for reimbursement. Any deviations from an approved application must be approved by the Design Committee and the DDA prior to the purchase or installation of the sign. Installed signs that do not conform to the approved application may not be eligible for the sign incentive reimbursement.
7. An approved applicant must submit a copy of their paid invoice from their sign company indicating the total cost of the sign before an incentive check may be issued to reimburse them. It may take up to 30 days for the incentive check to be issued.

#### **Incentive Program Requirements:**

1. Applicants leasing their space must provide a letter providing permission from the building owner to apply for the incentive. The letter must indicate an awareness of the rules and requirements of the program.
2. Applicants receiving incentives must have a sign design that conforms to the DDA/ Main Street's Design Guidelines. A high value will be placed on creative signage, particularly three dimensional, symbolic, and/or projecting signs.
3. Signs incentives will not be given to internally (backlit) lit panel signs or standard corporate franchise signs.
4. **Sign Incentive Grant Applications must be completed entirely, prior to submittal, for consideration by the Design Committee. Incomplete applications will not be considered.**
5. Applications will be considered on a competitive basis from time-to-time during open grant rounds.
6. The Design Committee may deny a sign incentive to any applicant that does not make recommended changes to their sign design after a first review. Every effort will be made to work with applicants so that an incentive can be granted.
7. Non-conforming signs will be considered for a sign incentive, provided that the applicant agrees to bring the sign into compliance with the City's Sign Ordinance.
8. The Design Committee will examine total cost of any proposed sign to ensure that the sign incentive is being used appropriately.
9. All incentive checks will be written to and mailed to applicants. An invoice from the sign company is required to confirm the total cost of the sign.

# Portland Main Street/DDA Sign Incentive Program Application

Applicants Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Proposed Sign Installation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am the \_\_\_\_\_ building owner \_\_\_\_\_ business owner (*please check one*)

Contact Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Sign Company Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

## Sign Costs

Estimated Total Cost of Sign: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Materials \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Design \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Installation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Enclosure Check List

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign Incentive Program Application
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign Permit Application from City of Portland
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written permission from building owner (if applicant is leasing)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign design, drawn to scale, including dimensions and colors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Date Received:			
Date Reviewed:	Approved	Tabled	Denied
Letter Issued:	Yes	No	
Incentive was	Approved	Denied	
Incentive Amount:	\$ _____		