



## Historic Preservation Grant Program Guidelines

Last Revised: 3/24/2025

### I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the City of Aurora's Preservation Commission is the conservation and revitalization of the City's historic neighborhoods. Key to this effort is the preservation of the City's unique heritage as exemplified through historic and architecturally significant residential structures. The City of Aurora has set aside funding in order to help property owners achieve these objectives.

This is a reimbursement program. Payments will only be made upon completion and approval of the work. The minimum amount of each grant is \$5,000 and the maximum is \$30,000. All grants at or under \$15,000 requires no cash match. All grants over \$15,000 require a dollar for dollar match for every dollar over \$15,000. Grants will provide financial assistance towards paying a contractor OR for the reimbursement of building materials if the property owner performs the rehabilitation work themselves. Labor cannot be used as a match.

The amount awarded will be approved by the City Council with Staff recommendation based on multiple cost estimates submitted as part of the application process and the ranking of the projects by the Preservation Commission.

### II. ELIGIBILITY

#### A. Structure Eligibility:

The eligibility of a structure for the program will be determined by the Aurora Preservation Commission based upon the following:

- 1) Structures located within local historic districts or those designated as historic landmarks within the City of Aurora, or those listed on the National Register of Historic Places shall be eligible. Exceptions may also be made if the property is in the process of receiving one of these three designations; and
- 2) Properties listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or that contribute to a National Register Historic District must become a locally designated Landmark prior to the disbursement of any funds; and
- 3) The structure must be of local historic and architectural significance as determined by the Aurora Preservation Commission; and
- 4) The structure must consist of at least one (1) but not more than five (5) living units; and
- 5) The structure should comply with Section 49-105.8: Nonconformity of the Code of Ordinance (Structures not meeting these standards will be reviewed on an individual basis).

#### B. Recipient Eligibility:

##### 1) Ownership:

The recipient must meet one of the following criteria:

- a) The recipient must be the owner of the property as determined through a title search. Owners must be able to verify ownership before beginning application process. Applicants shall attach proof of ownership to application form (i.e. property warranty deed, most recent property tax form, land contract registered with the respective county); or
- b) The recipient must be the purchaser of the property under a land-sales contract, in effect at least one year. The following special conditions apply to Land Sales Contract Purchasers:
  - i. Purchasers must provide the City with a copy of a current signed contract; and
  - ii. Purchasers must accept financial responsibility for rehabilitation and property improvement work; and

- iii. Purchasers must provide written consent from the title holder for rehabilitation work; and
  - iv. Purchasers and titleholders must agree to record the land contract with the Kane County recorder; and
  - v. Purchaser must close on the property prior to the disbursement of any funds.
- 2) Special conditions of qualification for all recipients:
- a) Only exterior work adhering to the standards set forth in the City of Aurora Historic Districts & Landmarks Guidelines is eligible for funding.
  - b) All work should be non-maintenance related work that is of high quality that will last for a minimum of five years before any additional work would be needed.
  - c) The following activities will be ineligible for a Historic Preservation grant: driveway repavement, new asphalt roofs, fencing, landscaping, painting aluminum siding, non-original decks, k-style gutters, aluminum storm windows and doors, and additions.
  - d) Anyone currently in default with any funds owed to the City will not be eligible for assistance.
  - e) Any recipient that has had multiple current and/or past property standard violations may be ineligible for funding as determined by the City on a case-by-case basis.
  - f) Recipients must allow the City staff to determine appropriate treatments – i.e. determine original conditions, restoration vs. replacement, and monitor ongoing rehabilitation work for compliance with the Historic Districts & Landmarks Guidelines.
  - g) Recipients must agree to establish a work program with staff, including potential correction of all preservation code violations first before other work will be funded.
  - h) Recipients must select a contractor within a reasonable time after the financing has been approved.
  - i) For projects over \$15,000, recipients are free to choose any contractor; however, recipients will be eligible for up to a \$1,000 bonus to offset the required match above original grant amount if chosen contractor's office is based in Aurora.
  - j) Contracts are between the property owner and the contractor and the city is not responsible for enforcing the conditions of the contract.
  - k) All exterior work will require an approved Historic Certificate of Appropriateness (HCOA) and if necessary, approved building permit. HCOAs and building permits can be applied for at the Division of Building & Permits, 77 S. Broadway, in Downtown Aurora.
  - l) All work must be in accordance with the conditions of the approved HCOA, building permit (if required), and any special conditions outlined by the agreement. A final historic inspection and final building inspection (if required) must be passed.
- 3) Application  
In order to be eligible the owner must submit to the City a complete and executed application for the Historic Preservation Grant Program.

### **III. GRANT FINANCING & CONDITIONS**

#### **A. Grant Specifications:**

- 1) The minimum amount for each grant is \$5,000 and the maximum is \$30,000, exceptions to the minimum may be granted on a case-by-case basis
- 2) All grants at or under \$15,000 require no cash match. All grants over \$15,000 require a dollar for dollar match for every dollar over \$15,000.
- 3) Owner contribution must be cash.

#### **B. Application & Agreement Process:**

- 1) In order to establish an accurate grant amount to be awarded, two bids shall be provided at time of application per architectural feature to be rehabilitated unless due to the nature of the work, a waiver to allow one bid is granted by the Zoning Administrator.
- 2) Due to the limited amount of funding available, applications will be ranked by the Preservation Commission based upon project scope. Owner-occupied homes will be given higher consideration. Each application will be evaluated by the Commission for several criteria, including, but not limited to, condition of the property, significance of the resource, potential public benefit of the proposed project, impact to the streetscape, visibility of the project, preservation of original fabric, etc.

- 3) All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and recommendations on approval will be made by the Grant Committee and City staff with final recommendation by the Aurora Preservation Commission. Final approval will be made by City Council.
- 4) Grant recipients must attend a Planning Meeting with City staff prior to commencement of the rehabilitation project. Owner(s) must sign an agreement which will outline the project scope and any special conditions.
- 5) The agreement shall specify a hard deadline that the work must be completed.
- 6) Agreement condition will include contractor waiver, paid invoices and final inspection prior to reimbursement.
- 7) Non-owner-occupied residents must show that the contractor used prevailing wage for the portion of the project funded with the Historic Preservation Grant Program.
- 8) The grant is taxable. The owner will be issued a 1099 form for the amount of the grant.
- 9) All work must be completed in accordance with state, federal and local regulations.

**C. Revocation**

The City reserves the right to recall the grant if any of the eligibility requirements are violated. Revocation of the grant will also result in the owner being disqualified from obtaining any other future funding from the City of Aurora.