



**Frequently Asked Questions &  
Application  
for the Sign, Lighting & Awning  
Program (SLAP)**

**Updated April 2014**

# **WAUKEGAN MAIN STREET USAGE GUIDELINES**

## **Sign Lighting and Awning Program**

### **What is the Waukegan Main Street Sign, Lighting and Awning Program?**

The program offers up to \$10,000 in matching funds to businesses and building owners in the Waukegan Main Street Program area in order to improve the appearance of individual buildings, as well as the overall look of Waukegan's downtown. Improvements must occur to areas visible from the public way. The goal of this program is to leverage private improvements while making revitalization efforts affordable, creative and community-based. A primary focus of this program is economic development and revitalization through financing improvements for small business. Waukegan Main Street and the WMS design committee administer the Sign, Lighting and Awning Program (SLAP).

### **Who can apply for funding?**

Any building owner or store proprietor/tenant with lease authority or authorization from the owner can apply for funding. Businesses must have gross annual revenue of \$1 million or less. **The applicant must be a member of Waukegan Main Street.** Applicants who are not currently members may join at the time of application submission. All grants are subject to available funding. The project site must be located in the Waukegan Main Street downtown district. (See map of the Waukegan Main Street project boundaries.) Tenants must have a minimum of two years remaining on their lease or an option to renew.

### **What types of improvements are eligible for funding?**

Signs (new, repairs, replacements, removal)

Exterior lighting (new, repairs, replacements)

Awnings (new, repairs, replacements)

Façade Repair

- Painting
- Replacement of entry doors, windows, storefront
- Cornice, woodwork, and trims
- Masonry Repair and new construction
- Concrete Repair
- Decorative Wrought Iron

Landscaping

### **Are there any design guidelines?**

Projects must meet the approval of the Design Committee of Waukegan Main Street. Waukegan Main Street can be consulted for design guidelines. Applicants are responsible for conforming to all relevant codes and ordinances.

### **How are the projects selected for funding?**

Applications will be selected based on their compatibility with the vision and goals of the Waukegan Main Street and their impact on the district. Projects that are selected are

expected to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment, maintain the eclectic character of downtown Waukegan, respect the scale of Waukegan's downtown, and to maintain the urban nature of the community. Preference will be given to projects that help to remedy inappropriate or incompatible design elements on the building façade.

### **How is the money awarded?**

This is a matching grant program, which means that the applicant pays a portion of the improvement and Waukegan Main Street pays a portion. The amount of the match must be at least 1:1-that is, the applicant pays \$1 and Waukegan Main Street pays \$1. However, there is a maximum grant contribution by Waukegan Main Street of \$10,000 per project. Work completed prior to the letter of commitment is not eligible for funding.

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and cannot be issued until the proposed project has been completed. Before reimbursement is made, applicants will need to submit proof of payment for completed work. In addition, before payment will be issued, Waukegan Main Street Design Committee must review the completed project to determine that the actual work performed was the work approved.

### **How does the application process work?**

Applicants should first meet with Waukegan Main Street staff and complete a preliminary application. This informal meeting will give the applicant the ability to describe, more fully, the proposed improvement. Submission of preliminary application with attachment of any information that will be helpful in the review process is recommended. Two color photos of the current building façade are required. Depending on the extent, priority and visibility of the work involved, Waukegan Main Street Design Committee may help locate design assistance for applicants in order to facilitate the development of a proposal.

When the Design Committee has reviewed the preliminary application, a determination will be made. If the preliminary application is accepted, qualified applicants will be asked to complete a full application, which includes architectural drawings (as applicable), sketches or renderings, color and material samples and two cost estimates. If the preliminary application is denied, the applicant will receive a letter explaining the reasons for its denial.

If the Design Committee approves the full application, the applicant will receive a letter of commitment from Waukegan Main Street for the specified amount with information on any other requirements. The applicant can then proceed with necessary permitting and city review processes. Funds will be released to the applicant upon completion of project, inspection of project, and documentation of matching funds.

If the Design Committee denies the full application, the applicant will receive a letter explaining the reasons for its denial. An application may be denied for many reasons ranging from incompatibility with the WMS Design Guidelines to lack of funding. ***Due to the limited funding available for this program, many good proposals may not be funded.***

The entire application process takes approximately 8 weeks; the Design Committee works with applicants to minimize the turn-around time.

**What happens after a project is selected for funding?**

Work selected for a matching grant must be completed and invoiced within six (6) months of approval of the application.

- ❖ The applicant is responsible for obtaining all building permits and any other required permits for the work to be done.
- ❖ The applicant is responsible for conformance with all applicable safety standards and codes.
- ❖ The applicant also agrees to maintain the property and improvement in keeping with the original design and appearance for a minimum of two years following the completion of construction/installation.

Waukegan Main Street may promote an approved project including, but not limited to, displaying a Waukegan Main Street sign at the site, during and after construction, and using photographs and descriptions of the project in Waukegan Main Street materials.

Note: Waukegan Main Street reserves the right to make changes in the conditions of the Sign, Lighting and awning Program as warranted. The approval of any applicant is at the sole discretion of Waukegan Main Street and all decisions are final.

## **WAUKEGAN MAIN STREET**

### **Steps to SLAP**

The review process is expected to take 8 weeks.

1. Meet with Waukegan Main Street staff and complete a preliminary application;
2. Preliminary application is reviewed by Design Committee;
3. Preliminary application is accepted or denied. If accepted, applicant completes a full application;
4. Full application is reviewed by Design Committee;
5. Full application is accepted or denied. If accepted, a letter of commitment with the specified award amount will be sent to applicant;
6. Applicant is responsible for any permits and city review processes necessary for work to be completed;
7. Work completed must follow what was proposed in full application;
8. All work must be completed and invoiced within 6 months of the commitment letter.
9. Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis to the party making the application and cannot be issued until the proposed project has been completed and a paid invoice to the contractor is submitted to the Design Committee.

***Remember, two copies of two recent color photographs of the building are required for the preliminary application.***

To set up an appointment or have questions answered; please call Waukegan Main Street at 847/623-6650. The office is located at 214 W. Washington Street, Second Floor, Waukegan, IL 60085.