



CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM 2026–2027 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM PURPOSE

Cane River National Heritage Area (CRNHA) is pleased to offer a competitive Façade Improvement Grant Program to support the preservation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of historic buildings located within the congressionally designated boundaries of Cane River National Heritage Area.

The program is intended to encourage the preservation of historic architectural character, support appropriate rehabilitation and maintenance of historic properties, and enhance the appearance and long-term preservation of historic buildings throughout Natchitoches Parish.

Funding is limited, and applications will be reviewed competitively. Submission of a Letter of Intent or application does not guarantee funding.

IMPORTANT DATES

Letter of Intent / Pre-Application Period: October 12 – November 9, 2026

Full Application Deadline: January 11, 2027 at 5:00PM

Grant Awards Announced: February 1, 2027

Project Completion & Closeout Deadline: October 4, 2027

Projects are considered complete only when all approved work has been completed and CRNHA has received and accepted the required final report, photographs, financial documentation, and other required closeout materials.

CRNHA may consider extensions only under exceptional circumstances, and applicants must request and obtain written approval before the project deadline.

GRANT AMOUNT

Applicants may request up to **\$5,000** from CRNHA.

CRNHA reserves the right to fund an application in whole or in part based upon the proposed project, available funding, eligible expenses, and the competitive review process.

Grant awards will not automatically increase if actual project costs exceed the amount presented in the approved application.

REQUIRED MATCH

All grants require a minimum **1:1 match**.

For every \$1 awarded by CRNHA, the applicant must provide at least \$1 in eligible matching contributions.

For example, an applicant requesting the maximum \$5,000 grant must document an eligible project budget of at least \$10,000, consisting of the \$5,000 CRNHA grant and at least \$5,000 in eligible matching contributions.

Eligible match may include:

- Cash contributions from the applicant;
- Eligible project expenses paid by the applicant;
- Non-federal grants or other eligible third-party funding;
- Donated eligible materials or professional services; and
- Documented volunteer labor directly related to the approved project.

VOLUNTEER LABOR AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteer labor may be used toward the required match when the work is directly related to the approved project and is properly documented.

Volunteer labor must be documented through records identifying the individual performing the work, the dates and number of hours worked, the nature of the work performed, and the value assigned to the donated labor.

The value assigned to volunteer labor must be reasonable and consistent with applicable federal requirements. Specialized or professional services may be valued at an appropriate rate when the individual performing the work is qualified to provide those services and adequate documentation is provided.

Donated materials or services used as match must likewise be directly related to the approved project and supported by documentation sufficient to establish their fair and reasonable value.

CRNHA reserves the right to determine the allowable value of volunteer labor, donated services, materials, and other in-kind contributions and may require additional documentation before accepting an in-kind contribution as match.

Volunteer labor and other in-kind contributions may be used only as match and will not be reimbursed with grant funds.

FEDERAL FUNDS

Federal funds may not be used to satisfy the required match for this program. Likewise, funds awarded through this program may not be used to satisfy the match requirement of another federal grant.

Applicants seeking funding from other grant programs or sources for the same project must identify those funding sources in the application, regardless of whether the funding is federal, state, local, private, or philanthropic.

Applicants are responsible for documenting the source and value of all matching contributions. Only match associated with eligible, approved project activities and incurred or contributed during the authorized project period will be counted toward the required match.

ELIGIBILITY

GEOGRAPHIC ELIGIBILITY

Eligible properties must be located within the congressionally designated boundaries of Cane River National Heritage Area, encompassing Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

Location within Natchitoches Parish alone does not make a property eligible for funding. The property must also meet the historic and property-use requirements of this program.

HISTORIC PROPERTY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify, a building must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- Be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
- Be determined eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places; or
- Be located within a National Register Historic District or Heritage Area Boundary and identified as a **contributing resource** to that district.

Properties classified as noncontributing to a historic district are not eligible solely because they are located within the boundaries of the district.

Modern buildings, temporary structures, manufactured or mobile structures, and properties that otherwise fail to meet the historic eligibility requirements of the program are not eligible.

Applicants may be required to provide documentation establishing the property's historic status. CRNHA staff may assist applicants in determining whether a property meets the program's historic eligibility requirements.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTY TYPES

In addition to meeting the historic-property requirements above, the property must fall within one of the following categories:

- Commercial property;
- Rental or other income-producing property;
- Mixed-use property;
- Other income-producing historic property;
- Vacant historic commercial or income-producing property when the applicant can demonstrate a reasonable intended commercial, rental, mixed-use, or other income-producing use;
- Property owned or operated by an eligible nonprofit organization or religious institution; or Government-owned property.

Examples of potentially eligible income-producing properties include retail storefronts, offices, restaurants, lodging properties, long-term rental properties, short-term rental properties, mixed-use buildings, and other properties operated for a commercial or income-producing purpose, provided all other program requirements are met.

PRIVATE RESIDENCES

Owner-occupied private residences are not eligible for funding through this grant program.

The fact that a residential building is historic, individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or located within a historic district does not make an owner-occupied private residence eligible for this funding cycle.

A residential building used as a bona fide rental or other income-producing property may be eligible, provided the property meets all other program requirements.

CRNHA may consider establishing a separate grant opportunity for owner-occupied historic residential properties in a future funding cycle.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY AND PROPERTY AUTHORIZATION

Applicants must own the eligible property or provide written authorization from the legal property owner to undertake the proposed improvements. Tenants or lessees may apply only with written authorization from the property owner and documentation demonstrating sufficient legal control of the property to complete the proposed project.

Applicants must be in good standing with CRNHA and must not have unresolved obligations associated with previous CRNHA grants or agreements.

An applicant may submit only one application per property during this grant cycle unless otherwise authorized by CRNHA.

An eligible applicant or property does not automatically make a proposed project eligible for funding. The proposed work must also meet the project eligibility requirements of this program.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

ELIGIBLE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

The Façade Improvement Grant Program is intended primarily to support the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic exterior building features.

For purposes of this program, façade improvements generally include work to the exterior of an eligible historic building that is visible from a public street, sidewalk, public right-of-way, or other publicly accessible area.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior painting and historically appropriate surface preparation;
- Repair and repointing of historic brick and masonry;
- Restoration or repair of historic windows, doors, shutters, transoms, and storefront elements;

- Repair or restoration of historic siding and exterior cladding;
- Repair or restoration of porches, galleries, columns, railings, cornices, trim, and decorative architectural features;
- Restoration of historically appropriate storefronts;
- Removal of inappropriate exterior alterations when undertaken as part of an approved historic rehabilitation project;
- Reconstruction of missing historic exterior features when adequate historical documentation exists;
- Historically appropriate awnings;
- Historically appropriate exterior lighting; and
- Other exterior preservation activities determined by CRNHA to be consistent with the purpose of the program.
- The repair and retention of existing historic materials is preferred over replacement whenever feasible.

Replacement of historic materials or features may be considered when deterioration makes repair impractical. Replacement features should match the historic feature in design, appearance, dimensions, configuration, and, when feasible, material.

Awnings, lighting, replacement materials, and other exterior features must be compatible with the building's historic character and are subject to CRNHA and applicable historic preservation review.

This list is illustrative and is not exhaustive. CRNHA reserves the right to determine whether a proposed activity or expense is eligible for funding.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

INELIGIBLE WORK AND EXPENSES

The Façade Improvement Grant Program is a historic preservation program and is not intended to serve as a general building maintenance, property improvement, or capital improvement program.

Ineligible activities and expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements to owner-occupied private residences;
- Roofing and roof replacement;
- Interior renovations or improvements;
- Landscaping, irrigation, trees, shrubs, and lawn improvements;
- Parking lots, driveways, paving, and general site improvements;
- Signage, including new or replacement signs;
- Accessibility improvements;
- HVAC systems;
- Plumbing systems;

- Electrical systems, except for eligible components directly necessary for approved historic exterior lighting;
- Appliances and appliance installation;
- General equipment purchases;
- New construction;
- Building additions;
- General property maintenance unrelated to an approved historic preservation project;
- Fences unless specifically determined to be an eligible historic architectural feature associated with the property;
- Replacement of repairable historic windows, doors, siding, masonry, or other character-defining materials with modern substitutes;
- Vinyl siding or other historically inappropriate replacement materials;
- Demolition, removal, or concealment of character-defining historic materials or architectural features unless specifically approved as part of the preservation project;
- Work that has already been completed;
- Work begun before written authorization from CRNHA;
- Materials purchased before the approved project period;
- Property acquisition;
- General operating expenses;
- Property taxes;
- Insurance;
- Financing costs, interest, penalties, or late fees;
- Personal labor performed by the property owner unless specifically authorized and documented in advance; and
- Work outside the approved project scope.

The inclusion or exclusion of a particular activity from these examples does not automatically establish eligibility.

CRNHA retains final authority to determine whether a proposed project, activity, material, or expense is eligible for funding under the Façade Improvement Grant Program.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW

SECTION 106 AND OTHER REQUIRED APPROVALS

Because CRNHA funding is federal in origin, all projects awarded funding through this program must complete the applicable Section 106 historic preservation review process before work begins.

CRNHA will assist grant recipients with the Section 106 review and coordination process with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Successful applicants should be prepared to provide photographs, descriptions of existing conditions, detailed scopes of work, material specifications, product information, drawings, contractor information, or other documentation necessary to complete the review.

Properties located within the jurisdiction of a local Historic District Commission (HDC) must also comply with applicable HDC requirements and receive any required Certificate of Appropriateness or other approval.

CRNHA will assist successful applicants in navigating applicable historic preservation review requirements; however, applicants are responsible for providing requested information and cooperating with the review process.

Grant approval by CRNHA and historic preservation approval are separate actions. Selection of a project for funding does not guarantee that every element of the proposed project will be approved through Section 106, SHPO, HDC, or another required review process.

Modifications to a proposed project may be required as a condition of historic preservation approval.

AUTHORIZATION TO BEGIN WORK

A GRANT AWARD DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AUTHORIZATION TO BEGIN WORK.

No grant-funded work or work being used to satisfy the required match may begin, and no project materials may be purchased, until all required reviews and approvals have been completed and CRNHA has provided written authorization to proceed.

Before work begins, successful applicants must:

- Execute the required grant agreement with CRNHA;
- Complete the required Section 106 review process;
- Complete required consultation with SHPO;
- Obtain applicable HDC approvals, including a Certificate of Appropriateness when required;
- Obtain any other applicable permits or regulatory approvals; and
- Receive written authorization to proceed from CRNHA.

Expenses incurred, materials purchased, or work undertaken before written authorization to proceed may be determined ineligible for reimbursement and may not be counted toward the required match.

Applicants should not assume that submission of a Letter of Intent, receipt of an application, submission of an application, or announcement of a grant award constitutes authorization to begin work.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

SCOPE OF WORK AND COST DOCUMENTATION

Applicants must submit a sufficiently detailed description of the proposed work to allow CRNHA to determine project eligibility, historic preservation appropriateness, and reasonableness of the proposed cost.

Applicants may be required to provide:

- Contractor estimates or bids;
- Detailed cost estimates;
- Current photographs of the building and proposed project area;
- Historic photographs or other documentation, when relevant;
- Material specifications;
- Product information;
- Drawings, plans, or renderings; and
- Other documentation requested by CRNHA.

CRNHA may request additional information before determining that an application is complete.

CHANGES TO AN APPROVED PROJECT

Projects must be completed substantially as approved.

Any significant change to the approved scope of work, design, materials, contractor, or project budget must receive written approval from CRNHA before the change is implemented.

Changes may also require additional review by SHPO, HDC, or other regulatory authorities.

Expenses associated with unauthorized changes may be deemed ineligible for reimbursement or match.

CRNHA is not responsible for project cost overruns.

GRANT PAYMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

REIMBURSEMENT

Unless otherwise provided in the grant agreement, awards will be administered on a reimbursement basis.

Grant recipients are responsible for paying eligible project expenses and submitting the required documentation to CRNHA for reimbursement.

Only eligible, documented expenses associated with the approved project scope and incurred during the approved project period will be reimbursed.

Required reimbursement and closeout documentation may include:

- Paid invoices;
- Receipts;
- Proof of payment;
- Contractor documentation;

- Documentation of matching expenditures;
- Before-and-after photographs;
- Copies of required permits and approvals;
- Documentation demonstrating completion of the approved scope of work; and
- A completed final project report.

CRNHA may inspect the completed project before issuing final reimbursement.

If the final eligible project cost is less than the amount included in the approved application, CRNHA may reduce its award as necessary to maintain the required matching ratio.

No applicant will receive reimbursement exceeding the amount stated in the executed grant agreement.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

COMPETITIVE REVIEW

Funding is limited, and eligible applications will be evaluated competitively.

CRNHA may consider factors including:

- Historic significance of the property;
- Preservation need;
- Threat or potential for continued deterioration;
- Appropriateness of the proposed treatment;
- Degree to which the project preserves original or historic materials;
- Visibility of the proposed improvement;
- Public and community benefit;
- Overall impact on the historic property, district, streetscape, or surrounding community;
- Project readiness;
- Reasonableness and completeness of the proposed budget;
- Ability of the applicant to provide the required match;
- Ability to complete the project within the established grant period;
- Completeness and quality of the application; and
- Availability of program funds.

CRNHA reserves the right to fund an application in whole or in part, establish conditions on an award, request modifications to a proposed project, or decline to fund an application.

LETTER OF INTENT AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Potential applicants must first submit a **Letter of Intent** to:

Logan Schlatre, Director of Programs

Cane River National Heritage Area

LSchlatre@CaneRiverNHA.org

The Letter of Intent will allow CRNHA staff to conduct an initial review of the property's eligibility and the general nature of the proposed project before providing the applicant with a full grant application.

Only applicants whose proposed property and project appear to meet the basic requirements of the program will be invited to submit a full application.

Receiving an application following review of a Letter of Intent **does not constitute approval of the project or a commitment of funding.**

Complete applications must be received by **Monday, January 11, 2027 at 5:00PM.**

Late or incomplete applications may not be considered.

Grant awards are anticipated to be announced on **Monday, February 1, 2027.**

AWARD CONDITIONS

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a written grant agreement with CRNHA before beginning the approved project.

Grant recipients must complete the project substantially as approved and comply with all conditions established in the grant agreement.

Failure to follow the approved scope of work, complete required preservation reviews, obtain required approvals, provide required documentation, maintain the required match, or complete the project within the established project period may result in reduction, cancellation, or termination of the grant award.

CRNHA reserves the right to inspect funded projects, request documentation, and verify that work has been completed in accordance with the approved project scope.

Grant funds are subject to availability and all applicable federal requirements.

CRNHA reserves the right to interpret these guidelines; determine applicant, property, project, and expense eligibility; request additional information or documentation; establish conditions of funding; and amend program requirements when necessary to comply with applicable laws, regulations, funding requirements, or historic preservation standards.

Questions regarding the Façade Improvement Grant Program should be directed to:

Logan Schlatre, Director of Programs

Cane River National Heritage Area

LSchlatre@CaneRiverNHA.org