



**City of Iron Mountain  
Downtown Development Authority**

**Building Improvement Grant Program - 2024**

## **Overview**

The architectural quality of the Iron Mountain downtown area is important to the entire city, its history, image, and economy. In an effort to maintain and enhance the integrity of Downtown Iron Mountain properties and businesses, and to promote further growth and development within the City's downtown commercial core, the City of Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has created the Building Improvement Grant Program (BIG). The purpose of the BIG is to provide financial incentives and assistance to property owners wishing to complete various construction activities, and to encourage the revitalization of historic properties within the DDA district.

The BIG is a matching grant program that provides financial support to property owners for projects that enhance the aesthetic appearance and functionality of downtown buildings. Some projects may involve historic preservation, and the program may provide additional funds for those projects. The parameters outlined in this document should be followed by property owners, architects, and contractors involved in exterior improvements or restorations to downtown buildings; and will be used by the DDA when considering which applicants merit receiving limited funds available through this grant program.

The Building Assistance Program replaces and combines two previous DDA grant programs: the Facade Restoration Grant and the Downtown Assistance Program (DAP) Grant. This was done to simplify the program descriptions, application processes, and evaluation criteria to apply to a range of possible building projects. As a result, the DDA aims to continue the historic preservation aspect of the previous Facade Grant program, where it applies, and also make understanding and applying for the grants easier for property owners.

Submission of an application does not automatically guarantee funding, as the DDA Board of Directors reserves the right to make all decisions regarding grant awards. This will usually involve some deliberation on the overall merit of projects being considered for funding, part of which will be discretionary in nature rather than based solely on purely objective scoring or other rigid criteria.

# **Grant Program Description**

## *Program Values*

**Project Need:** Priority will be given to improvement projects that eliminate blight, correct an undesirable or historically inaccurate appearance and have the greatest visual or physical impact on the surrounding environment.

**Significance:** Priority will be given to buildings with historical, community, or social significance.

**Visibility:** BIG is intended to promote positive, visual change and encourage improvements to properties or businesses that are in a prominent location.

**Historic Preservation and Appropriateness of Approach:** It is recommended that all projects involving facade designs for historic preservation comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which promotes historic preservation best practices and helps to protect our cultural resources.

**Implementation:** Work must be completed within 12 months of approval.

## *Source of Program Funding*

The City of Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority (DDA) sponsors this program. The source of funding for the program is a special tax assessment on properties located within the DDA District boundary (see Map 1) pursuant to Michigan Public Act 57 of 2018.

## *Program Parameters*

The BIG funds up to 50% of a proposed activity, or up to \$10,000 per project in cases involving historic preservation, whichever is less. The amount awarded depends on a scoring system which takes into consideration the type of improvements proposed and whether or not those improvements include historic preservation. The total allocation for this program is up to \$20,000 per year.

Applications must be made by the property owner; tenants are not eligible. A \$25 nonrefundable application fee must be included with the application packet. Only properties or businesses within the DDA District boundary are eligible (see Map 1).

Only licensed and insured professional service providers or contractors located within Dickinson County are to be used for eligible activities. Applicants must submit a minimum of 2 bids, within the same scope of work, for the cost of services.

Site or building improvements, modifications, signage, landscaping, etc. must comply with all local ordinances, codes, and standards.

## **Grant Program Description (cont'd.)**

BIG grants will be awarded for the same parcel or business no more than once every five-years. Property owners may apply for Building Improvement Grants for multiple properties at the same time, but only one grant can be awarded per property owner per year. New construction is not eligible.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of the DDA and must be approved by the DDA Board of Directors before work is started. Applications and supporting documents are due to Iron Mountain City Hall by March 29, 2024 at 4:00pm.

Applicants are required to present the proposed project to a committee on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 5:30pm to be held at Iron Mountain City Hall. Contractors, architects, or consultants are strongly encouraged to attend with the applicant.

All work must be completed before grant payment is made.

All property taxes for the properties involved must be current, and the subject property or business must be properly insured.

Annual program funding will be limited. The DDA Board of Directors will make all decisions regarding grant awards.

The City of Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority reserves the right to change, alter, enhance, amend, or suspend the BIG program and evaluation process at any time. Furthermore, design guidelines may also be changed, altered, amended, or enhanced by the DDA at any time.

Please be aware that enhancing your building may increase property value, which may ultimately have an impact on the amount of property taxes levied.

### *2024 Application & Award Dates*

Open for applications: Until March 29, 2024 at 4pm

Grant panel: April 24, 2024 5:30 pm

Grant applicants notified: May 15, 2024

Complete grant project: 12 Months from award Date

## **Grant Program Description (cont'd.)**

### *Eligible Uses of Program Funds*

- Architectural design & engineering
- Development & restoration feasibility studies
- Exterior building improvements  
(awnings, windows & doors, painting, landscaping, sidewalks & drives)
- Deferred maintenance projects  
(roofs, masonry repair, parking, etc.)
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance projects
- Environmental abatement & clean-up

### *For projects involving historic preservation:*

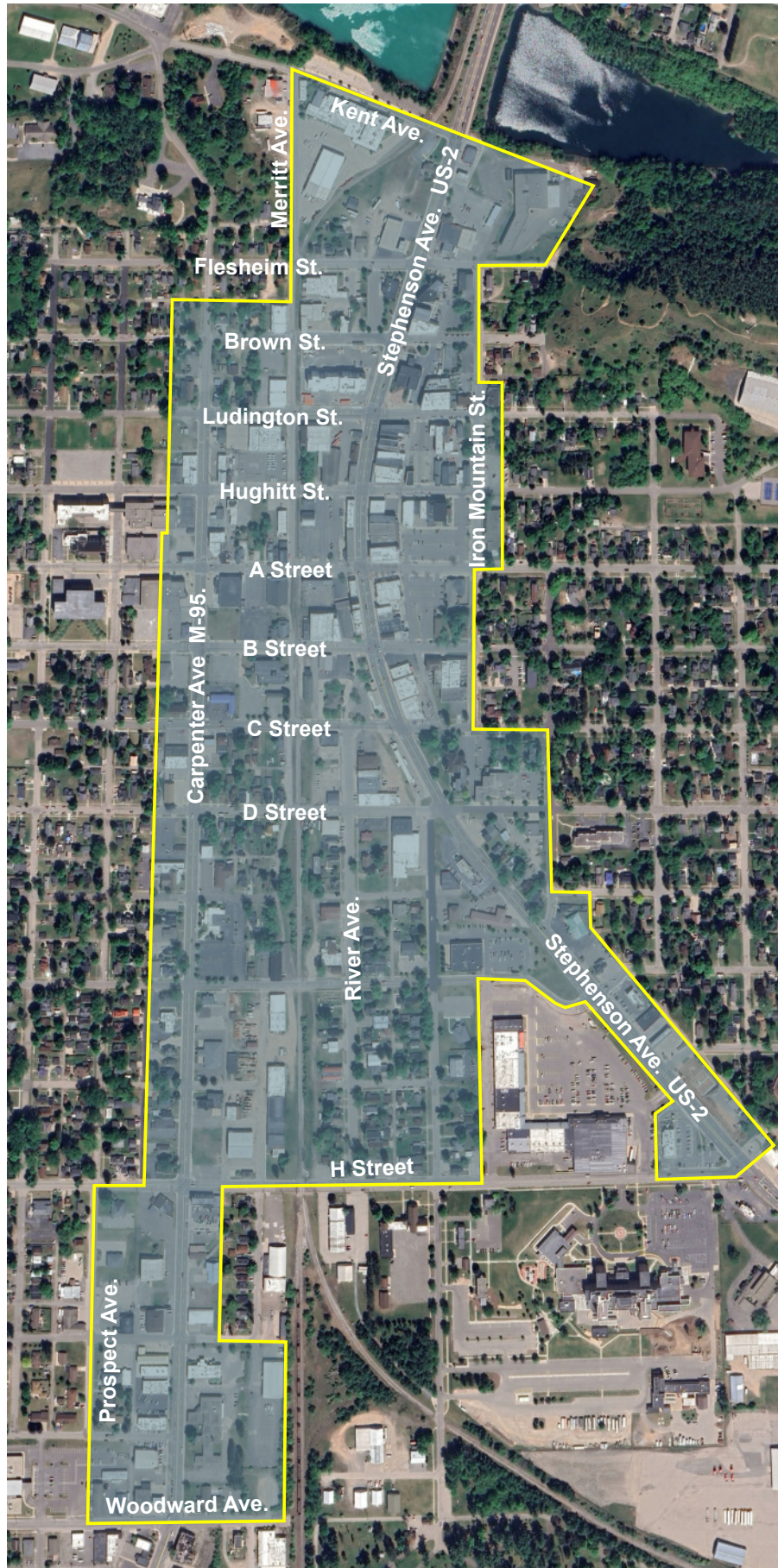
- Remove non-historic features and materials (vinyl/metal siding, roof forms, etc.)
- Add / repair / replace windows and/or doors
- Uncover or rehabilitate the original facade of an existing building.
- Restore / repair original brickwork, wood, masonry, stucco, etc.
- Replace, repair, reconstruct architectural details such as cornices or transoms.
- Add traditional-style awnings, lights, signs, etc.

### *Ineligible Uses of Program Funds*

- Building demolition
- Legal fees
- Permitting & application fees
- Use of historically inappropriate materials to cover an original facade (vinyl / metal siding, etc.)
- Non-permanent fixtures (tables, planters, etc.)
- Any element that is determined to be in conflict with City zoning and/or codes.
- Reduction / closure of an original storefront or upper window glazing (glass)
- Removal of entry from the public right of way
- Historically inaccurate paint colors for projects involving historic preservation
- Painting over raw stone or masonry

# Map 1

## Iron Mountain Downtown District (DDA) Boundary





## **Application Process, Work Progress, and Financial Requirements**

1. At least 1 (one) month before the application deadline, communicate with DDA staff to review your intentions for using program funds, and establish eligibility for additional grant funds for historic preservation.
2. Solicit necessary proposals or quotes for services, construction, installations, etc. to support your request for funding. Finalize renovation plans and design by working with a designer, architect, engineer, or builder to develop drawings of the proposed improvements.
3. Secure a pre-approval letter from your lender (ideally local to Iron Mountain) or provide proof-of-funds showing financial ability to undertake and complete the proposed project.

The following information must be submitted with your application before it will be considered by the DDA staff. Applications missing the following items are subject to disqualification and will not be scored by the committee.

- Brief narrative explaining your project
- Photos of existing property conditions
- Historic photos of property (if available)
- Drawings and specifications of proposed work (in color)
- Samples or images of finishes, colors, and materials to be used
- Any additional documents or summaries that help convey the significance of your project.
- Detailed project estimate or proposal for professional services  
(to be supplied by contractor, supplier, architect, designer, etc.)
- Proof of financial backing to initiate and complete work  
(bank statements, letter of support from a financial institution, etc.)
- \$25 Nonrefundable application fee (made payable to the City of Iron Mountain DDA)

4. Submit the completed application packet with narrative and supporting documents by 4:00pm on March 29, 2024.
5. After submission of the application, attend a grant selection panel on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 5:30pm, at Iron Mountain City Hall. Contractors or architects are strongly encouraged to attend with the applicant.
6. Once Approved - begin work on the project within four months or 120 days from date of the grant award letter. Keep detailed and accurate accounting of your actual project costs.
7. Complete your project within 12 months of approval. Submit your final invoices, receipts, or proof of payment, and “after” photos.
8. If all requirements of the program have been met, receive reimbursement.

# Application

Applicant / Property Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Type / Proposed Use: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Project (Please check one or both):

Physical Improvements / Construction Activities:

(Please describe project intent)

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Work to be performed on the building facade (if historic preservation is involved). Check all that apply.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Removal of non-historic features / materials
- \_\_\_\_\_ Repair / replacement of windows and/or doors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Repair / replacement of original architectural details (cornices, parapets, transoms, bulkheads, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Addition of awnings, lights, signs, other exterior features
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uncover, restore, preserve the building's original, historic facade
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restoration of brickwork, masonry, stucco, wood, or siding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe)

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Facades to be renovated (check all that apply):                      Front    Back    Side(s)

Do you have the ability and/or plan to execute this project, if grant funds are not received?    Yes            No  
If no, please explain:

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

Grant Amount Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

DETACH & RETURN TO DDA OFFICE

## Conditions and Agreements

PLEASE INITIAL

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant must be paying into the downtown district through the DDA millage and be in good standing by payment of taxes and assessments to the City of Iron Mountain and the DDA.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant agrees that all work to be undertaken will comply with all applicable zoning and building codes. Any review by the Iron Mountain Planning Commission that may be required must be conducted prior to project commencing.

\_\_\_\_\_ The project must commence within 4 months (120) days of approval and all projects must be completed within twelve (12) months of approval to be eligible for reimbursement.

\_\_\_\_\_ Deviation, in any form, from the approved scope of work described in the application must be communicated to the DDA Program Coordinator. Drawings or detailed descriptions of changes must be submitted for approval prior to commencement of work. Deviations made without prior approval from the DDA may result in loss of grant funding.

\_\_\_\_\_ Disbursement of funds will be made only after the entire project is complete and is determined by the DDA to be in compliance with the work described in the application and approved by the DDA Board of Directors.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant must submit copies of receipts, invoices, and a signed itemization of the total project cost to the DDA Program Coordinator. All documentation for reimbursement must be submitted at one time to the DDA for payment. This documentation must be provided no more than 15 months after the application has been approved.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant understands that he/she is solely responsible for all construction management, safety conditions, and compliance with applicable codes, regulations, and ordinances.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant agrees to allow the DDA to document the progress of construction work for marketing and record keeping purposes, and to use any documentation (photographs, drawings, videos, interviews, etc.) for news releases and social media posts for the purposes of promoting the Building Improvement Grant program, The Downtown Development Authority, and the City of Iron Mountain.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant agrees to indemnify, protect, defend, and hold harmless the City of Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority and its agents and employees from all claims, damages, lawsuits, costs, and expenses for any personal injury, damage to property, or other losses relating in any way to the Iron Mountain DDA Building Improvement Grant program.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant agrees to present the proposed project to the grant panel on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 5:30pm at Iron Mountain City Hall. Contractors, architects, and consultants are encouraged to attend with the applicant.

\_\_\_\_\_ The applicant agrees to be bound by the terms stated above in this document.

By signing and submitting this application, the Applicant certifies and agrees to all the terms and conditions of the program including those listed above.



Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please detach and return this Conditions and Agreements section, the Application section, and the supporting documentation outlined in the Application, Work Progress, and Funding Requirements section, by March 29, 2024 at 4pm to:

City of Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority

501 S. Stephenson Ave.

Iron Mountain, MI 49801

906-774-8534

programs@downtownironmountain.com

**PLEASE NOTE:** Incomplete applications or applications missing required supporting documentation will not be accepted or scored.

## Selection Process

The following scoring guidelines are utilized by the City of Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority. Incomplete applications or those missing required supporting documentation will not be accepted or scored. However, the applicant will first be asked to supply any missing information.

If an applicant is unsure of the eligibility of their project, or simply wants to discuss it with the DDA before applying, please contact the DDA Program Coordinator.

Building Assistance Program grant applications are evaluated on 4 groups of criteria below:

1-100 Possible Points

**Category**

Project Need (30 Possible)	Does it correct blight?	Score 1-5
	Does it correct an undesirable or historically inaccurate appearance?	Score 1-10
	How much social, community, or historical significance does the building have?	Score 1-10
	When was last updated? (1=recent, 5=not recent)	Score 1-5
Historical Era or Year Built (24 Possible)	In which era was the building built? Choose one.	
	<1940, The Mining Era	17-24 points
	1941 - 1975	9-16 points
	1976 - Present	1-8 points
Functionality, Aesthetics (24 Possible)	Is the proposal "functional" - leading to functional improvements to the building?	Score 1-12
	<i>("Functional" - project characteristics intended to "save" building, improve to code, enhance accessibility, windows, energy efficiency, etc.)</i>	
	Is the proposal "aesthetic" - leading to improvements in the building's appearance?	Score 1-12
	<i>("Aesthetic" - project characteristics which enhance physical appearance, promote historic preservation)</i>	
Board & Panel Discretion (22 Possible)	Note: Most projects will involve a combination of functional and aesthetic characteristics	
	The DDA grant review panel and the DDA Board of Directors will also consider the following issues / topics when evaluating proposals for the Building Improvement Program.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application is neat and complete</li> <li>• The proposed project would positively impact neighboring buildings and businesses</li> <li>• The proposed project involves a new business that would benefit the downtown</li> <li>• The proposed project would add to the housing stock of the community</li> <li>• The proposed project would rehabilitate a property long in need of rehabilitation / reuse</li> <li>• The properties involved are current on all taxes and utility bills</li> </ul>	

**Final Scoring:** Minimum of 50 required for consideration and 100 possible points total. Score of 65 and over is generally indicative of a project involving historic preservation.

The DDA Board of Directors always retains the right to allocate limited funds at their discretion - based on the nature of applications received and on the amount of funds available.

While a higher score implies greater project significance, there is no particular score that will result in the award of a grant. Applications are competitively evaluated and grants are awarded to projects that the DDA perceives will have the greatest impact on the downtown environment.

# **Design Guidelines For All Projects**

## *Materials*

The quality of building materials and their application determine compatibility. Use the highest quality facing materials possible. Materials that are compatible in quality, color, textures, finish, and dimension to those existing on neighboring buildings are encouraged.

## *Color*

Colors should coordinate with neighboring buildings. The more intense hues of a color are discouraged. The use of more than one vivid color per building is discouraged. The use of colors that are incompatible with other colors used on the building or found on the adjacent buildings is discouraged. Contrasting colors which accent architectural details and entrances are encouraged.

## *Side/Rear Facades*

1. Side elevations and rear facades should be treated the same as a main facade.
2. The development of rear or side entrances with appropriate design is encouraged.

## *Cornices*

1. The retention and repair of existing cornices is strongly encouraged wherever possible.
2. The re-creation of missing cornices should be done with care, using existing cornices on neighboring buildings as a guide.

## *Roof Forms*

Gabled and/or residential roofs are not appropriate; historically, downtown buildings have flat roofs. The roof plane should be hidden from view on the front facade. Decoration of the roofline by use of special materials, forms, or decorative details, using examples from surrounding buildings as a guide is encouraged.

## *Awnings*

1. Awnings should relate to the shape and color of the building.
2. Metal canopies or roof-form canopies are strongly discouraged, except when historically appropriate. Removal and replacement of such canopies with canvas/fabric awnings is strongly encouraged.

## *Signs*

1. All Signs are controlled by the adopted Sign Ordinance of the City of Iron Mountain
2. Plastic, illuminated, and flashing signs are strongly discouraged. Attached, awning, hanging, or window decal signs lit with outside indirect lighting are most appropriate.
3. Good signs have the following characteristics: legibility, clarity, attractiveness, durability, and good placement.

## *Windows*

Original fenestration or openings should be maintained and should not be closed off.

## **Standards for Rehabilitation for Historic Structures**

In addition, the following “Standards for Rehabilitation” for historic structures are suggested by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Projects adhering to these guidelines will be evaluated more favorably by the DDA than those not in adherence.

1. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
5. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
6. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials should not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
7. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.