



Village of Masset

Business Façade Improvement Program

2026 Guidelines

Program Purpose and Goals

This program aims to help Masset business owners and non-profit organizations upgrade their commercial façades or wayfinding signage. A façade is the public-facing part of a building exterior.

The program will contribute towards the following goals:

- Make Masset a more inviting place to walk, shop, eat, and explore
- Boost local economic activity
- Attract more customers, visitors and new businesses

Funding for the 2026 Village of Masset Business Façade Improvement program is provided by the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT).

The Program

These guidelines are intended to maximize aesthetic improvements to Masset's commercial and non-profit building exteriors.

Façades

- The Village of Masset will provide a 50% reimbursement grant of up to \$5,000 per building to improve the façades of local businesses and non-profits, including home-based businesses that have a commercial storefront.
- Façade projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1,000.
- Applications will be accepted starting **9 March 2026**. The deadline to apply is **19 October 2026**.

Wayfinding signage

- The Village of Masset will provide a 50% reimbursement grant of up to \$500 to install wayfinding signage for home-based businesses without a commercial storefront.
- There is no minimum total cost for wayfinding signage projects.
- Applicants must ensure they meet community signage bylaws.
- Applications will be accepted starting **9 March 2026**. The deadline to apply is **19 October 2026**.

Eligible Areas

Eligible properties include retail buildings, commercial buildings, non-profit run buildings as well as home-based businesses without a commercial storefront within the Village of Masset.

Eligible Applicants

- You must be either the property owner or the business owner.
- If the business owner applies, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that the business owner will pay for all the improvements.
- In the case of a joint project between multiple businesses in the same building, each business must submit a separate application for grant funding with a cover letter that explains the nature of the partnership.
- New businesses may apply for the grant, so long as they can demonstrate they will be open and operating for at least two months of the calendar year in which they receive funding.
- Home based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants) are eligible.
- Home-based businesses that have a commercial storefront are eligible.
- Home-based businesses with no commercial storefront are eligible for wayfinding signage only.
- Property taxes pertaining to the property must be fully paid and current.
- The subject property must have no outstanding permits or stop-work orders.
- All projects must comply with applicable Village of Masset bylaws.
- Successful applicants can re-apply to the program in future years.

Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the commercial area
- Apartment buildings
- Government-owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal—applies even if they have business tenants)
- Properties outside the Village of Masset
- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)

Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement)
- Exterior architectural features
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims etc.)
- Windows (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone window replacement)
- New siding
- Façade painting
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement)
- Awnings

- Signage (affixed to the building)
- Wayfinding signage (*sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway*).
 - Signs are eligible for 50% up to \$500 and must follow any signage bylaws and regulations
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Fixed patio infrastructure, including upgrades to existing patios, for businesses that can justify use and/or improved customer experience because of the addition.

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Interior/internal improvements
- Improvements not visible from the public right of way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Eligible Costs/Expenses

- Direct project labour costs
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to facade only)
- Contractor fees
- Rental of tools and equipment
- Project related materials and supplies
- Shipping and/or freight
- PST

Ineligible Costs/Expenses

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Duties
- Permit fees
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Façade improvement expenses started prior to application approval
- GST

Design Guidelines

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project.

Grants will be awarded based on a view by Council.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Projects must be as consistent as possible with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area.

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Designs do not need to be done by a professional architect or designer, but it is strongly encouraged that the business/ property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that the grants will be awarded based on the merit of the project design and visual impact on the streetscape. The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our streetscape.

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Business Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

The 2026 design guidelines can be found on the village website, or by request at the village office.

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Business Application Process

Storefronts

- Applications for façade projects must include a 'before' picture or pictures and a design drawing (front elevation) showing the 'after' with the proposed improvements, including colour choices.
- Applications must include a budget estimate, or a contractor's quote clearly detailing costs.

Home-based businesses

- Applications for wayfinding signage must include a 'before' picture or pictures showing the detail of the sign including its location, color scheme, content, and a brief explanation of why it is necessary for wayfinding.
- Applications must include a budget estimate or a contractor's quote clearly detailing costs.

Applying does not necessarily mean a project or specific grant amount will be approved. All applications are subject to a comprehensive review, must meet high quality standards, and must reflect the spirit and intent of these guidelines.

1. Owner/tenant contacts the Village of Masset to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, discuss your project, and obtain the program guide and application.
2. Owner/tenant submits a complete application as outlined in the application requirements.
3. Village staff will review the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that program guidelines have been met.
4. Complete applications are brought forward with recommendations from village staff to council.
5. Village council reviews applications and a decision is made to accept or reject the application.
6. Applicant is advised of the decision by email and mailed letter.
7. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and the chief administrative officer.
8. Owner/tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
9. Owner/tenant provides verification of expenses with the following:
 - Copies of **all** invoices or receipts
 - Copies of cleared cheque/bank statements/credit-card statements confirming payments
 - Proof the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable)
 - Pictures of the completed project
 - A short statement about how the program has benefited the business.
10. The owner/tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
11. Village staff verifies that the façade improvements meet the terms stated in the Letter of Understanding and provide confirmation to the chief administrative officer.
12. Applicants are issued a cheque.

Note on timelines

The application period will begin **9 March 2026**, and applications will be reviewed by Village of Masset council. Eligible applications must be approved by the village council before any work begins. Approved projects should be completed by **1 December 2026**, as indicated in the letter of understanding.

Once approved, new businesses must demonstrate by 1 December 2026 that they have been open and operating for at least two months of 2026. Proof of operational status can be shown with a grand opening flyer, dated sales receipts, or other form of documentation acceptable to the village.

Evaluation/Selection Process

Evaluation of projects will be based on the following criteria:

1. Applications will be evaluated by the Village of Masset council.
2. Property taxes are current and paid up to date.
3. Building age and condition (i.e., buildings in poor condition have a greater likelihood of approval).
4. Property complies with all applicable Village of Masset bylaws.
5. Impact on streetscape.
6. Quality of the design.

Projects will be recommended by the chief administrative officer for final approval by the council.

Appeal process

If an application is declined, the applicant may request a meeting with the chief administrative officer to discuss the application with the purpose of:

1. Seeking input on the proposal to modify the application and meet the program guidelines.
2. Provide more information to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

Program marketing plan

The 2026 Village of Masset Façade Program will be advertised on the Village of Masset website, Facebook page, and in the village newsletter as well as by in-person business visits by village staff.