



PA Route 6 Façade Program In Warren and McKean Counties

GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

The PA Route 6 Alliance is committed to supporting community revitalization efforts throughout the PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor. Through ongoing planning initiatives and engagement with local communities, the Alliance has identified a need for regional Downtown Façade Improvement Programs. While the Alliance serves communities across the 427-mile corridor, this funding round is focused on providing façade improvement assistance to eligible commercial properties and businesses in Warren and McKean Counties. Many communities within these counties lack access to the resources and technical assistance associated with Main Street designations, yet possess significant potential for revitalization, business growth, and private investment.

Several communities designated as PA Route 6 Heritage Communities in Warren and McKean Counties including Youngsville, Warren, Kane, and Smethport have developed Heritage Community Workplans that identify strategies for downtown revitalization and the enhancement of historic and cultural assets. These communities, along with other municipalities throughout Warren and McKean Counties, stand to benefit from a coordinated regional façade improvement program. All communities within Warren and McKean Counties, as well as neighboring communities along the PA Route 6 Corridor, have been invited to participate and comprise the target area for this program.

Building upon the success of previous PA Route 6 Façade Programs implemented in partnership with the PA Wilds, Endless Mountains, Great Lakes, Lackawanna, and Pocono Mountains regions, the PA Route 6 Alliance believes that commercial building improvements can serve as a catalyst for broader community and economic revitalization. Façade improvements not only enhance the appearance of individual properties but also strengthen the overall vitality and competitiveness of downtown business districts. Communities across the nation have demonstrated that attractive, well-maintained storefronts encourage customer engagement, support local businesses, and foster investment. By improving a building's façade, property owners and businesses contribute to the long-term viability and appeal of their community.

The PA Route 6 Façade Program in Warren and McKean Counties provides funding assistance to commercial property owners and businesses or nonprofit organizations (with property owner approval) for eligible façade restoration and improvement projects within the designated target area. Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to, design assistance, exterior painting, signage improvements, awning repair or replacement, masonry restoration, window and door improvements, and other façade enhancements. While some projects may be extensive, even modest improvements can have a significant and lasting positive impact on a building and the surrounding community.

This is a matching grant program requiring a 50 percent applicant match on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to a \$5,000.00 grant. Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis following project completion. All applicants must comply with the PA Route 6 Façade Program Guidelines as well as any applicable requirements established by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) if the property is individually listed on a historic register or located within a designated historic district.

The program guidelines have been developed to preserve and enhance the historic character, architectural integrity, and visual appeal of the region's downtowns. The PA Route 6 Alliance seeks to ensure that all improvements are compatible with the scale, character, and history of the surrounding community. Whenever possible, existing and original architectural features should be repaired, restored, and preserved. The program also encourages the removal or reversal of inappropriate alterations that may have diminished a building's historic character over time.

These guidelines are intended to address the most common project types; however, they cannot anticipate every circumstance. Applicants are encouraged to provide additional information regarding unique conditions or proposed improvements within their application. All applications will be reviewed by the PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee, which will consider individual circumstances and evaluate projects on a case-by-case basis.

PROGRAM GOALS / OBJECTIVES:

The **PA Route 6 Façade Program in Warren and McKean Counties** has the following goals and objectives:

1. Reduce or eliminate vacancies throughout the program target area and promote the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings.
2. Bring substandard building conditions into compliance with basic health, safety, and building codes while enhancing the visual appeal of our Region's downtown businesses.
3. Encourage redevelopment and reinvestment, as well as stimulate private investment, therefore enhancing commercial growth in the program target area.
4. Assist with the preservation of the historic commercial buildings and districts and ensure that such buildings are rehabilitated in an appropriate manner.
5. Add significant physical improvements to the aesthetics of a targeted downtown property that is compatible with existing buildings and the historical era of the community and region.
6. Create a compelling image of our Region's downtowns that will increase commerce, attract new business, and foster a sense of community and civic pride.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

The total funding per property is 50% of the total project cost. Therefore, a property owner may submit more than one application if that owner owns more than one property located in the designated area. A property owner can apply for more than one eligible improvement as long as the total request for funding does not exceed the maximum funding of \$5,000.00. While the total cost of façade improvements may exceed \$10,000.00, the maximum program reimbursement shall not exceed \$5,000.00. Total project costs over \$25,000 will be required to adhere to prevailing wages.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any person(s) or other legal entity owning property within the designated **PA Route 6 Façade Program in Warren and McKean Counties** area (see map on page 12) is eligible to apply. Business owners and nonprofits who lease buildings or parts thereof may apply if given permission by the property owner as shown by their signature on the application.

A property owner with multiple properties (with different addresses) within the targeted program area may submit multiple applications within the same year. The regional **PA Route 6 Façade Program in Warren and McKean counties** maintains the right to limit the total amount of funding that a property owner of multiple properties/applications may be awarded in order to allow other interested owners to apply.

If a property owner seeks and receives funding, a tenant in the same building can also receive funding as long as the total amount does not exceed the maximum funding amount for the property. A tenant can apply for the full amount with written consent of the property owner on the application.

Proof of property ownership and property insurance documentation must be provided with the application. All property owners must be current on state, county, school district, local municipal and room/bed taxes as well as municipal utility bills. If a property owner is delinquent on these taxes or bills, tenants located within the property are also ineligible to receive funding.

ELIGIBLE BUILDINGS, STOREFRONTS & FAÇADES

All buildings located within the designated two-county area are eligible to apply for funding, however, priority ranking will be given to properties located within designated **PA Route 6 Heritage Communities**, designated historic districts, and communities with a development plan. Extra consideration will also be given to highly visible properties along the PA Route 6 Corridor that significantly impact the viewshed and landscape of the Corridor.

The façade is the part of the building facing the street(s) and includes the entire face of the building from the ground up. In cases where more than one storefront exists within the same property façade, each storefront can receive its own grant for eligible grant activities, however, the total must not exceed maximum allowable amount per property. A storefront shall be defined as having its own unique entrance, interior space, and display window(s).

If a building has multiple façades, such as from being located on a street corner where two named streets intersect or having separate façades on two separate streets, both façades are eligible for funding, but the total must not exceed maximum allowable amount per property.

In order for a project to be eligible for funding of rear façade improvements, the building must have an existing rear entrance accessible to the public from a dedicated public street, alley or other right of way, parking lot, or walkway granting public pedestrian access.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/IMPROVEMENTS:

Façade improvement awards are based on project merit, not financial need. Projects must achieve visible results that enhance the downtown's image, marketability and economic vitality, and will be evaluated in terms of quality, design compatibility and level of visual impact. Only exterior improvements are eligible for funding. Finishing interior work, such as trimming on windows, is not an eligible expense.

Façade improvements must comply with all state and local building code and zoning requirements. All necessary permitting must be completed by the applicant at the applicant's expense.

Eligible activities include the repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of building façades located in the designated program target area (see map on page 12). Eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- Brick and Stone Masonry – Structural repairs, cleaning and re-pointing.
- Architectural Metals – Repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, duplication and restoration of exterior building components (e.g., cast iron, pressed tin).
- Doors and Upper Story Windows – Maintenance, repairs, replacement, and restoration of window sashes and exterior doors. Installation of storm windows is also eligible in conjunction with other significant façade improvements.
- Exterior Woodwork – Maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and restoration of sills, windows and doorframes, bulkheads, storefront and roof cornices, window hoods, decorative moldings.
- Storefronts – Removal of inappropriate coverings and additions, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and restoration of display and transom windows and lighting.
- Signage – Installation, maintenance, repair, removal and replacement.
- Painting – Surface preparation, cleaning and painting using a Design Committee-approved color palette. Stains must also be complementary to a Design Committee-approved palette.
- Awnings – Installation, repair and maintenance of fabric awnings. Awnings must also be complementary to a Design Committee-approved palette.
- Lighting – External lighting fixtures for signage and/or building lighting. Storefront window lighting must be clearly visible from the street and enhance the façade.
- Design Assistance – Architectural consultation, renderings and/or drawings.
- **Decking/porches** – Restoration of architectural elements for historic purposes. Historic photographs should be submitted with application.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- Building permit fees and related costs.
- Title reports and legal fees.
- Extermination of insects, rodents, vermin and other pests.
- Sidewalk replacement or repair.
- Acquisition of land or buildings.
- Air conditioning and/or heating of facilities.
- Plumbing or sprinkler systems (both interior and exterior).
- Building security systems (both interior and exterior).

- Electrical wiring or service upgrade (except electrical work necessary to illuminate an eligible sign).
- Elevator repair or installation.
- Interior floor, wall, flooring and/or ceiling replacement or repair.
- General repair/maintenance work that does not contribute to the visual appearance of the building façade.
- Landscaping, fences and retaining walls.
- Site improvements, paving, parking lots and roof work that does not contribute to the visual appearance of the building façade.
- Neon signs.
- Labor provided by the owner of the property.

Façade improvements not specifically listed as eligible or ineligible above are subject to review by the **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee** at their sole and exclusive discretion.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Both the PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor, Lumber Heritage Region and PA Wilds are known for a strong sense of place. Our region’s rural and historic character are part of what makes it attractive to visitors and residents, so it is important for us to be good stewards of these characteristics.

The Pennsylvania Route 6 Management Plan, Historic Conservation Strategy and Corridor Management Plan is the overall governing document of the **PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor**. Among other strategies, it contains guidelines and recommendations for the downtowns, commercial districts and public spaces within the Heritage Corridor. The multi-faceted plan can be found at <http://www.paroute6.com> or provided upon request.

One of the key recommendations of the plan is to support and expand on the guidelines set forth in the Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide.

The Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide: A Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship is a voluntary planning document that highlights how communities can protect and enhance their rural character as they grow – whether that growth is due to tourism, resource extraction, or other industries.

The Design Guide is a great resource for developers, planners, architects, business owners, property owners, revitalization partners and community leaders, and all applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the guide prior to applying for façade funds. The Design Guide can be found at <http://www.pawildscenter.org/community-character-stewardship/> or provided upon request.

CHARACTER – The region enjoys a variety of architectural styles. It is the goal of this design program to see that each building is presented in its most appealing form with its original character preserved and enhanced.

PRESERVATION – Any existing or historical character of a property should be retained and preserved to the extent that is feasible. The removal of historical materials and alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property should be avoided.

CHANGE – It is recognized that many properties have changed over time. Changes that contribute to the significance of the designated area’s architectural character should be retained and preserved.

HISTORY – Each property should be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create an inaccurate sense of history and architectural elements from other buildings will not be favored. Please refer to the **“Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings,”** which can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm> or provided upon request.

DETAILS – Distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques and examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property should be treated with respect.

REPAIRS – Features that have made a property unique and recognizable, but have deteriorated, should be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities as well as material, when possible. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentation such as physical or pictorial evidence.

SURFACE CLEANING – Chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to historic materials, such as sandblasting, are not favored. Surface cleaning of structures, when necessary, should be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

ALTERATIONS – New additions, exterior alterations and related new construction should not destroy any historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be compatible with the size, scale and architectural features that protect the characteristic integrity of the property and its environment.

SIGNAGE – Signs play an important role in how a business is initially perceived. Not only are they a marketing tool, but they also set the appearance from a roadway. Signage should project an atmosphere that is welcoming and inviting to members of the community and visitors. Consistent signage adds to the character of the area in which it is placed and should be considered to be a unifying factor in a town. Lighting should be external, using spotlights directed onto the sign.

PROJECT CRITERIA

AWNINGS & CANOPIES – Awnings and canopies are considered both functional and decorative. Not only are they a marketing tool, but they also set the appearance of the business from the roadway. An added feature of awnings and canopies is that they bring the tremendous appeal of color to buildings and streetscapes. Therefore, funding for awnings and canopies may only be used for awnings or canopies in a color scheme consistent with the downtown’s color palettes. Funds are available for repair, removal and replacement of existing awnings and canopies, as well as installation of new. If replacement of awnings or canopies is requested rather than repair, cost estimates showing that repair is cost prohibitive must be

submitted. Awnings and canopies must also be placed in such a way that they avoid covering or overwhelming architectural details such as cornices, trim, windows, decorative brickwork and other unique structural characteristics.

Please note, not only must awning/canopy design be pre-approved by the regional **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee**, but it also must meet all local and state codes and requirements and be approved by local code and zoning officials.

SIGNS – Signs can be one of the most important parts of a storefront making a dramatic impact on the overall image of a business and its community. A sign can cause an individual passing by to become a potential customer. Signs that are properly sized, attractively designed, constructed of appropriate materials and properly located can enhance the image of the business and community. Signs should be designed to complement the façade of the business and not hide or overwhelm the structure.

Please note, not only must sign design be pre-approved by the **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee**, but it also must meet all local and state codes and requirements and be approved by local code and zoning officials.

Interior window signs shall *not* be eligible for funding through the **PA Route 6 Façade Program**.

The PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee recommends:

- Using display windows for creative signage.
- Using individual lettering on the structure itself to recreate the feel of an earlier era in which the building was initially constructed.
- Locating signs in such a way as to avoid covering or overwhelming architectural details (e.g., cornices, trim, windows, decorative brickwork or other unique structural characteristics).
- Orienting signs toward pedestrian traffic versus vehicular traffic (i.e., detailed so as to appeal to someone proceeding slowly at close range).
- Using sign materials and designs that reflect the period of the building and design of the storefront, including colors that complement the paint scheme of the storefront.
- Using artisan-crafted signs and/or high-quality materials manufactured specifically by the sign industry for handcrafted signs, such as wood, metal, and urethane.
- Using colors that complement the paint scheme of the storefront while distinguishing the type of business and creating interest without losing community appeal.
- Keeping lettering on a sign to a minimum and the message brief. A logo or illustration may be substituted to communicate the nature of a business.
- Avoid using multiple signs where one sign would be sufficient.

PAINT, EXTERIOR RESTORATION AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS – Some central business districts may specify color schemes that are allowable for funding through the program. Buildings located in districts with no such specifications should use color schemes typical of the era of its historic downtown.

Funds are available for repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting and restoration of exterior woodwork and trim, architectural sheet metal and/or decorative brick elements. This category includes exterior masonry repairs, restoration, painting (in the case of brick, only if originally painted), low-pressure water or steam cleaning or the best recommended manner in which to clean the specified material.

Roof and commercial cornices, parapets and other decorative elements may be repaired and reconditioned. Replacement of cornice and trim elements will be permitted only when they are deteriorated beyond repaired. Missing decorative elements may be replaced utilizing existing examples found elsewhere on the building, period photographs or, in the absence of both, examples from similar buildings downtown. Roof repair and/or replacement are **not** eligible for funding.

WINDOWS & DOORS – Funds are available for painting, rehabilitation, reglazing and reconditioning of existing windows (including display, ornamental and upper-story windows), doors, and exterior shutters when they are original to the building. Funds are also available for the replacement of non-original existing windows, doors and exterior shutters that are out of character with the building.

Grant funds are *not* available for replacement of original windows, doors and exterior shutters or such elements that are in character with the building unless they are deteriorated beyond repair or rehabilitation.

Window Guidelines

The **PA Route 6 Façade Program in Warren and McKean Counties** encourages the preservation of original wood windows wherever possible and discourages the use of new vinyl, fiberglass or metal windows where such replacements would lead to the removal and destruction of historic wood windows. Although the **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee** may determine eligibility for funding on a case-by-case basis, window-related projects will generally be evaluated according to the guidelines below.

Window-related activities that may be eligible for funding include:

1. Restoration and repair of original wood sashes and frames.
2. Addition or replacement of quality storm windows is undertaken as part of an effort to retain original wood windows.
3. Addition or replacement of appropriate weather-stripping on existing wood windows if undertaken as part of an effort to restore and retain original wood windows.
4. Replacement of original wood windows with comparable new wood windows or high-quality aluminum clad wood windows.
5. Replacement of existing non-wood or non-original replacement windows with new non-wood replacement windows, if the older windows are deteriorated or otherwise of inferior quality and newer windows will result in a significant visual improvement.

Window-related activities that may *not* be eligible for funding include:

1. Replacement of existing wood windows with vinyl windows or other non-wood windows where comparable improvements in appearance may be achieved by painting or otherwise repairing existing wood windows.
2. Replacement of existing wood windows with vinyl windows or other non-wood windows for the sole purposes of energy savings or convenience of maintenance.

When considering whether to repair or replace wood windows, applicants are encouraged to review two informative “**Preservation Briefs**” on the subject, which can be found at:

“**The Repair of Historic Wood Windows**” – www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief09.htm

“**Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings**” – www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief03.htm

These briefs conclude that “the repair and weatherization of existing wooden windows is more practical than most people realize, and that many windows are unfortunately replaced because of a lack of awareness of techniques for evaluation, repair, and weatherization. Wooden windows which are repaired and properly maintained will have greatly extended service lives while contributing to the historic character of the building. Thus, an important element of a building’s significance will have been preserved for the future.”

When there is no alternative but to replace severely deteriorated windows, the **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee** encourages property owners to consider the following options:

1. Maintain the original architectural character and structure of the building by using replacement windows sized to fit the original opening that are consistent with the style and detail of the original building.
2. Consider the use of colors other than bright white when choosing replacement windows for brick buildings or other non-white façades, such as a tan color that will blend more naturally with surrounding surfaces.
3. Limit the use of snap-in interior grilles where possible. Consider replacement with windows having a single-paned or double-paned sash and single wider vertical bar for a more authentic appearance than those with grids of four, six or nine divisions.
4. Visit local showrooms to consider all possible replacement window options.

DESIGN ASSISTANCE – Funds are available for architectural/historic façade research, preservation, and graphic design services by a design or architectural professional. However, **the total funding request for design assistance cannot exceed \$500.00.**

LIGHTING – The **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee** recommends externally lit fixtures and spotlights rather than internally lit plastic fixtures. Whenever possible, lighting fixtures should be compatible with the period of the structure. Sign lighting should be directed only onto the sign itself and not onto the surrounding area. To every extent possible, lighting should be “Dark Sky Friendly” such as by having lights cast in a downward direction and bulbs not being visible from the street.

APPLICATION PROCESS/PROJECT AWARD

Applications must be submitted online by August 17, 2026.

The PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee will begin reviewing applications at that time.

Upon final approval, funding recipients will receive a **Letter of Commitment** stating the reimbursement grant amount, terms of the improvements, conditions for construction, and any other provisions related to the project. **The Letter of Commitment must be signed by the recipient and returned within 15 calendar days of the notification of the award.** The recipient can then begin obtaining necessary building permits and any other applicable review processes.

Applicants should NOT start any improvements prior to receiving written notification of funding, signing and submitting the Letter of Commitment, and obtaining appropriate building permits. Any work performed, materials purchased, or contracts entered into prior to funding approval notification, signed Letter of Commitment, and receipt of building permits will **NOT** be eligible for grant funding reimbursement.

Grants are made on a cost reimbursement basis following a process of application, design, review, approval, construction, and proof of payment in full. The applicant must submit documentation to the **PA Route 6 Program Coordinator** that substantiates the agreed upon work is complete and payment by recipient in full in order to receive a reimbursement check.

All work must be completed within 150 days after the date of the Letter of Commitment, or all grant funding may be forfeited. Applicants may request an extension through the Committee; however, extensions shall not exceed 90 additional days unless explicitly approved by the PA Route 6 Alliance Executive Director.

Reimbursement will be based upon the Scope of Work submitted as part of the application. Any and all Project Change Orders must be submitted in writing to the **PA Route 6 Program Coordinator** who will consult with the Committee to initiate approval of modification to any part of the executed Commitment Letter. Approval must be obtained prior to conducting activities that in any way modify the agreed upon scope or cost of project activities. Failure to obtain approval from the **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee** before the commencement of work relieves the **PA Route 6 Façade Program** from any obligation to make any payments to the approved applicant. Any expenditure made by the applicant which is not in accordance with the terms of the Letter of Commitment may be denied by the Committee and payment to the applicant adjusted accordingly.

Reimbursement to the applicant requires the submittal of documentation that substantiates the work is complete including total and final cost for work and proof of payment. This documentation must include photograph(s) of the completed project, contractor insurance certificate(s), final invoice(s) and/or receipt(s), and cancelled check(s) or confirmations of payment in full. Prior to reimbursement, the completed work must also be approved by the **PA Route 6 Façade Program Committee** or **Program Coordinator**.

PROJECT MAP – A map Warren and McKean counties along the PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor in is below. Applicants who are applying for funding for commercial buildings located in Warren and Mckean counties are eligible to apply.



SUMMARY

While these guidelines may not address each and every situation, they are intended to be a helpful guide and should be used in conjunction with the “**Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide: A Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship**,” found at <http://www.pawildscenter.org/community-character-stewardship/>.

Applicants are required to reach out to the **PA Route 6 Program Coordinator** at info@paroute6.com or by calling the office at 814-435-7706 to discuss their potential project prior to submitting an application.