



A program of  
  
Community Action Committee  
of the Lehigh Valley, Inc.

# Slate Belt Rising

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## Business Sign Program Guidelines

2017

Slate Belt Rising, a program of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, is committed to the revitalization and historical preservation of the boroughs of Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland. The Business Sign Program is designed to help improve the exterior appearance and condition of the commercial properties within the targeted boroughs. The program's goals are to maintain historic and architectural integrity and improve neighborhood appearance.

### **Eligible Properties**

All locally-owned non-residential properties and any mixed use residential/commercial properties located within the following targeted areas are eligible to participate:

- **Wind Gap:** *Along Broadway, Lehigh Avenue (SR 512), and E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from the intersection with S Broadway to the intersection with Longcore and Church Roads*
- **Pen Argyl:** *Along Robinson Avenue, Main Street, Pennsylvania Avenue (from Slate Belt YMCA intersection to E Main intersection.)*
- **Bangor:** *Within one block of the core commercial district near the intersection of SR 512 and SR 191*
- **Portland:** *Along State Street, Main Street, and Delaware Avenue*

### **Eligible Projects**

- Window lettering, wall signs, hanging or projecting signs, and window awnings.

### **Applicant Eligibility Requirements**

- a. The applicant may be either the property owner or a storefront lessee of the building. A lessee-applicant will need a notarized letter of the property owner's consent to participate in this program.
- b. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all required permits associated with the proposed sign. All signs must comply with the borough's zoning ordinance which regulates, among other things, the size of the sign.
- c. The property may not have any outstanding municipal debt, including but not limited to, borough and county taxes, utilities, or other municipal liens.
- d. The applicant must submit a complete application and fulfill the approval process prior to beginning the project. Any sign purchased before the application and approval process will not be eligible for a grant.

### **Terms of the Grant**

- a. Locally-owned non-residential or mixed use commercial/residential property –up to \$500 grant with a 1:1 cash match.

The applicant is responsible for all project costs over and above maximum grant amount. The applicant must pay the match share of the grant to CACLV prior to any sign being purchased. CACLV will pay the total amount of the sign directly to the sign vendor whose estimate is selected.

### **Outreach**

Slate Belt Rising will make an effort to inform all eligible property and business owners about this program. Outreach may include door-to-door canvassing, mailings, and phone calls.

### **Application Process**

1. Applications may be obtained from the Slate Belt Rising office which is located at 197 Pennsylvania Avenue, Bangor, PA 18013.
2. Completed applications are submitted to the Director of the Slate Belt Rising.
3. If an application is denied, after making any necessary revisions, property owners and business owners may request that the application be reconsidered by the Steering Committee.
4. Three (3) estimates must be obtained prior to signs being purchased and must be included with the application.
5. Once signs are approved, applicant must provide match share to CACLV within 30 days.

### **Design Philosophy**

There are generally two types of signs, those that are attached to the building and those that are freestanding and placed near buildings. New signs can use similar features of traditional signs to both enhance the character of the building and convey the necessary information to the public. The choice between attached or freestanding signs may be based upon the property's specific location, needs of the occupant, and limitations of the borough ordinances. This program is designed to highlight, preserve, and maintain the unique historic and architectural heritage of each borough to the extent that is practicably possible.

Designs to avoid:

- Signage that obstructs views into the store through storefront windows and glazing or architectural features
- Exposed conduit, boxes or raceways for signage or lighting
- New billboards, internally illuminated box signs, LED reader boards, flashing or changeable message signs.
- Contemporary or glossy awning materials such as vinyl, plastics or leatherette; internally illuminated awnings; and waterfall awnings

- Odd shaped signs unless historic evidence exists

### **Sign and Awning Guidelines**

- Signage should be compatible to scale of the building, adjacent buildings, the streetscape and adjacent signage
- Small scale signs are appropriate to smaller scale buildings, pedestrian traffic and professional offices, while larger scaled signs are appropriate to vehicular traffic
- Multiple small scale signs at one building can be grouped in a single directory sign for a unified appearance
- A well-designed smaller sign can have more of an impact than a larger sign, particularly along historic commercial corridors, where the means of travel is by foot or slow moving vehicles
- Signs should not cover or conceal architectural features or ornament and signs should be mounted in a way that does not damage historic materials.
- Sign design and color that reflects the architectural characteristics with materials that are consistent with the historic character of the building
- Canvas awnings, with straight valance, in shapes that correspond with the openings they protect
- Installing signage or awning designs that are sympathetic to the style of a building and in a manner that minimizes damage to historic features including installing fasteners at mortar joints and not stone faces
- The use of perpendicular signage is strongly encouraged as it is more likely to catch the attention of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic

### **Lighting**

- Existing ambient street light or storefront lighting in lieu of lighting whenever possible
- Lighting for signs should be external white light from projecting lamps at the top of the sign and all wiring should be discrete and concealed. Gooseneck style lights are historically appropriate.
- Signage lighting styles that are consistent with the character of the building including location, orientation and brightness
- The use of LED, Solar, and other energy efficient lighting is preferred and more cost effective.

### **Sign and Awning Material**

- All signs should be made from durable materials. Slate Belt Rising encourages local business and property owners to use sandblasted, carved, or painted signs of traditional materials, such as wood, metal, stone, or brick. The use of resin or composite materials that give the appearance of traditional materials may also be used as appropriate.

- Canvas and fire-resistant acrylic are preferred awning materials. Use of metal, plastic, or fiberglass awnings are discouraged.

**Lettering:**

- Incised lettering in lieu of raised lettering at signage
- Balance the need to make the sign legible, convey the business identity or logo, and complement the historic character of the building and environment
- Excessive amounts of text or highly stylized type styles can overwhelm a viewer and make the message effectively illegible.
- Simple lettering and limited color