



# **Slate Belt Rising**

**a program of Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley**

## **Residential Façade 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 Residential Façade Improvement Program is designed to help low- to moderate-income homeowners improve the exterior appearance and condition of their homes. The program's goals are to maintain historic and architectural integrity, improve neighborhood appearance, help homeowners make exterior repairs that they would otherwise not have the ability to complete, attract new homeowners and small business owners, and increase property values for all borough residents.

### **Eligibility**

Owner-occupied residential 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:** *within one block of the core commercial district, Robinson Avenue, East and West Main Street, Pennsylvania Avenue (from Slate Belt YMCA intersection to E Main intersection), Railroad Avenue, Broad Street, and Chestnut Street.*
- **Bangor:** *Within one block of the core commercial district near the intersection of SR 512 and SR 191, Pennsylvania Avenue up to and including 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Church Street, South Main Street, Messinger Street, Bangor Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Bangor Street and Church Street, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Church Street.*
- **Portland:** *Along State Street, Main Street, and Delaware Avenue*

Preference will be given to low-income homeowners and participation may be restricted to homeowners at specific income levels based on funding requirements. Priority will be given to those projects creating a positive impact.

All property owners must be current on borough, county, and school district taxes, which must be documented by a copy of a recent tax bill or a recent mortgage payment, through which property tax is escrowed. The property may not have any outstanding municipal debt, including but not limited to utilities, or other municipal liens. Sufficient insurance coverage on each property is also required. Properties must be structurally sound to be eligible.

A property which benefitted from a façade grant in the last 10 years may be allowed to participate in the program upon determination by the SBR staff with the approval of the SBR Neighborhoods and Housing Committee as to the property's current state-of-repair and if permitted by the requirements of the funder.

### **Terms of the Grant**

Up to \$5,000 grant (no cash match required) for income-qualified households whose total household income is at or less than 80% of the prevailing area median income.

These grants are being made available to homeowners in the form of self-forgiving loans. If beneficiaries remain in their home for a full five years after using the funds for their façade improvement, the loan will be forgiven. If they sell their home within five years, they will be obligated to repay the loan at 80% after year 1, 60% after year 2, 40% after year 3, and 20% after year 4. In order to administer this loan, CACLV will put a lien on the property and release it after five years.

The contractor is responsible for obtaining all required permits associated with the proposed façade project. The contractor will be paid in two increments, 80% paid according to work completed on the specifications. The final 20% will be released when the Lead Clearance and the Certificate of Final Inspection is signed by CACLV.

The property owner is responsible for all project costs over and above maximum grant amount and must pay those costs to CACLV before any work can begin.

### **Eligible Improvements**

A project must enhance the primary façade, which is any side of the building facing a public street. Buildings situated on street corners with facades facing two public streets or those facing a street and a public space, such as a park, may be eligible for two façade grants.

Improvements may include:

- Restoration of architectural details and removal of elements covering architectural or historic details
- Cleaning and/or repainting of building exteriors
- Repointing of brick or repairing cornices
- Installation of appropriate lighting to illuminate the exterior of a property
- Removal and replacement of awnings
- Installing or removing gutter and downspout systems in conjunction with other façade improvements
- Wood repair
- Energy Star rated and historically appropriate entrance lighting
- Repair of deteriorated windows, sashes, sills, and framing visible from the street
- Replacement or upgrade of porches, balustrades, columns/supports, steps, or railings
- Replacement or upgrade of doors
- Replacement of miscellaneous façade items such as house numbers and mailboxes for a unified façade appearance
- Replacement or improvement of roofs as approved by the Neighborhoods and Housing Committee
- Landscaping such as flower boxes, planters, and shrubbery.

All improvements must comply with the program design guidelines and must bring the facade into code compliance.

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Removal of historic features

### **Outreach**

Slate Belt Rising staff will make an effort to inform all eligible homeowners about this program. Outreach may include, but is not limited to, 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 Slate Belt Rising.
3. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. However, neighboring property owners who submit applications as a group will receive priority. Priority may also be given to applicants based on income or potential for impact.
4. Applications will be reviewed and prioritized by the Slate Belt Rising Neighborhoods and Housing Sub-Committee.
5. If an application is denied, property owners may request that the application be reconsidered by the Steering Committee
6. Estimates for work to be completed will be determined after the initial review of the application.
7. Work may not begin until the application is approved and the owners have signed all of the necessary paperwork. Any construction started before the application and approval process will not be eligible for a grant.

### **Project Approval and Appeal Process**

- Upon completion of project, work will be inspected for quality and compliance with code requirements and design guidelines.
- The inspector, homeowner, and contractor must sign a verification form stating that the work was done in a satisfactory manner.
- If the inspector finds a problem with the work, the contractor must correct the problem before receiving final payment. Generally, 20% of the contract amount will be kept as a retainage until all work has been completed.

### **Determining the Scope of Each Project**

The Slate Belt Rising staff will arrange to visit each home to assess, photograph, and determine the extent of work needed for the façade renovation in accordance with the ordinances of the Borough where the property is located. S(he) will then write-up the scope of work and estimate the rehab costs for the project, bearing in mind the budget for each of the façade improvements. Staff will then review the scope of work with the property owners, who will approve the written description.

### **Contracting Process**

Slate Belt Rising will follow the contracting process required by each funder. At a minimum, qualifying contractors must:

- Be registered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Not be debarred or suspended

All contractors will be provided with exactly the same description, so that their estimates can be accurately compared. It will be required that a minimum of three (3) estimates be obtained. The lowest estimate will be selected, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as poor references, or an inability or unwillingness to follow through or schedule the work within a reasonable period of time. Contractors will be asked to provide the following information prior to being awarded the contract:

- Commercial general liability insurance
- Automobile liability insurance
- Commercial Pollution Liability Insurance
- Worker's compensation insurance
- Indemnification - the contractor will hold CACLV harmless to the fullest extent possible
- PA contractor's registration number
- EIN
- Three references from previous jobs

Should all the bids exceed the estimated amount for renovation, the Slate Belt Rising staff will notify the contractors of the situation, adjust the scope of work, and ask all of them to restructure their estimates. The staff will again review the estimates, accepting the lowest one. Should there be two or more estimates coming in at the same amount, the director will rank the projects according to the quality of the materials proposed and choose the one that would provide the most lasting improvements to the building in consultation with the Neighborhoods and Housing Committee.

The terms of the contract will require that the work begin within 30 days of the execution of the contract and be completed within 90 days of the execution of the contract.

### **Design Philosophy**

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.

### **Rehabilitation Guidelines**

**Façade Materials – Wood Framed and Sided Construction:** It is never desirable to put new aluminum or vinyl siding on street-facing facades of homes with wood framed/sided construction. For reasons of aesthetic appearance, historic accuracy, sustainable energy and environmental standards and material reliability, the following are the design choices in order of preference.

**Option A:** Replace with high quality, paint grade, wood lap siding.

**Option B:** Replace with cement fiber lap siding with a smooth paintable finish.

**Option C:** If original siding is intact under removed siding, scrape, repair and repaint original surfaces. Restore original details.

**Option D:** If cost hardships prevent options A through C above, then power wash and repair existing siding and paint. Restore as much detail as possible via paint scheme selection.

**Façade Materials – Brick, Stone and Masonry Construction:** It is always best, when possible, to maintain the original masonry surface in an unpainted condition. Stone should never be painted. Covering wood framed and sided facades with faux brick or stone (Brickote, Formstone) are also inappropriate rehabilitation techniques.

**Option A:** Gently clean and repoint existing brick, stone and masonry surfaces as per professionally recommended standards. Replace broken and missing pieces with similar color and texture materials.

**Option B:** If brick surface is painted, remove paint in professionally recommended, non-destructive manner. Repair mortar and brick as above.

**Option C:** If brick is intact (after inspection of sample area) remove Brickote/Formstone. Repair mortar and brick as above.

**Option D:** If brick surface is severely spawled, cracked, etc. such as to be aesthetically unacceptable, repair as necessary and refinish surface with specialty paint specifically formulated for brick surfaces.

**Option E-1:** If Brickote/Formstone cannot be removed without destroying original substrate, patch and repair as necessary and paint. Maintain brick detailing as close to original masonry as possible.

**Option E-2:** If original masonry is beyond repair to the point that option four is not an acceptable solution, then Brickote can be considered as a last resort. The pattern, color and detailing of the finish shall be approved by the Director in partnership with any professional consultants.

**Façade Materials – Other Construction:** To be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Porches – Floors and Foundation Walls:** Materials should remain generally consistent with typology of the block and street. Orientation of entry should also follow the pattern set by original street conditions.

**Option A:** Concrete floors should remain so unless deterioration is extreme and replacement with same would involve considerable structural disruption to the adjoining building. In the latter case a “shell” construction of wood over existing concrete may be considered.

**Option B:** In *no case* shall pressure treated lumber be used as a finish material. It is designed as framing lumber for damp locations and insect resistance. In exposed use it warps, shows knots and does not take finishes well. Wood flooring should be exterior grade, tongue and groove type; stain or paint grade. Edge details should be designed to eliminate exposure of end grain.

**Porches – Railings and Columns:** Original materials may be wood, concrete, iron or masonry. It is the intent to match original materials wherever possible.

**Option A:** Non-original iron, aluminum and other metal railings should be replaced with original materials where possible.

**Option B:** Exposed concrete shall be patched as necessary with Abocrete synthetic patch material or equal. If color variation detracts from finish appearance, it may be painted with approved concrete stain.

**Option C-1:** Wood railings and columns shall be exterior grade finish lumber: stain or paint grade.

**Option C-2:** No PVC material shall be used. Heavy composite material matching consistency and finish of original wood (such as Fypon) may be considered if desired wood product is not available.

**Option D:** Original iron railings and columns shall be wire brushed, primed and painted as necessary to maintain original condition. Brass or other high-grade finishes shall be polished and protected with clear lacquer. Missing parts shall be fabricated and replaced where necessary.

**Porches – Entry Stairs and Stoops:** The material should echo the character, scale and finish of similar components of the surrounding street and block. In most cases this will be concrete since the steps are normally exposed to the weather. It is *not acceptable* to replace or cover existing concrete entries with wood. In *no case* shall pressure treated lumber be used to replace wood steps for exposed entry stairs.

**Windows, Doors and Trim - General:** The character of the neighborhood shall be maintained by adherence to the detailing of doors, windows and trim. Front doors and first floor windows especially shall be treated as main design elements of any façade project.

**Windows:** Shall maintain size and lite arrangement (2 over, 6 over 6, etc.) of original. New, insulated glass units shall be mandatory unless recreating special design features (sidelights, transoms, fan windows) renders that prohibitive.

**Doors:** Formal entry doors shall maintain the character of the street and block. Replacement with “suburban style” metal doors (oval lite panels, fake historic elements) shall be avoided. Use of storm doors with summer screen inserts is encouraged. No aluminum replacement screen doors.

**Trim:** Trim, sills, window caps and other fine details shall be of original design material. Aluminum coil stock shall not be used to cover original detailing. For properties with existing aluminum or vinyl siding, exposure of original painted sills, corner boards and trim shall be executed with exterior, paint grade lumber. If wood is not available a composite material (such as Fypon) can be considered.

**Façade Color Palette:** One or more design consultants shall meet with the grant recipient to come to a consensus on a paint scheme that both serves the building well and accentuates the context and character of the neighborhood. The consultant(s) shall work with the grant applicant to achieve a design appropriate to all concerns. A sample façade color palette will be made available to any grant applicants.