



***Vision:*** A crossroads of southern charm and modern innovation, Historic Downtown Wilson is the heartbeat of a diverse community, where arts, culture and unique businesses draw people day and night.

***Mission:*** WDDC leads community investment and drives the economic engine of an authentic Wilson by creating and promoting a vibrant, innovative & sustainable downtown.

# **Business Assistance Program**

## *for the Municipal Service District*

### **GUIDELINES & APPLICATION**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Business Assistance Program (BAP) is to physically improve downtown properties for priority business uses, stimulate active business and property ownership, healthy commerce, and pedestrian activity in Historic Downtown Wilson's Municipal Service District (MSD).

**Categories:** There are two (2) categories of assistance for which an eligible applicant may apply:

- I. Rent Incentive Grant (RIG) ***RIG SUSPENDED from 7/1/16 - 6/30/17***
- II. Building Improvement Reimbursement Grant (BIRG)

The program encourages business uses to include a mixture of retail, restaurant, entertainment, and professional businesses, which compliment an active downtown (i.e., shopping, dining, cultural, arts, daytime workforce, etc.).

When reviewing applications, the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC) will take into consideration a healthy "business mix" for the downtown.

WDDC has prioritized this program to focus on active uses that create a vibrant downtown. In particular, "Pedestrian Oriented Businesses"--the type of business that generates positive foot traffic and synergy downtown--are given priority for this grant program.

**Eligibility:** Eligible applicants must be either:

- 1) Owners of property located within the MSD who are *actively marketing* their property for lease or sale for priority business uses  
(*Only properties that are MSD tax generators are eligible.*)

**--OR--**

- 2) Owners of a lawful, for-profit business that is currently located and operating, or will be located and operating, within the MSD  
(See Map--Exhibit A) **and** the business meets the following conditions:
  - a. **a new business** that has been open & operating for 18 months or less  
(*Eligible for RIG or BIRG*)
  - b. **an existing MSD business** that is **making a significant expansion requiring renovations** to a property located within the MSD  
(*Eligible for BIRG*)
  - c. **an existing business opening an additional location or relocating** from outside the MSD area  
(*Eligible for RIG or BIRG*)

**Applicable  
Uses:**

As of October 2014, WDDC expanded the types of uses their incentives cover to meet the current needs of growing and existing businesses, as well as to help establish new businesses in properly equipped and renovated spaces. Although a rent grant continues to be offered to new and relocating businesses, interior renovations and permanent improvements to properties are a key focus of this new assistance program.

Although this is not an exhaustive list, to follow are possible reasons to apply:

- ✓ rent assistance (*ideally to free up operating funds to utilize in other ways, such as marketing*)
- ✓ interior up-fits or renovations including, but not limited to electrical, plumbing, HVAC, sprinkler systems
- ✓ structural repairs or improvements not covered by Façade Grant, which are part of a larger renovation project
- ✓ expenses related to energy efficiency, including but not limited to HVAC, windows, lighting, solar panels

Priority will be given based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Businesses that will attract other businesses to the MSD
- ✓ Businesses that have a successful financial track record and/or are well-capitalized
- ✓ Renovation that will spur additional development and private investment
- ✓ Renovation that will attract desirable new businesses and that create an effective business mix
- ✓ Renovation that will have a substantial visual impact
- ✓ Renovation that will result in filling vacant commercial space
- ✓ Renovation that will increase quality, usable square footage of commercial space
- ✓ Renovation that will increase property value
- ✓ Renovation that will increase employment
- ✓ Projects that will work hand in hand with other major developments

**Funds Available:** The Business Assistance Program is available through WDDC, administrator of the MSD tax revenues generated by taxable properties located within the boundaries of this defined district. (See Map--Exhibit A) Property owners within the MSD pay an additional tax of \$0.17 per \$100 valuation on their property. These additional funds are dedicated to economic development and programming within the MSD.

*The amount of available funding for these grants varies based on MSD revenue budgeted annually for these grants. Amounts and disbursement timeframes may vary, as well as conditions placed on recipients. Grants will be awarded for eligible projects on a funds-available basis as directed by the WDDC Board of Directors.*

## **GUIDELINES**

1. **No grant shall exceed \$8,000.**
2. Any assistance received will be a **one-time incentive grant**, not eligible for renewal. Each business is eligible for only one (1) rent incentive grant. Each property is eligible for only one (1) Building Improvement Reimbursement Grant per renovation project.
3. Assistance will be awarded to those that meet the approval of the WDDC Board of Directors. The payment amount and number of installments may vary depending upon type of assistance awarded. The board reserves the right to make awards based on business clustering for the best mix of uses in a particular area.
4. Any BAP application is eligible for funding, but **priority will be given to businesses and building improvement projects that make the greatest impact on the MSD.**

5. **Grants are not based on need, but to stimulate business ownership, economic activity, job creation and encourage pedestrian traffic in the downtown.** Only strong start-ups or strong existing businesses are encouraged to apply.
6. Eligibility shall vary per category. Each category requires additional documents, along with the attached application form.
7. Applicant must be operating or proposing to operate a lawful business which is allowed under current zoning in the MSD. The business and must abide by all other laws, rules and regulations of the City of Wilson, Wilson County, State of North Carolina and the Federal Government.
8. Following the formal application process through the WDDC Economic Development Committee, *and gaining final approval from the WDDC Board of Directors*, applicants shall be eligible for the amount specified in each category. (See details in the following pages.)
9. No grant will be awarded until all proper documentation has been filed, the application is approved by WDDC's Economic Development Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Directors, **and once the business is open for regular business.**
10. During the grant period, the WDDC reserves the right to monitor healthy and honest business operations as a condition of the grant. All businesses that are awarded a grant must be operating their business in a professional, honest, upstanding and customer friendly manner and must be an active and contributing business member of the downtown. **Violating these conditions, such as legal infractions and other unprofessional business activity may result in the suspension or revocation of an awardee's grant.** This will be spelled out in the grant agreement letter the awardee receives.
11. WDDC reserves the right to require business training as a condition of the grant. WDDC maintains partnerships with the Small Business Center, Upper Coastal Plain Business Development Center, Wilson Chamber of Commerce and other business assistance organizations. If required, this will be spelled out in the grant agreement letter the awardee receives.
12. The applicant agrees to hold the WDDC harmless of any damages, liability, or other costs relative to the business or property.
13. WDDC staff may use the incentives to recruit new businesses to the MSD.

### CATEGORY I: RENT INCENTIVE GRANT (RIG)

This grant shall not exceed \$8,000, up to 12 months, and no more than 75% of overall rent liability.

#### Square footage calculator for rent grants:

- up to \$3.00 per square foot of total dedicated, usable space occupied by a service business, bar/tavern/nightclub or other entertainment business use.
- up to \$5.00 per square foot of total dedicated, usable space occupied by a retail or dining establishment business use.

**RIG FUNDING  
SUSPENDED**

**FROM**

**7/1/16 TO 6/30/17**

## Rent Grant Regulations:

- A.** WDDC will make the grant payment directly to the property owner, as stated on the lease. The awardee is responsible for the remainder of the rent obligation. When the award period has expired for the rent grant, no extension will be given.
- B.** If awarded, the rent grant will be paid on a monthly basis for up to 12 months.  
*For example, if an applicant was awarded a grant in the amount of \$6,000, WDDC would issue a monthly check of \$500 for 12 months directly to the property owner.*
- However, WDDC reserves the right to institute a “step down” payment plan for the rent grant.  
*For example, if an applicant was awarded a grant, structured as a “step down” rent grant, in the amount of \$6,000 over 12 months, WDDC would issue monthly checks of \$650 for the first 6 months; \$450 for the next 4 months, and \$150 for the following 2 months, directly to the property owner. This will be spelled out in the grant agreement letter the awardee receives.*
- C.** No rent grant will exceed 75% of the total rent obligation.  
*For example, if the total rent obligation over a 12 month period is \$6,000, then the total rent grant would not exceed \$4,500 annually.*
- D.** WDDC reserves the right to monitor business hours as a condition of the rent grant. Awardees must post their regular business hours and must be open and fully operating during posted hours. *If the awardee chooses to change operating hours, they must request a change from the Economic Development Committee to do so. Violating these conditions may result in the suspension or revocation of an awardees rent grant. This will be spelled out in the grant agreement letter the awardee receives.*
- E.** WDDC reserves the right to monitor the timeliness of an awardees portion of the rent payments to the property owner, as stated on the lease. Being in arrears on rent payments may result in the suspension or revocation of an awardees rent grant.
- F.** The Economic Development Committee must be informed in writing and approve any deviation in its business operations before being undertaken by the awardee. If business operations are inconsistent with the contents of the original application or the business is not operating as a quality and respectable establishment, then the grant may be suspended or revoked.
- G.** Rent grant payments will begin once the awardee is open for regular business.
- H.** If the applicant closes the business prior to the granted funding period, or if the business is sold, the grant will be cancelled and the applicant may be required to reimburse WDDC for monies previously paid.

## **CATEGORY II: BUILDING IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT (BIRG)**

This grant shall not exceed \$8,000 and constitute no more than 50% of overall building improvement cost. Awardee will have 6 months to complete building improvements.

### **Square footage calculator for interior renovations:**

- up to \$3.00 per square foot of total dedicated, usable space occupied by a service business, bar/tavern/nightclub or other entertainment business use.
- up to \$5.00 per square foot of total dedicated, usable space occupied by a retail or dining establishment business use.

*Example:* Office renovation at \$3.00/sq. ft. x 2,000 sq. ft. = \$6,000 max. award, if building improvement expenses total at least \$12,000.

### **Building Improvement Reimbursement Grant Regulations:**

- A.** Allowable expenses include structural repairs and improvements (not covered by the Façade Grant), which are part of a larger renovation project, focusing on interior up-fits, energy efficiency upgrades, and renovations which will remain with the building if/when the lease is terminated or building is sold.
- B.** Building Improvement Reimbursement grant payments will be reimbursed based on successful completion of the improvement project. *Receipts must reflect submitted cost estimates.*
- C.** **Project must be started within 45 days of the notification of the grant approval and must be completed within 6 months.** Failure to complete the project by this date without an approved extension could result in loss of funding. *Prior to the deadline of completion, the Economic Development Committee must approve any extensions of completion date. **In no event shall any grants be extended beyond 12 months of initial approval.***
- D.** **The Economic Development Committee must review any deviation from the approved plans before being undertaken.** Payment can be denied if completed work is inconsistent with the contents of the original application or is of insufficient quality.
- E.** WDDC always recommends using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as a guideline for renovations to buildings located within the MSD. Priority is given to projects using these standards. (See Standards attached.)

*For example, WDDC would not encourage a drop-ceiling in place of a tin ceiling that could be totally or mostly refinished.*

A complete outline of these standards, describing how to appropriately preserve historic properties in working with masonry, wood, metals, roofs, entrances, storefronts, structural systems, mechanical systems, features/finishes, new additions, accessibility and healthy/safety, can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand>.



*NOTE: Property to be improved and businesses to be assisted must be free of all municipal and county liens, judgments, or encumbrances of any kind. This provision can be waived by the WDDC, if development plans for said property or business meets WDDC's goals and objectives. Upon approval, said property and/or business must remain free of all municipal and county liens, judgments or encumbrances of any kind under the term of the agreement.*

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **STEP 1**

Applicant is provided with an application from the Downtown Development office **if the business is located or is proposed to be located in the Municipal Service District area of downtown**. Office located at City Hall—112 Goldsboro St., E.) Every effort will be made to work with the applicant in preparing eligible projects.

### **STEP 2**

Applicant **must have a personal meeting** with Downtown Development staff **before completing the application**. Please call 252-399-2395 to set up an appointment the Downtown Business Specialist.

### **STEP 3**

**Applicant completes application and includes all of the following required documents:**

#### **For Rent Incentive Grant (RIG)**

BAP Questionnaire, Business Plan, Marketing Plan, Resume' or Additional Page of Past Business Experience, Porforma Statements, Profit and Loss Statements, Personal Financial Statements, Funding Sources, Current photo of the building and Historic Photographs of the building (if available), Copy of City of Wilson Business License, Copy of Lease or Deed of Ownership, and any other documentation stated on the application form.

#### **For Building Improvement Reimbursement Grant (BIRG)**

BAP Questionnaire, Summary of Project, Business and Marketing Plan, Resume' or Additional Page of Past Business or Development Experience, Cost Estimates for Renovation or Up-fit Expenses, Construction or Architectural plans as required by the City of Wilson to obtain a building permit for the project, Current Photo of the building, Historic Photograph of building (if available), Copy of Lease or Deed of Ownership and any other documentation stated on the application form.

#### **STEP 4**

**Documentation requests may be unique to each individual project and the applicant may be required to supply additional documentation which is not outlined in this document.** WDDC's Economic Development Committee seeks documentation to ensure that the applicant is a strong candidate and a good investment of WDDC's resources.

#### **STEP 5**

**The monthly application filing deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.** When appropriate documentation has been filed, staff will review it to determine if it is eligible for consideration by the WDDC Economic Development Committee. *Once deemed eligible and complete*, it will be presented to the **Economic Development Committee** for review. **This committee typically meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month.** The Economic Development Committee may request the applicant to attend a meeting to discuss the proposed project.

*NOTE: The committee combines their November and December meetings into one meeting, usually around the first week of Dec. In instances when holidays or other factors result in the rescheduling or combining of meetings, the committee reserves the right to delay review.*

#### **STEP 6**

The application is reviewed by the WDDC Economic Development Committee and, if recommended, is brought to the WDDC Board of Directors for final approval. The Economic Development Committee may present a recommendation to the Board of Directors; however, the Board of Directors is not required to follow the Economic Development Committee's recommendations. **The WDDC Board meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month and will make the final determination on the grant application.**

#### **STEP 7**

A notification letter and grant agreement will be sent to the applicant as to whether the project has been approved, approved with conditions, or denied.

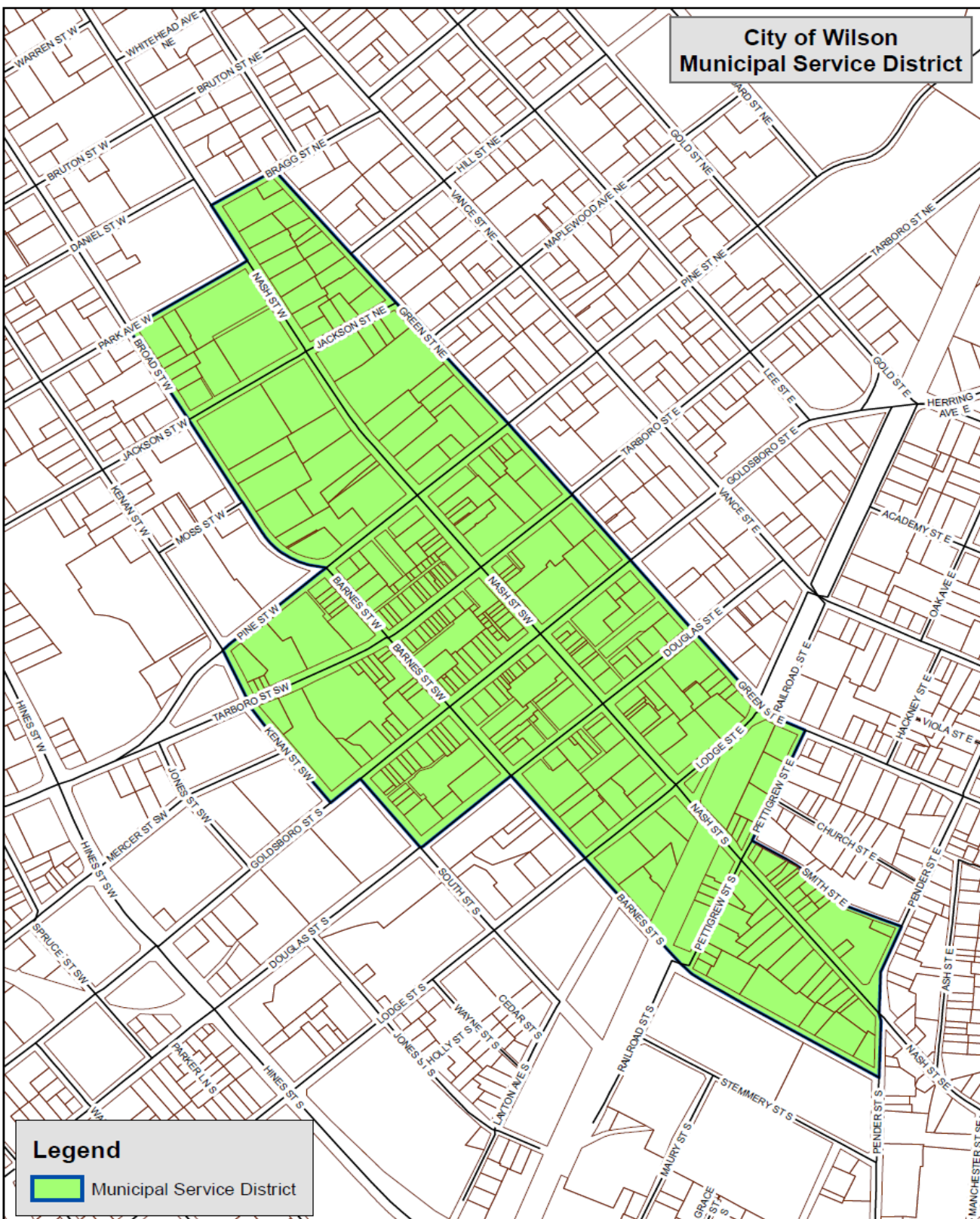
#### **STEP 8**

The grant agreement must be signed by awardee and returned to the Downtown Business Specialist at the Downtown Development office within two (2) weeks from the date of the notification letter.

*NOTE: The application and approval process usually takes at least 1 to 2 months, once all documentation has been supplied by the applicant.*



# EXHIBIT A



Wilson Downtown Development Corporation ~ 112 Goldsboro St. E., Wilson, NC 27893  
Ph: (252) 399-2395 ~ Website: [HistoricDowntownWilson.com](http://HistoricDowntownWilson.com)



# Business Assistance Program Application

<b>For Office Use Only</b>	
Review Date:	_____
By:	_____
ED Cmte Date:	_____ BOD Date: _____

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

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must Be Within MSD)

Name of Property Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Applicant's Information

Name of Applicant/Business  
Owner(s)/Tenant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

DBA: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this business currently operating? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, since what date? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, planned opening date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of employees: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of new jobs created: \_\_\_\_\_

Types of jobs: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated number of daily customers: \_\_\_\_\_ Square Footage of total space occupied: \_\_\_\_\_

Short description of business: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### I am requesting a (check one):

(RIG) Rent Incentive Grant of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ months = \$ \_\_\_\_\_/month  
(Not to exceed \$8,000 and 75% of total rent obligation for a term of up to 12 months)

Total Monthly Lease Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Length of lease: \_\_\_\_\_

(BIRG) Building Improvement Reimbursement Grant of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Not exceed \$8,000 and no more than 50% of overall building improvement cost)

Total Renovation Project Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total SF of Renovation Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Why you are applying for assistance and how does this assistance fit into your overall financial prospectus? (Attach additional page, if necessary.)

How would this assistance further the purposes outlined for WDDC's Business Assistance Program?

Have you applied for a WDDC grant in the past? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, for what? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Have you been a WDDC grant recipient in the past? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what kind of grant did you receive? \_\_\_\_\_

**As required, I (applicant) have attached the following documents:**

<b>R I G</b>	<b>B I R G</b>
<p><u>For Rent Incentive Grant</u></p> <p><b>RIG FUNDING</b></p> <p>BAP Questionnaire _____</p> <p>Business &amp; Marketing Plan _____</p> <p>Resume' of Past Business Experience _____</p> <p><b>SUSPENDED</b></p> <p>3 years of Proforma Statements (projections) _____</p> <p>Last 2 years of Profit and Loss Statements _____</p> <p>Last 2 years of Personal Financial Statements _____</p> <p>Copy of City of Wilson Business License _____</p> <p>Copy of Lease or Deed <b>FROM</b> _____</p> <p>Current photo of the building _____</p> <p>Historic photo of the building _____ (If Available)</p> <p><b>7/1/16 TO 6/30/17</b></p>	<p><u>For Building Improvement Reimbursement Grant</u></p> <p>BAP Questionnaire _____</p> <p>Business &amp; Marketing Plan _____ **</p> <p><i>**Current businesses that are expanding--Business plan is for expansion only, but info on current operations helpful</i></p> <p><i>**Owners renovating and not operating a business within the property—Explain your reasons for renovation in detail in your Summary of Project in lieu of a business plan</i></p> <p>Resume' of Business or Development Experience _____</p> <p>Summary of Project _____</p> <p>Construction Plans or Architectural Drawings _____</p> <p>Cost Estimates _____ *</p> <p><i>*Final receipts must be reflective of submitted cost estimates</i></p> <p>Copy of City of Wilson Business License _____ (If applicable)</p> <p>Copy of Lease or Deed _____</p> <p>Current photo of the building _____</p> <p>Historic photo of the building _____ (If Available)</p>

I understand that this grant must be used for the project described in this application. I understand that failure to abide by the information provided in my application and in my grant agreement contract may result in reduced funding or revoked funding. I hereby testify that I have fully read and understand the entire Business Assistance Program Guidelines and Application. I certify that my property and/or my business is free of liens, judgments, or encumbrances of any kind.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

### Introduction to the Standards

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing standards for all programs under Departmental authority and for advising Federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**The Standards for Rehabilitation** (codified in 36 CFR 67 for use in the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program) address the most prevalent treatment. "Rehabilitation" is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."

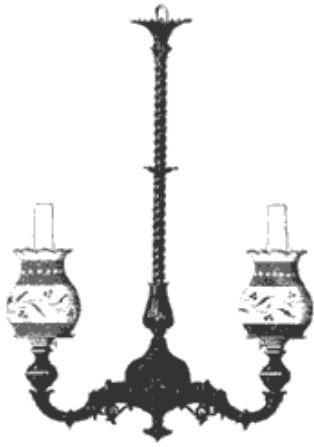
Initially developed by the Secretary of the Interior to determine the appropriateness of proposed project work on registered properties within the Historic Preservation Fund grant-in-aid program, the **Standards for Rehabilitation** have been widely used over the years--particularly to determine if a rehabilitation qualifies as a Certified Rehabilitation for Federal tax purposes. In addition, the Standards have guided Federal agencies in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities for properties in Federal ownership or control; and State and local officials in reviewing both Federal and nonfederal rehabilitation proposals. They have also been adopted by historic district and planning commissions across the country.



The intent of the Standards is to assist the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. The Standards pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and interior of the buildings. They also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. To be certified for Federal tax purposes, a rehabilitation project must be determined by the Secretary to be consistent with the historic character of the structure(s), and where applicable, the district in which it is located.

As stated in the definition, the treatment "rehabilitation" assumes that at least some repair or alteration of the historic building will be needed in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use; however, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character. For example, certain treatments--if improperly applied--may cause or accelerate physical deterioration of the historic building. This can include using improper repointing or exterior masonry cleaning techniques, or introducing insulation that damages historic fabric. In almost all of these situations, use of these materials and treatments will result in a project that does not meet the Standards. Similarly, exterior additions that duplicate the form, material, and detailing of the structure to the extent that they compromise the historic character of the structure will fail to meet the Standards.

## THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION



The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

**1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.**

**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. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.**

**5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.**

**6. 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 in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.**

**7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.**

**8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.**

**9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.**

**10. 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.**