



## Trail Town Business Sign Grant Program Guidelines

The Trail Town Program® is offering a matching grant program throughout 2011 in order to assist businesses in installing custom-made and locally-produced signs that reflect the special nature of each participating business.

Grant assistance may not exceed **\$500** per applicant or **50%** of eligible expenses, whichever is less, and is provided on a reimbursement basis. For example, if the total project costs \$1,000, the grant award will be half of that amount: \$500. A project that costs \$600 will receive a \$300 award. Projects that cost more than \$1,000 are eligible for the grant, but the award will be capped at \$500.

Eligibility requirements for this program are as follows:

1. Your business must be located along the Great Allegheny Passage and provide goods or services to GAP trail users.
2. You must spend at least one dollar of your own money for every dollar of grant money that the business receives. This is a "cash match" requirement. Site prep and in-kind contributions do not qualify.
3. The new sign must replace current signage that is either outdated or significantly out of step with the spirit of the *Trail Town Business Sign Design Guide* or create new signage that adheres to concepts in the guide.
4. Proposed signage should move your business toward a look and feel that reflect the recommendations set forth in the *Trail Town Business Sign Design Guide*. In many cases, these include, but are not limited to:
  - The sign's material consists of those recommended in the guide, and does not incorporate any of the discouraged materials.
  - The sign project reduces unnecessary signage and/or limits sign clutter (i.e., uses smaller and fewer signs).
  - Proposed lighting provides the lowest level of lighting so as to reduce light pollution.
  - The sign is not a plastic, internally illuminated sign, and in most cases does not include large, bold lettering, flashing lights, neon, etc.
  - The sign is sensitive to unique community characteristics.

- The sign respects the surrounding environment. For instance, it does not block or obscure views of neighboring businesses, scenic hillsides, ridges, peaks, or forests.

5. Grant is for on-premises permanent signage that will be affixed to a building or to the ground. Proposals for billboards and other signage located away from the business site are not eligible. Proposals for temporary signs (banners, signs advertising goods, sales, or special events, etc.) are also not eligible.

6. The sign manufacturer should be located within 120 miles of the trail corridor in alignment with the Trail Town Program's values of supporting our local economy.

7. Expenditures made prior to approval of your application will not be eligible for reimbursement.

8. The applicant will be responsible for ensuring that the sign meets all applicable local, state and federal regulations, and for securing any necessary approval from all applicable agencies. Please check with your local municipality for zoning requirements that may be applicable to signage.

In addition to filling out the official application form, you will need to submit the following documents:

- Clear, current photos of your existing signage, including streetscapes
- Some details about the proposed new sign's appearance. This should include, ideally, a sketch or mock up from the sign company.
- A simple breakdown or estimate of expected costs. (Most sign companies will give you an estimate without first contracting work.)
- After approval and project completion, receipts and photos of the installed sign must be submitted in order to receive reimbursement.

The Progress Fund's Trail Town Program<sup>®</sup> staff reserves the right to approve or disapprove grant requests based on whether it believes the sign will enhance each applicant's business image and visibility and align with our values of preserving built communities and supporting the local economy.

*These guidelines were drawn with much gratitude from others from throughout the Commonwealth, including those developed by:*

- *The PA Wilds Initiative*
- *Pine Creek Valley, courtesy of T&B Planning*
- *City of Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission*

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