

New York Main Street (NYMS)

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT FUNDING**



**Homes and
Community Renewal**

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RENEWAL

**ANDREW M. CUOMO, GOVERNOR
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Funding Availability

The Housing Trust Fund Corporation invites eligible applicants to apply for funding for New York Main Street Technical Assistance Projects. This Request for Proposals (RFP) describes the available funds, and the method used to accept and evaluate applications for funding.

HTFC expects to make up to \$200,000 in funds available to eligible applicants under this RFP. Eligible applicants are invited to submit applications for funding requests of up to \$20,000.

Background

The New York Main Street Program (NYMS) is administered by the Office of Community Renewal (OCR) under the direction of the Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC). HTFC contracts with New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) to administer the Corporation's activities and manage its affairs. NYMS provides funds to stimulate reinvestment in properties located within mixed-use commercial districts in New York State, consistent with Article 26 of the Private Housing Finance Law (PHFL).

The NYMS program provides grants to stimulate reinvestment in mixed-use (commercial, civic and residential) "main street" buildings or neighborhoods to:

- Stimulate the economic revitalization of mixed-use business centers in urban, small town, and rural areas by providing financial incentives for the rehabilitation of traditional commercial building stock;
- Foster small business development, thereby providing economic opportunities and promoting economic activity in traditional downtown or neighborhood business locations;
- Expand affordable housing opportunities in mixed-use districts, including accessible upper floor units and new homeownership opportunities;
- Increase the capacity of local government and community-based not-for-profit organizations to undertake community renewal programs at the local level and market the district to prospective businesses and residents;
- Facilitate an effective planning process that ensures that capital investments of public funds will enhance the aesthetics and economics of the commercial district through appropriate design that respects the historic architecture of the target area;
- Preserve significant or historic buildings and provide an environment that attracts new investment to enable the adaptive reuse of these buildings for new Main Street enterprises;
- Address issues of code enforcement, energy efficiency, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and fair housing to bring vacant commercial space into code compliance, so that it can be utilized by new businesses.

New York Main Street Technical Assistance Activity Description

New York Main Street Technical Assistance (NYMS-TA) projects are intended to improve a community's readiness to administer a future NYMS building renovation program. Two essential elements in successful administration of a New York Main Street renovation program are a clear understanding of the needs of the project community, and interest from mixed-use property owners. NYMS-TA funds are available to encourage communities to evaluate neighborhoods building conditions, and housing opportunities to prepare for future NYMS projects. Part of this evaluation may include identifying priority

target areas, and developing a phased approach to downtown revitalization. The NYMS-TA project should address local limitations identified prior to application, and should specifically address the unique needs of a community and how acquiring future NYMS building renovation funds will address these needs.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for NYMS Program applications are Units of Local Government or organizations incorporated under the NYS Not-for-Profit Corporation Law that have been providing relevant service to the community for at least one year prior to application.

HTFC strongly encourages collaborative efforts between not-for-profit organizations and local governments to achieve the goals and objectives of this program.

Eligible Activities

Examples of eligible NYMS-TA activities include, but are not limited to the projects described below. Please contact the Office of Community Renewal at 518-474-2057 or HCR_CFA@nyshcr.org to discuss project eligibility prior to submitting and application.

Building Reuse or Feasibility Analysis

Study for the rehabilitation or adaptive re-use of downtown, mixed-use building(s) to provide property owners with the resources necessary to make informed decisions regarding the feasibility of rehabilitation projects. These studies may include: historic and architectural analysis; building condition assessment; building code analysis; structural engineering study, proposed uses for the building including opportunities for upper story apartments; plan drawings; green technology potential; cost estimates; and funding strategies, including historic tax credits; and pro-forma analysis.

Design Guidelines

The importance of preserving downtown architecture must not be overlooked in repairing and renovating buildings for new occupants and uses. Design Guidelines should be an educational tool for property owners and provide technical assistance and practical recommendations for repairing and renovating downtown, potentially historic, building facades and storefronts. Proposals to produce Design Guidelines must provide clear community support, and a plan for formal adoption and implementation once produced.

Ineligible Activities

General administrative expenses, organizational operating expenses, general planning activities, construction activities or capital projects of any kind are not eligible for NYMS-TA funds.

NYMS-TA proposals should be for future capital projects. OCR and HTFC will not fund a NYMS-TA proposal related to an open NYMS contract or NYMS program renovation application under review.

Please contact the Office of Community Renewal prior to submitting an application to discuss project eligibility.

Eligible Target Area

A NYMS-TA project must be located within an eligible target area. Applicants must clearly identify how the target area meets each of the three components of the statutory definition of an eligible target area.

Applications that do not address each of the three statutory criteria, or do not provide clear source documentation will be deemed ineligible. Please note, based on the statutory criteria there are areas within NYS that are not eligible; therefore vague or unclear responses will not be interpreted to present an eligible target area.

Article XXVI of the Private Housing Finance Law indicates that an eligible target area shall mean an area:

- (i) that has experienced sustained physical deterioration, decay, neglect, or disinvestment;
- (ii) has a number of substandard buildings or vacant residential or commercial units;

and (iii) in which more than fifty percent of the residents are persons whose incomes do not exceed ninety percent of the area median income for the county or metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in which the project is located, or which is designated by a state or federal agency to be eligible for a community or economic development program.

Applicants are encouraged to identify well-defined Main Street areas to maximize the impact that the funds will have on the community.

Applicants are required to include a Target Area Map to identify the location of the proposed target area.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

General Review Criteria

Proposals will be examined for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete proposals and those that do not meet eligibility requirements will be rejected as ineligible.

HTFC will take into consideration the following community development goals in the review of NYMS-TA applications: preservation of affordable housing; community and neighborhood revitalization; expansion of economic opportunities; and collaboration with other local, state or federal agencies and the local development community.

Past Performance and Timeliness

Applications submitted by current awardees with open, on-going contracts may be negatively impacted if substantial expenditures or funding commitments have not been achieved. An applicant's past and current performance in other state programs and contracts will be considered in rating and ranking its application. HTFC reserves the right to not issue an award to any applicant if it has been determined that the applicant is not in compliance with existing state contracts and has not taken satisfactory steps to remedy such non-compliance.

Rating, Ranking and Scoring

Each application is reviewed and rated on criteria derived from statutory, regulatory and policy considerations. Each NYMS application that is determined to be complete and eligible will be reviewed and rated based on the following:

Demonstration of Need

Measures the severity of need for the proposed project based on the proposal's analysis of existing commercial and residential conditions in the targeted area, and the demonstration of need for financial assistance and public funding. The needs described should correspond to the proposed activities and the extent to which the activity resolves or addresses the identified needs.

Impact

Measures the extent to which the project will have a positive public benefit and sustainable positive impact on housing and economic development in the neighborhood and larger community. Specifically, this rating is based on the likelihood that Technical Assistance investment will preserve and improve housing units or increase the availability of affordable housing; improve the aesthetics of the commercial corridor; and spur investment of private resources to sustain commercial assets.

Priority is given to proposals for NYMS-TA projects that have a broader application in assisting other communities, or can be readily adapted for use by other communities, e.g., template guidelines or technical primers, as such projects maximize the NYMS-TA investment.

Local Support

Evaluates local support for the proposed project and demonstrated linkages between the proposed project and local planning and development efforts.

Leveraging

Measures the extent to which the program resources will result in additional investments committed to the project. Applicants are encouraged to present leveraged funds beyond the required 5% matching funds, particularly private funds.

Work Plan

Evaluates the project scope and work plan developed for the proposed project. Applicants must fully address the following work plan components:

- Procurement: Explain the applicant organization's procurement policies/procedures, and the procurement process to be used for the proposed project. The applicant must clearly explain how this process conforms with the applicant organization's procurement policies and how a reasonable project cost will be established. The NYMS-TA grant agreement will require a minimum of two bids for professional services.
- Budget: Outline the process for developing the project budget and establishing the program request amount. Include details related to the required matching funds or additional leverage.
- Deliverables: Outline the anticipated, immediate and long term outcomes for the proposed project, and the specific deliverables to be produced. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how the project will directly improve an organization and/or community's capacity or readiness to administer a future NYMS building renovation program. Applicants should specifically address how the identified deliverables will result in increased readiness for property owners to participate in a future NYMS building renovation program.
- Implementation Plan: Outline a specific action plan for implementing the deliverables produced with the program funds. For example, an applicant should present a plan for pursuing formal municipal adoption of architectural design guidelines produced, or present a timeline for applying for NYMS building renovation funds to complete an adaptive reuse project.

Capacity & Readiness

Measures the extent to which the applicant has organized the proposed project and has assembled sufficient resources to complete the project, and achieve the goals and objectives of the program in a manner that is timely, effective and on-budget. Applicants should demonstrate

experience in community development, housing rehabilitation or commercial revitalization in mixed-use districts, show a record of achievement within the proposed project area, and present a strong understanding of program rules. Proposals should document local approvals in place and adequate organizational structures and procedures to implement the proposed project without delay.

Pre-Application Requirements

Municipal Resolution

Each municipality in which the proposed program or project will function must approve a formal resolution supporting an application for the proposed NYMS-TA project. The resolution must be provided as an attachment to the application. The resolution must be on official stationery and should hold the official seal. Applicants within New York City must obtain the resolution from the Community Board with jurisdiction over the project target area.

- Draft or proposed resolutions are not acceptable, the resolution must be passed prior to the application submission.
- Support letters do not meet this requirement.
- The resolution must be for the current funding year and the specific NYMS-TA project application.
- If the municipality or Community Board provides only a summary letter without the full text of the resolution, the applicant must also provide a copy of the meeting minutes to document the vote and formal board resolution.

Applications without a Municipal Resolution, as described above, will be deemed ineligible.

Application Process

Beginning April 6, 2016, NYMS-TA applications will be available through an open round process in the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) portal. An applicant must complete the full application in the CFA portal within 90 days of beginning an application.

The Open Round process for NYMS-TA applications does not share the annual CFA round deadline. Open Round applications may be submitted throughout the year. The application will remain open until all available funding has been allocated. A CFA request for this program cannot include requests for other CFA funding sources within the same application.

Instructions for Submission

1. Register an application on the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Portal: <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>.
2. Once registered, applicants will be assigned an Application Number and a Token. This token will be used to log in to the CFA portal while completing the application.
3. Follow Instructions from the CFA@ny.gov email prompt to proceed into the CFA portal.
4. Use either the Program List or Program Wizard to select NYMS – Technical Assistance to begin the application.
5. Complete all required questions and upload required attachments.
6. Once the application is submitted, OCR will review the application.

Award Criteria Details

- HTFC reserves the right to award all, a portion of, or none of the program funds based upon funding availability, competitiveness of applications received, feasibility of achieving project goals and objectives and completing proposed activities. HTFC also reserves the right to change or disallow aspects of the applications and may make such changes conditions of its commitment to provide funding to a project or program. OCR reserves the right recommend funding in an amount less than requested.
- Award of a NYMS-TA proposal does not guarantee future NYMS renovation project funding.
- The OCR reserves the right not to issue an award or contract to any applicant if it has been determined that the applicant is not in compliance with existing state contracts and has not taken satisfactory steps to remedy such non-compliance.
- Documents and materials produced using NYMS-TA funds must identify New York Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) and the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) as the funding source. Copies of the materials produced must be submitted to the Office of Community Renewal upon project completion to request full reimbursement and complete the contract.
- Materials produced are property of HTFC, and HTFC reserves the right to modify and distribute such materials.
- Activities funded by the New York Main Street Program are subject to review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act and for compliance with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Projects that commence prior to contract execution and environmental review will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- NYMS operates as a reimbursement program, and NYMS funds will be disbursed only upon project completion. NYMS-TA projects require matching funds. NYMS-TA funds may reimburse up to 95% of the project cost, not to exceed \$20,000. The remaining 5% must be provided as a cash match.

Award Recommendations and HTFC Board Approval

Recommendations for awards are made based on available funding, proposal quality and project feasibility based on the review and rating of the complete and eligible applications. The evaluation and selection criteria are detailed in RFP. Recommendations are advanced to the HTFC Board for consideration and the NYMS-TA awards must be approved by the HTFC Board prior to the execution of a grant agreement.

Application Status and Notification

Applicants for NYMS-TA funding will be notified within approximately 60 calendar days of the application submission. Upon action by the HTFC, applicants will receive notification of the status of the proposal as follows:

- Ineligible Project: Applications for projects that are ineligible for funding under this program and funding source;
- Incomplete Letter: Application presents potentially eligible project, but provides insufficient information. Applicant will be provided an opportunity to submit additional documentation;
- Non-Award Letter: Application presents an incomplete, non-competitive, not viable project and will not receive an award of NYMS-TA funds;
- Award Letter: Application presents a complete, eligible, competitive and feasible project. The project has been recommended to and approved by the HTFC Board of Directors for funding.

Program Grant Agreements

Applicants selected for funding may be asked to revise parts of their proposal prior to issuance of a program grant agreement. After any required revisions are submitted and approved, an agreement will be issued. Recipients of NYMS-TA funding enter into a one-year (12 month) grant agreement in which all funds must be expended and all proposed accomplishments met.

An applicant should not submit an application if the project will not begin within a reasonable time period after receiving an executed grant agreement, or will not be able to complete the project within the one-year term. Funds remaining at the end of the one-year period are subject to de-obligation and reallocation.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Minority and Women Owned Business and Affirmative Action Policy Statement

Under Article 15A of the New York State Executive Law, all award recipients and their contractors are required to comply with the equal employment opportunity provisions of Section 312 of that Article. Also, all contractors and awardees are required to make affirmative efforts to ensure that New York State Certified Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises are afforded opportunities for meaningful participation in projects funded by HTFC pursuant to Section 313 of the Article.

Affirmative Action Policy Statement: It is the policy of the HTFC to provide equal opportunity to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.

Proposal Costs

HTFC will not be held liable for any cost incurred by the applicant for work performed in the preparation, production, or submission of a proposal. All proposal materials and information submitted as part of the application becomes the sole property of HTFC. No materials, curricula, media or other content will be returned to the applicant.

Questions

Any questions regarding this RFP or the application process should be directed to:

Crystal Loffler, NYMS Program Director

Office of Community Renewal

Hampton Plaza

38-40 State Street, 4th floor

Albany, NY 12207-2804

(518) 474-2057

HCR_CFA@nyshcr.org