

VILLAGE OF CANTON MAIN STREET PROGRAM GUIDELINES



BACKGROUND

The Village of Canton is applying for up to \$500,000 in grant funds through the 2020 round of the New York Main Street Program (NYMS) that is administered by the NYS Office of Homes and Community Renewal (OCR). The Canton Main Street Program (CMSP) will support residential and commercial development projects within the mixed-use downtown core area of the village. Funds will be used for the following eligible activities within a designated Target Area:

1. The renovation of mixed-use, commercial, and civic buildings;
2. COVID Relief activities;
3. Streetscape enhancements;
4. Administration and program delivery.

The NYMS Program is intended to promote economic development and historic preservation through comprehensive renovation projects. NYMS funds are not intended to address only minor repairs and deferred maintenance. Projects must produce a finished commercial, or residential space ready for occupancy and funds will only be disbursed for completed projects. The Village of Canton's Office of Economic Development (OED) is tasked with administration and delivery of the program, and the Director of Economic Development will act as Program Manager.

TARGET AREA

Projects are being solicited from the area outlined on the map below defined as 1-127 Main Street (between Riverside Drive and North Country Savings Bank), 3 East Main Street (St. Lawrence County Historical Association), 2-33 Riverside Drive (from Main Street to State Street), 8, 9, 12-14, 20-22, 21, 24 Miner Street, 1-15 Hodskin Street, 1-24 Court Street, and 1-22 Park Street. The Target Area may be refined after applications are received and projects are selected to maximize program impact, as required by the NYMS program.



ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All property owners in the Target Area are eligible to apply. A business owner who is a commercial tenant or leaseholder may apply, but additional conditions must be met.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The NYMS Program requires that project selection afford priority to projects that:

- Are visually prominent on Main Street;
- Include renovation of upper story residential units;

- Have historic value or are historic properties in danger of being lost in part or in total to disrepair or damage;
- With the assistance of grant funds will reduce blight, contribute to the economic recovery of the Target Area.

The Village will give priority to projects that contribute toward a vital and vibrant downtown economy, and leverage and encourage private investment by:

- Stabilizing the integrity of buildings with structural problems;
- Transforming vacant or underutilized second story spaces to affordable residential or commercial use;
- Transforming vacant or underutilized lower-level basement spaces to usable commercial space;
- Improving aesthetics through façade improvements that make downtown unique and attractive, such as updated signage and improved exterior lighting;
- Improving interior space that adds to area vitality and character;
- Improving functionality of historic buildings, including improving energy efficiency and adding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility; and
- Enhancing secondary access to retail stores and businesses from municipal parking areas to make them safer, more attractive and accessible.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

- Property must be located within the program’s designated Target Area.
- Property must be commercial or mixed-use.
- Property owner must be current on all village payments such as water and sewer bills, and current on all taxes including Village, Town, County and school, for all properties owned;
- Property must be covered by comprehensive property insurance as well as any specialty insurance that may be needed, such as flood insurance. Insurance must be sufficient to cover any outstanding loans on the property plus the total amount of CMSP program funds provided.
- Applicants must demonstrate sufficient available financial resources to complete the full project. At least 25% of the total project cost must be provided by the property owner as a non-reimbursable match of cash, loans, or other awarded state or federal grant funds. "Available" funds *cannot* include money drawn against a business’ Accounts Receivable, available credit balance on credit cards, or anticipated rents. It *can* include a loan/mortgage drawn against equity in the property to be renovated.
- Projects must not permanently displace low-to-moderate income tenants.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Village may award matching grants of up to \$50,000 per building, not to exceed 75% of the total project cost. Renovation projects that provide direct assistance to residential units may also be awarded an additional \$25,000 per residential unit, up to a per building maximum of \$100,000, not to exceed

75% of the total project cost. The owner is responsible for providing at least 25% of the eligible project costs as a non-reimbursable match of cash, loans, or other awarded state or federal grants.

This is a reimbursement program. The owner must spend 100% of the eligible project costs, then secure reimbursement for up to 75% of those costs through the Village. The Program Manager will work with property owners throughout the duration of the project to be sure proper documentation required for reimbursement is obtained.

It is recommended that all applicants meet with business advisors at SUNY Canton's Small Business Development Center to review the business and financial aspects of undertaking a CMSP project.

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

- Health and safety improvements such as mitigating radon and lead-based paint hazards, repairing or installing fire alarms, sprinklers or fire escapes, and addressing codes violations;
- ADA accessibility compliance;
- Renovations that address energy efficiency and green-building measures;
- Façade restoration such as preservation projects, reopening storefronts, removing security gates, installing signs or awnings, re-pointing brick, repairing windows;
- Residential improvements such as converting vacant upper stories into apartments and updating existing apartments. ***Any change of use requires written local approval;***
- Preparing commercial spaces for tenants such as installing drywall, electrical and plumbing; and
- Professional services costs that are reasonable and necessary for the completion of the project (i.e. architectural services, environmental review).

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

- Acquisition costs;
- New construction, including in-fill;
- Improvements to structures owned by religious or private membership organizations;
- Improvements to municipally-owned buildings used for municipal purposes;
- The purchase of non-permanent fixtures such as furnishings, appliances, electronics, and business equipment;
- General organizational operating expenses;
- Capitalizing a revolving loan fund;
- Site work or ancillary activities on a property, including septic systems and laterals, grading, parking lots, sidewalks, landscaping, fences, free standing signs, and general maintenance;
- General planning activities;
- Demolition of an entire structure, however necessary interior demolition may be permitted;
- Site work or ancillary activities on a property such as septic systems or laterals, grading, parking lots, sidewalks, landscaping, fences, free standing signs, or general maintenance;

COVID-19 – EXPANSION OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES (2020 Application round ONLY)

In conjunction with one of the above building renovation activities, applicants may also request to use funds to alleviate the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Requests must be specifically outlined in the application. COVID Relief activities must be directly related to a building renovation activity and will be awarded on a per project basis. Funds will be awarded only for activity ancillary to a traditional NYMS building renovation project and cannot be applied for on its own. Funds may be used for:

- Reconfiguration of existing facilities to encourage reduced density;
- Redesign and updates for air filtering or ventilation systems;
- Equipment or software required to increase business capacity and efficiency in post-COVID climate, e.g. online sales, POS systems. (One-time only purchases, subscription or membership fees are not eligible for reimbursement);
- Fixtures and equipment to partition customers, guide social distancing or provide contact-less sales opportunities; and
- Interior and exterior improvements to support adjusted business practices, e.g. pick-up windows, outdoor seating areas.

INELIGIBLE COVID-19 EXPENSES

- Inventory, rent or lease expenses, working capital or other undefined expenses, general or disposable supplies; and
- Other expenses that do not sustain business operation.

PROJECT REVIEW AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Submitting an application for funding under the CMSP does not guarantee receiving a grant. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Completed applications will be reviewed by an independent Selection Committee of community stakeholders and scored against the criteria set forth below, plus any additional criteria the Village decides to include in order to achieve its objectives for the program.

Project funding will be awarded based on applicants' scores after review, until all funds have been allocated. The Committee may award the total amount requested by an applicant or some lesser amount, whichever best fulfills NYMS Program and Village goals. Projects will be selected to ensure that a mix of interior and façade renovations, and of commercial, residential, and civic projects are funded to best enable the Village to meet the goals outlined in the New York Main Street Program Grant Agreement.

Applicants will be notified of the Committee's decision within thirty (30) days of the application deadline. Incomplete or late project applications will not be reviewed.

Project scoring will be based on the following criteria:

The proposed project:

- a) **Renovates a visually prominent building on the main street of the Target Area.** Projects having a visible impact on the appearance of key buildings are a priority. Projects that improve aesthetics through façade improvements that make downtown unique and attractive will score higher.
- b) **Includes renovation of upper floor residential units.** Projects that enhance the marketability of both affordable and market rate housing in the Target Area are a priority. Projects that transform vacant or underutilized second story spaces into affordable residential units will score higher.
- c) **Includes renovation of lower-level commercial units.** Projects that enhance the marketability of lower-level basement commercial units are a priority. Projects that transform vacant or underutilized basement level space into usable commercial units will score higher.
- d) **Preserves an historic or architecturally significant building that may otherwise be lost due to disrepair or damage.** Projects that rehabilitate a building listed, or eligible for listing, on the State and National Registers are a priority. Projects that stabilize the integrity of buildings with structural problems, or that restore or replace architectural detail elements that exist or used to exist on the building façade will score higher.
- e) **Reduces blight in the Target Area or aids in area revitalization efforts.** Renovations that have a visible impact on the appearance and economic viability of Target Area are a priority. Projects that improve aesthetics through façade improvements that make downtown unique and attractive, and/or improve interior space that adds to area vitality and character will score higher.
- f) **Enables stabilization or expansion of a business in the Target Area.** Projects that enhance the ability of tenant businesses to be successful are a priority.
- g) **Improves the functionality of an historic building.** Projects that improve energy efficiency and/or ADA accessibility will score higher.
- h) **Enhances secondary access to retail stores and businesses.** Projects that improve aesthetics, safety, visibility and functionality of alternate entries from municipal parking areas will score higher.
- i) **Consistent with other Village goals.** Projects that address goals identified in the Canton Community Action Plan will score higher.
- j) **Leverages additional funds.** Applicants that provide funding beyond the required 25% match will score higher.
- k) **Encourages private investment.** Applicants who invest in other improvements beyond those funded by the Main Street Program will score higher.

OTHER PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

For projects awarded a CMSP grant, these requirements will apply:

- A formal Scope of Work must be developed that fully specifies interior and/or exterior work that will be done to repair, renovate, and preserve the property. The Scope of Work will be developed with the assistance of a professional with experience in preservation of historic buildings, and renovation of buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Scope of Work will include a budget that details soft costs (i.e. architect fees, construction monitoring, filing fees, etc.), as well as construction costs.
- All aspects of the project will be overseen by the Village of Canton. This includes: development of the specifications and Scope of Work; selection of contractors to bid on the project; preparation and distribution of bid packages; and receipt of sealed bids. At least two (2) complete, competitive bids must be submitted to the Village for review. The Village of Canton will:
 - Involve the property owner in developing the initial Scope of Work;
 - Review the final Scope of Work with the property owner;
 - Involve the property owner in selection of bidding contractors;
 - Have the property owner (or a representative) present at bid opening.

While the property owner is free to select a bidder other than the lowest bidder, reimbursement will be based on the amount of the lowest bid; the difference shall be the responsibility of the owner.

The Village will require periodic inspections be performed by a construction inspector throughout the duration of construction until completion of the project.

- Residential units renovated with grant funds must be marketed to and affordable to households with incomes at or below 90% of the area median income. Based on the St. Lawrence County median income of \$52,108 in 2019, maximum rent for an efficiency unit is \$953/month; for a one bedroom is \$1,021/month; for a two bedroom is \$1,225. These rates will be adjusted annually by the NYMS Program.
- Property owners are obligated to maintain the condition and appearance of all improvements and maintain affordable rent limitations on assisted residential units for five (5) years from the date of project completion, and will be required to sign a Property Maintenance Declaration that will remain on file with the St. Lawrence County Clerk's office. If the property is transferred during this period the new owner must agree to assume the responsibility of maintaining the asset. If the asset is not properly maintained, repayment of NYMS funds is required according to a predetermined repayment schedule.
- NYMS projects are subject to the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The Scope of Work for the project will determine the required analysis and documentation. The Village will oversee the environmental review, which will include the following compliance areas:
 - Historic/Cultural Resources (State Historic Preservation Office review)
 - Flood Plains
 - Zoning and Change in Use
 - Coastal Zones
 - Site Contamination

- Lead-Based Paint
- Asbestos Containing Materials
- Radon
- Wetlands

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Office of Economic Development will begin accepting applications for the CMSP on December 17, 2020. Applications may be downloaded from the Village website at www.cantonny.gov or can be requested from the Office of Economic Development. The deadline for receipt of applications is 12pm on January 12, 2020. No incomplete or late applications will be reviewed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Leigh Rodriguez, Director of Economic Development

Village of Canton

60 Main Street

Canton, New York 13617

(315) 386-2871 x5

lrodriguez@cantonny.gov