

New York Main Street (NYMS)

CONSOLIDATED FUNDING APPLICATION 2021 AVAILABLE RESOURCES GUIDE



**Homes and
Community Renewal**

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RENEWAL

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New York Main Street Program

Funding Available: Up to \$6.2 million

Description:

The New York Main Street (NYMS) Program was created by the Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) in 2004 to provide resources to assist New York's communities with Main Street and downtown revitalization efforts. Article XXVI was added to NYS Private Housing Finance Law in 2009 to formally establish the New York Main Street Program in statute. The NYMS Program is administered by the Office of Community Renewal (OCR) under the direction of the Housing Trust Fund Corporation.

NYMS provides resources to invest in projects that provide economic development and housing opportunities in downtown, mixed-use commercial districts. A primary goal of the program is to stimulate reinvestment and leverage additional funds to establish and sustain downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

Eligible Types of 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.

Eligible Target Area:

All NYMS activities must be located in 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 cannot 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. The proposed activities must be carried out in a program target area of generally no more than three contiguous blocks which has experienced sustained physical deterioration, decay, neglect, or disinvestment, and has a number of substandard buildings or vacant residential or commercial units.

Applicants are required to include a Target Area Map to identify the location of the proposed target area and source documentation to demonstrate how the target area meets eligibility criteria.

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 program or project. The resolution must be passed prior to the application deadline and attached in the documents section of 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.
- Support letters do not meet this requirement.
- The resolution must be for the current 2021 funding round and the specific NYMS project.
- If the municipality or Community Board provides only a summary letter without the full text of the resolution, a copy of the meeting minutes must be provided to document the vote and formal board resolution.

This requirement applies to all NYMS application types. Applications without a Municipal Resolution, as described above, will be deemed ineligible.

Eligible Activities

Applicants may propose **one** activity for a 2021 New York Main Street (NYMS) application. Four NYMS activities are available in the 2021 CFA New York Main Street application:

1. Technical Assistance Project

Applicants may request up to \$20,000 to complete a project that improves community or property owner readiness to participate in a future New York Main Street renovation activity. Examples of eligible NYMS-TA activities include, but are not limited to, the projects described below. Please contact the Office of Community Renewal at HCR_CFA@nyshcr.org to discuss project eligibility prior to applying.

- **Building Reuse or Feasibility Analysis** - Analysis of rehabilitation or adaptive re-use options for 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; 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.
- **Economic Development Planning** - Economic resilience and sustainability is important to preserving and expanding the downtown or main street business community, so

resources are available to support future building renovation projects. These studies may include market analyses, business development plans, and plans for continuity of business operations.

Examples of completed [NYMS-TA Projects](https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street-technical-assistance-nyms-ta-completed-projects) are available for review online, here: <https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street-technical-assistance-nyms-ta-completed-projects>

2. Traditional NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Project

Applicants may request between \$50,000 and \$500,000 for Target Area Building Renovation Activities. Requests must not exceed an amount that can be reasonably expended in the identified target area, within a 24-month term.

- **Building Renovation:** Matching grants available for renovation of mixed-use buildings. Recipients of NYMS funds may award matching grants of up to \$50,000 per building, not to exceed 75% of the total project cost, in a designated target area. Renovation projects that provide direct assistance to residential units may be awarded an additional \$25,000 per assisted residential unit, up to a per-building maximum of \$100,000, not to exceed 75% of the total project cost.
- **Streetscape Enhancement:** Applicants may request up to \$15,000 in grant funds for streetscape enhancement activities, such as: planting trees, installing street furniture or public art or other activities to enhance the NYMS target area.

Applicants may request a higher amount, up to \$25,000, if the additional requested funds directly alleviate COVID related impacts and further economic recovery and neighborhood and community revitalization (e.g. creation of shared outdoor dining space, public space improvements to improve access and use of outdoor space, mechanicals necessary to use outdoor public spaces, etc.). Projects that specifically create paid work for artists or support the artist community will also receive favorable consideration.

The project and budget should be clearly defined at the time of application and include a detailed description of the proposed Streetscape project, how the proposed project enhances the planned building renovation projects, and contributes to other downtown revitalization efforts underway. If more than \$15,000 will be requested, the plan should also identify how the project will alleviate COVID related impacts.

- Streetscape enhancement grant funds will be awarded only for activity ancillary to a traditional NYMS building renovation project and cannot be applied for on its own. NYMS Downtown Anchor or Downtown Stabilization applicants may not request Streetscape funds.
 - Streetscape enhancement activities must be reviewed for eligibility and approved by HTFC prior to commencement of construction or installation.
 - Streetscape activities must be completed within the proposed target area.
- **Administration:** Applicants may request up to 7.5% of the grant amount for salaries and other costs associated with the administration of the grant. The administrative funds must be requested at the time of application, and must be included within the maximum request amount.

- **Soft Costs:** Applicants may request funds to cover architectural and engineering work, required environmental testing and clearances, and filing fees. These expenses must be included in the per-building activity funding limits, require matching funds and may not exceed 18% of the NYMS renovation funds for a specific project. Project costs incurred for work on buildings that eventually prove infeasible and do not receive other investments will not be reimbursed with NYMS funds. Funds for Soft Costs must be requested at the time of application, and must be included within the maximum request amount.

Funds for Administration and Soft Costs are available on a reimbursement basis, and will therefore be reviewed for eligibility prior to disbursement of funds. Applicants are not required to request NYMS program funds for Administration or Soft Costs, but are encouraged to identify alternate sources of funds for administrative expenses and soft costs. Additional funding commitments for administrative expenses and soft costs strengthen an application.

Example NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Application Request:

\$250,000	2021 NYMS Request Amount
\$210,000	Building Renovation Funds: to renovate five buildings
\$15,000	Streetscape Enhancement Funds: install bike racks, benches
\$10,000	Soft Costs: to hire environmental firm to complete five site specific reviews
\$15,000	Administration: hire consultant to administer grant

3. NYMS Downtown Anchor Project:

Applicants may request between \$100,000 and \$500,000 for a standalone, single site, “shovel ready” renovation project. NYMS Downtown Anchor Project funds are intended to help establish or expand cultural, residential or business anchors that are key to local downtown revitalization efforts through substantial interior and/or exterior building renovations. The NYMS Downtown Anchor Project funds may not exceed 75% of the Total Project Cost.

Applicants for NYMS Downtown Anchor Project funds must:

- Document a compelling need for substantial public investment and justify how the project qualifies as a Downtown Anchor.
- Document project readiness, as evidenced by funding commitments, developer site control, pre-development planning completed, and local approvals secured;
- Provide cost estimates to substantiate the request amount;
- Identify source(s) of available construction financing and matching funds;
- Demonstrate the importance of the project for the neighborhood, community and region;
- Provide a Business Plan and Market Analysis to demonstrate project viability.

- **Administration:** Applicants may request up to 5% of the grant amount for salaries and other costs associated with the administration of the Downtown Anchor Project grant. The administrative funds must be requested at the time of application and must be included within the maximum request amount.
- **Soft Costs:** Applicants may request funds to cover architectural and engineering work, required environmental testing and clearances, and filing fees. These expenses must be included in the per-building activity funding limits, requires matching funds and may not exceed 18% of the NYMS renovation funds for the project. Funds for Soft Costs must be

requested at the time of application, and must be included within the maximum request amount.

Funds for Administration and Soft Costs are available on a reimbursement basis, and will therefore be reviewed for eligibility prior to disbursement of funds. Applicants are not required to request NYMS program funds for Administration or Soft Costs, but are encouraged to identify alternate sources of funds for administrative expenses and soft costs. Additional funding commitments for administrative expenses and soft costs strengthen an application.

Example NYMS Downtown Anchor Project Application Request:

\$250,000	2021 NYMS Downtown Anchor Project Request Amount
\$227,500	Building Renovation Funds: to renovate one building
\$10,000	Soft Costs: to hire firm to complete environmental review
\$12,500	Administration: staff time to administer grant

4. NYMS Downtown Stabilization Project

Applicants may request \$100,000 to \$500,000 to complete a Downtown Stabilization Project. Funds are available to assist with environmental remediation and associated construction costs, as well as other innovative approaches to stabilizing and developing a downtown, mixed-use project. NYMS Downtown Stabilization Project funds may not exceed 75% of the total project cost.

NYMS Downtown Stabilization Project funds are available for projects that meet the goals identified above and, include, but are not limited to: asbestos management (surveys, abatement design plans, air monitoring, etc.), soil vapor intrusion testing and mitigation, building stabilization construction activities (e.g. roof stabilization in conjunction with asbestos remediation) or other projects that identify or mitigate risks associated with other hazardous materials or remove obstacles to future redevelopment. Applicants must demonstrate local support, financial commitments and a compelling need for substantial public investment.

Please contact the Office of Community Renewal at HCR_CFA@nyshcr.org to discuss project eligibility prior to submitting an application.

COVID Relief Activities

In conjunction with Target Area Building Renovation Activities or a Downtown Anchor Project, applicants may 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 awarded on a per project basis. Funds will be awarded only for activity ancillary to a traditional NYMS building renovation or Downtown Anchor project and cannot be applied for on its own. NYMS Downtown Stabilization applicants may not request to use funds for these activities. Program administrators will be required to document:

- Impact of COVID on participating business or property owner;
- Need for funding;
- Confirmation that funds do not duplicate other available resources and;
- Explanation for how the investment impacts the sustainability and resiliency of the business or property. Small projects are unlikely to demonstrate long term viability.

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 a 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;
- Interior and exterior improvements to support adjusted business practices, e.g. pick-up windows, outdoor seating areas.

Ineligible expenses include:

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

Applicants requesting to use funds for COVID Relief activities in conjunction with a NYMS Downtown Anchor project must specifically identify the amount allocated for these activities in the budget and budget table attachment as well as describe the specific use in the budget narrative question.

Applicants requesting to use NYMS funds for COVID Relief activities must confirm that funds will not duplicate other available resources. Award of NYMS funds does not confirm eligibility of all activities included in an application proposal. All activities must be reviewed for eligibility and approved by HTFC prior to commencement.

New York Main Street (NYMS) Program Ineligible Activities

Please note: An applicant is encouraged to focus its efforts on one project type. For this reason, applicants may propose only one NYMS activity in an application.

Ineligible uses of NYMS funds include, but are not limited to: demolition; new construction; 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 are not eligible under the four NYMS program activities.

Costs that are not adequately justified or that do not directly support the project are not eligible for reimbursement with NYMS funds. Contact the Office of Community Renewal prior to submitting an application to discuss project eligibility, and review the NYMS Program Guide for more detailed guidance on NYMS program rules: <https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street>

NYMS Selection Criteria – up to 100 Points

Total Vision and REDC Strategies –20 points

The Regional Council rates the degree with which the proposed project aligns with the Regional Council's Strategic Plan.

Need - 10 points

Measures the severity of need for the proposed Main Street activities, based on the analysis of existing commercial and residential conditions in the target area. The needs described must correspond to the proposed activities and the extent to which the activity resolves or addresses the identified need. Applications should include data and a relevant examination of that data to demonstrate substantial need. The application must provide a clear statement about the need for public investment in the proposed target area and specific need for the NYMS program funds to receive maximum points.

Impact - 10 Points

Measures the extent to which the project described in the application will have a positive public benefit and sustainable positive impact on the commercial and residential conditions in the target area and surrounding community and neighborhoods. Applications should provide clear explanations of the anticipated impact of the proposed program, including but not limited to: enhancement of existing assets in the target area and community, expansion of economic opportunities, ability to spur investment of private resources, improvement of aesthetics, and preservation and creation of affordable housing in the upper floors of mixed-use buildings. Applications determined to have the greatest impact on increasing the availability of quality, affordable housing and the greatest impact on business conditions, when compared to other applications, will receive the highest scores.

Leveraging & Financing Plan - 20 Points

Measures the quality and completeness of the proposed project budget and status of funding commitments, specifically:

- Clarity of project budget including eligible use of funds and substantiated request amount;
- Status of funding commitments for required match and construction financing;
- Extent to which the NYMS resources will result in additional investments including private sources beyond the required matching funds (leveraging);
- Plan for use of funds for soft costs and administrative expenses.

Implementation Capacity and Readiness - 40 Points

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. 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.

- Program Experience - Points for performance history are available to applicants that are administering an open NYMS or other Office of Community Renewal program contracts where substantial expenditure or funding commitments have been achieved and sufficient progress has been made. Points are also available to applicants that have successfully and effectively completed previous NYMS or other Office of Community Renewal program contract obligations. Applicants that have not previously participated in the NYMS program but have a successful record of achievement within the community where the proposed Main Street target area is located, and have assembled

a team with experience in community development, housing rehabilitation, or commercial revitalization in mixed-use districts on a scale comparable to the proposed program or projects will also be eligible for points.

- **Implementation Capacity** - Proposals that have identified specific projects, clearly substantiated the request amount, obtained local approvals, have demonstrated a clear understanding of NYMS administrative procedures, and have necessary organizational structures in place to implement the proposed projects, without delay, will receive the most points.
- **Program Support** - Evaluates local support and linkages between the proposed project and local planning and development efforts. Rates the degree to which the proposal relies on building consensus and cooperation among groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.
- **Design** - Applicants must outline the plan for a coordinated design review process. The highest scores will be awarded to proposals in communities that have existing design standards and have identified the necessary resources to work with building owners to enhance the physical appearance of the commercial area by preserving historic buildings and implementing sensitive design plans.
- **Business Strategy** - Applications must demonstrate a viable strategy for retaining and assisting existing businesses, attracting new customers, potential investors and residents, and finding new commercial uses for traditional buildings in the district. Downtown Anchor applications must present a viable strategy for establishing or expanding a cultural, residential or business anchor that is key to local revitalization efforts. Priority consideration will be given to applicants that demonstrate a strong understanding of current economic conditions in the district, identify opportunities for market growth, and clearly demonstrate how the proposed project contributes to improving economic conditions. Projects that demonstrate capacity to grow the district's existing economic base, while meeting the challenges of commercial sprawl, will receive the highest scores.

Funding Priorities:

- Ready to go or "shovel ready" projects. Project readiness is best demonstrated by clear funding commitments for permanent and construction financing, documented site control, completed pre-development planning work, local approvals, and administrative capacity.
- A proposed NYMS service area should include a mix of uses, such as residential, commercial, and civic buildings. Individual assisted buildings are not required to include both residential and civic or commercial spaces; however, applications should propose a comprehensive approach to strengthen both the commercial and residential sectors. Affordable housing in upper-floor spaces and on adjacent streets helps to strengthen the social and economic vitality of the business district. Incorporating residential units on the upper floors is strongly encouraged and those projects will receive priority consideration.
- For NYMS there is a preference for funding proposals where contiguous buildings will be assisted, maximizing the impact of the investment.
- Applicants able to successfully demonstrate broad local support and linkages between the proposed project and local planning and development efforts, and applicants documenting high percentages of committed matching and leveraged funds will receive the highest scores.

Significant Statewide Programs:

Proposed projects that are part of the following initiatives will be looked upon favorably.

- **Downtown Revitalization Initiative and Strategic Community Investment**
Priority consideration will be given to proposals which demonstrate they will advance downtown revitalization and strategic place making through transformative housing, economic development, transportation and community projects that will attract and retain residents, visitors and businesses - creating dynamic neighborhoods where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work, and raise a family. Projects should reflect the general principles of smart growth and sustainable development.
- **Improving Access to Child Care**
Despite record investments in child care, many New Yorkers still struggle to access high quality child care. This issue forces families to choose between quality child care and employment or places families in the position to use unlicensed child care providers. Applicants should provide any information about their project that works to improve access to child care.
- **Environmental Justice**
Environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. As we transition to a greener economy, it is imperative that no subset of the population be marginalized or left behind. Applicants should provide any information about how their project actively works to address these issues.

Award Criteria Details:

- HTFC 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. Not-for-profit organizations applying for NYMS program funds must submit a Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire (VRQ) with the application. Projects that commence prior to contract execution and environmental review will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- HTFC reserves the right to award all, a portion of, or none of a program's funds based upon funding availability, feasibility of the applications received, the competitiveness of the applications, an applicant's ability to meet HTFC criteria for funding, the applicant's ability to advance the State's housing goals, and HTFC's assessment of cost reasonableness. HTFC reserves the right to award less than the requested amount, and further reserves the right to review an application requesting project funds as an application for funding under other programs for which the project is eligible, and to change or disallow aspects of the applications received.
- Award of NYMS funds does not confirm eligibility of all activities included in an application proposal, and HTFC reserves the right to change or disallow aspects of the applications received and may make such changes an expressed condition of its commitment to provide funding to a project.

- HTFC will consider regional distribution in the determination of awards, to the extent practicable.

Limitations:

The list below identifies several program requirements, and limitations, but applicants are advised to review the [NYMS Program Guide](#) for additional detail related to activity eligibility and grant administration:

<https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street#forms-and-documents>

Environmental Review

Prior to the commitment or expenditure of NYMS program funds, the environmental effects of each activity must be assessed in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Environmental Compliance areas evaluated for each project include, but are not limited to: Historic and Cultural Resources, Floodplains, Zoning, Site Contamination, Lead Based Paint, Asbestos Containing Materials, Radon, Endangered Species, and Smart Growth. Please review the NYMS Program [Environmental Compliance Handbook](#) for additional information:

<https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street#forms-and-documents>

Funding Commitments

NYMS Downtown Anchor and Stabilization Projects must be ready to commence upon award, grant agreement execution and environmental review. HTFC will not execute a grant agreement with applicants unable to present evidence of site control and construction financing commitments sufficient to undertake the proposed project following award of NYMS funds.

Procurement & Bidding

All NYMS activities including contracting, professional services, and administration require a minimum of two bids or proposals to be solicited and accepted by the applicant organization to establish reasonableness of cost.

Regulatory Term

The owner of a property improved with NYMS funds must agree for a minimum of five years to: maintain the property in good operating order and condition; to make available and maintain the affordability of residential housing units to persons of low income (90% Area Median Income) by signing and filing a Property Maintenance Declaration with the County in which the building is located.

Project Term Completion Dates:

Projects must not commence prior to award, and grant agreement execution. Costs incurred prior to award and grant agreement execution will not be eligible for reimbursement. NYMS-Technical Assistance project awardees enter into a one-year grant agreement. NYMS Target Area Building Renovation, Downtown Anchor and Downtown Stabilization awardees enter into a two-year grant agreement.

Applicants should not submit applications if they do not expect to initiate the project within a reasonable time after receiving an executed contract or will not be able to complete the project within the term. Funds remaining at the end of the term are subject to de-obligation and reallocation.

Matching Fund Requirements:

Each of the NYMS activities require matching funds, and only funds directly invested in eligible project activities are eligible as the required match. In kind match is not eligible, and costs incurred for ineligible activities or prior to award and contract execution are not eligible.

- New York Main Street Technical Assistance Project
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, in kind match will not be accepted. A total project cost of at least \$21,053 must be presented to request a \$20,000 NYMS-TA grant.
- New York Main Street Building Renovation Project
The NYMS Program operates as a reimbursement program and the NYMS Program Guidelines require matching funds for each participating building project. NYMS funds may reimburse up to 75% of total, eligible project costs for general building renovations up to a maximum of \$50,000 per building, or up to \$100,000 for a building renovation project involving direct assistance to a minimum of two residential units.
- New York Main Street Downtown Anchor Project
NYMS Downtown Anchor Project funds are available to reimburse up to 75% of a total, eligible project cost not to exceed \$500,000 in NYMS Downtown Anchor Project funds. The minimum NYMS Downtown Anchor request amount is \$100,000.
- New York Main Street Downtown Stabilization Project
NYMS Downtown Stabilization funds are available to reimburse up to 75% of a total, eligible project cost not to exceed \$500,000. The minimum NYMS Downtown Stabilization Project request is \$100,000.

Additional Resources:

For more information, applicants should contact the Office of Community Renewal at New York State Homes and Community Renewal, 38-40 State St, Albany, New York 12207, call (518) 474-2057, email HCR_CFA@nyshcr.org or visit the NYMS website: <https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street#funding-round-materials>