

Virginia Main Street

Fiscal Year 2025 Grant Manual



Virginia Main Street (VMS) At-a-Glance

What does this program do?

Virginia Main Street provides hyperlocal community economic development that focuses on improving the living environment through the development and management of historic downtown and commercial districts using the Main Street Approach™. **From 1985 to 2022, Virginia Main Street communities created more than 7,500 businesses; 25,000 jobs; and generated more than \$2.1 billion in public and private investment.**

Eligible Applicants Include:

- Advancing Main Street organizations
- Mobilizing Main Street organizations or the unit of local government
- Exploring Main Street organizations or the unit of local government
- [Access Map Here](#)

Grant Awards:

- Community Vitality Grants – up to \$15,000
- Downtown Investment Grants – up to \$75,000
- Financial Feasibility Grants – up to \$25,000

Main Street is Economic Development. And Community Development. And Planning, Placemaking, Historic Preservation, Adaptive Reuse, and Housing Development. Working in tandem with, and complementing, traditional economic development tools, local Main Street programs create places that attract talent and private investment. As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, the Virginia Main Street program, housed in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), nurtures successful local commercial district revitalization programs across Virginia by enhancing aesthetics, providing resources to grow and sustain small businesses, and creating opportunities for connecting with friends and family. The dedicated and experienced Virginia Main Street team provides training, economic vitality services, grant funding, and knowledge sharing resources to communities of all sizes with different levels of experience in, and commitment to, commercial district revitalization.

What makes a successful Virginia Main Street grant project?

Across all grant opportunities, VMS prioritizes visibly impactful, physical improvement projects that:

- Promote a community's unique, identity-defining assets—both built and cultural;
- Promote inclusive collaboration and engagement with a vast and diverse set of local partners, leaders, stakeholders, and residents;
- Support local entrepreneurs, small businesses, women- and/or minority-owned businesses, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and small-scale development;
- Promote equal access to opportunity and thoughtfully acknowledge and address diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility challenges and opportunities; and
- Promote the awareness, growth and financial sustainability of the local Main Street organization.

Use of Funds

VMS grant programs are designed for flexibility. Within our program priorities, tell us how your project relates to an adopted strategic or work plan and how the proposed activities will generate economic activity in the district.

Virginia Main Street (VMS) At-a-Glance

Program Outcomes

In 2022 alone, VMS Advancing Main Street communities reported:

- Over **\$49 million in privately funded improvements** to downtown historic buildings;
- Over **\$49 million in public improvements** to help encourage private investment in downtowns;
- More than **241 unique businesses** created, expanded or retained in historic commercial districts, and;
- More than **825 jobs created or retained** for local community members seeking employment

Getting Started!

Communities can participate in Virginia Main Street in one of three tiers:

Tier One: The Exploring Main Street (EMS) tier is open to all communities, including incorporated and unincorporated municipalities and urban neighborhood commercial districts, who are exploring the Main Street Approach for downtown commercial or neighborhood revitalization.

Tier Two: Mobilizing Main Street (MMS) is a two-year, competitive, cohort-based accelerator program that provides targeted organizational development support to build a community's revitalization program using the Main Street Approach.

Tier Three: Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) is the top tier of VMS participation. AVMS communities have established volunteer organizations that are committed to long-term implementation of the Main Street Approach. They are supported by their local municipality and other local community and economic development organizations, along with VMS and MSA.

Contact the Virginia Main Street Team today – mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov!

South Hill - Virginia Statewide Business District Resurgence Grant

In 2022 the Town of South Hill supplemented two of its existing business incentives —the Façade Improvement Program and the Building Up-Fit Grant—with \$50,000 in funding from Virginia Main Street. The expanded Façade Improvement and Building Up-Fit Grant programs dispersed more than \$110,000 in grants and improved 10 buildings in the historic downtown. Eligible improvements included painting and replacing exterior doors, windows, awnings, lighting, porches, and decks, along with replacing sidewalks and HVAC systems. One building was able to install updated kitchen equipment including a hood system that was required to continue restaurant operations. A \$50,000 investment by the state through the Resurgence funds was leveraged with additional public and private funds totaling more than \$700,000, for a return on investment of more than \$14 to \$1.

Virginia Main Street Grants Fiscal Year (FY) 2025

Background

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Virginia Main Street Program (VMS) is a community economic development program that follows the Main Street Approach™ of the National Main Street Center. Each year local Main Street organizations work to attract the necessary public and private investment to their historic commercial districts in order to: (1) breathe new life into blighted and vacant buildings; (2) establish and expand independent businesses that make downtowns fun and unique consumer destinations; and (3) create mixed-use downtowns where people live above bustling commercial establishments and property owners maximize the productive use of every floor of downtown buildings.

The cumulative success of the Main Street Approach™ and local programs has earned Main Street the reputation as a powerful economic revitalization tool. In 2022 alone, VMS designated communities reported:

- Over \$49 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings;
- Over \$49 million in public improvements to help encourage private investment in downtowns;
- More than 241 unique businesses created, expanded or retained in historic commercial districts, and;
- More than 825 jobs created or retained for local community members seeking employment.

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VMS Grants at a Glance

Each year, DHCD and VMS offer a number of grant opportunities to further the revitalization and preservation of Virginia's historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts with a goal of creating vibrant and thriving local economies.

The grant opportunities are outlined below.

| | Downtown Investment Grants (DIG) | Community Vitality Grants (CVG) | Financial Feasibility Grants (FFG) |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Who is eligible? | Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) organizations | Exploring (EMS) & Mobilizing Main Street (MMS) communities* | All VMS communities with priority to AVMS* |
| Maximum Award | \$75,000 | \$15,000 | \$25,000 |
| Match Requirement | 2:1** | 2:1 | N/A |
| Project Types | Downtown economic improvement & community revitalization | Downtown revitalization & organizational development | Downtown redevelopment |
| Application Deadline | April 5, 2024 | April 5, 2024 | Rolling*** |
| Expected Project Completion | Fall 2025 | Fall 2025 | May 31, 2025 |

*Grant can be administered through the designated local Main Street organization or local government.

**Ratio is DHCD grant funds to grantee match. For every \$2 of grant funding applied for, there must be \$1 in match funding committed.

***Applications will open on February 1, 2024. Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a first come, first serve basis and will remain open until program funding is fully obligated.

VMS Priorities

Across all grant opportunities, VMS prioritizes visibly impactful, physical improvement projects that:

1. Promote a community's unique, identity-defining assets—both built and cultural;
2. Promote inclusive collaboration and engagement with a vast and diverse set of local partners, leaders, stakeholders, and residents;
3. Support local entrepreneurs, small businesses, women- and/or minority-owned businesses, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and small-scale development;
4. Promote equal access to opportunity and thoughtfully acknowledge and address diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) challenges and opportunities; and
5. Promote the awareness, growth and financial sustainability of the local Main Street organization.

How-to-Apply Webinars

DHCD will offer virtual a How-to-Apply Webinar for VMS grants on January 31, 2024. This will be recorded and shared on the VMS page of the DHCD website: <https://dhcd.virginia.gov/vms>. Prospective applicants are also encouraged to reach out to DHCD staff as soon as possible to discuss any projects in development.

Downtown Investment Grants

Overview

Downtown Investment Grants (DIGs) allow Main Street organizations to take on unique, one-time projects that measurably, creatively, and sustainably advance the organization's goals and strategies. DIGs involve multiple downtown partners and require active leadership and participation by the organization's board, committees, and volunteers.

Eligibility

Grants are available only to designated Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) organizations and must be administered through the local Main Street organization. Applicants must be current on all VMS and DHCD reports (as applicable) and comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements denoted below. Priority is given to Main Street America Nationally Accredited Communities.

Award Amount

The maximum award amount per organization/project is \$75,000.

Match Requirements

All projects require a 2:1 match. For every \$2 of grant funding applied for, there must be \$1 in match funding committed. In-kind services provided by local government, consultants, and other Main Street stakeholders and partners may be included. Time contributed solely to the implementation of the project by volunteers from the Main Street organization or the organization's partners may be included.

Funding Priorities & Anticipated Outcomes

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project will result in measurable economic improvement in the Main Street district. The project will:

- Support the community's vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district;
- Clearly align with the mission of the Main Street organization; and
- Address one or more of the organization's Transformation Strategies or market-based strategic planning goals for the Main Street district.

The implementation of the proposed project will empower board and committee volunteers as leaders and help develop and capitalize on the expertise and financial support of the organization's stakeholders and community partners.

DIGs can be used to: fund complete projects; provide seed funding for new projects; or provide gap financing that allows a project to become fully funded. As noted above (in the "VMS Grants at a Glance" section), visibly impactful, physical improvement projects that will result in one or more of the preferred outcomes will be prioritized.

Grantees are encouraged to utilize Consultant Services (see pages 10-13 in the [2022 VMS Program Guidelines](#)) to develop design projects, as well as the planning and organizational support components for economic vitality projects.

Unallowable Activities

Except for 10% or less of grant administration fees, DIG funds may not be used for operational expenses, such as payroll, debts, or any other ongoing, predictable organizational expenses for which the board could have reasonably planned (i.e. general marketing materials, website updates, financial management expenses, etc.). Additionally, funds may not be simply “passed through” the Main Street organization to third parties.

Scoring Rubric

Grant applicants are scored on a 0-100 point scale. Grant funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. Funds will be allocated from top scoring until all funds are exhausted.

The project scoring methodology is as follows:

| Criteria | Points |
|---|------------|
| Relation to organization’s strategies/goals | 30 |
| Project’s impact/outcomes and alignment with VMS’s priorities | 30 |
| Organizational capacity/readiness | 15 |
| Relation to organization’s mission and vision | 10 |
| Realistic project work plan and budget | 10 |
| Organization is Nationally Accredited | 5 |
| Total | 100 |

Sample Projects

1. [Downtown Blackstone, Inc.’s Façade Improvement Grant Project](#) - A \$25,000 DIG funded a façade improvement grant matching program to help enhance the exterior appearance of buildings and stimulate private investment in Blackstone’s historic commercial district.
2. [St. Paul Tomorrow, Inc.’s Outdoor Dining & Alleyway Improvement Project](#) - An \$18,000 DIG supported the completion of an alleyway activation project, creating a pocket-sized outdoor eating space between two restaurants that hosts both permanent and temporary art exhibits.
3. [City of Winchester’s Streetscape Improvement Project](#) - A \$25,000 DIG funded streetscape improvements on Piccadilly Street including new parking space parklet murals (designed by local artists) and façade improvements that ultimately spurred lots of private investment on a traditionally overlooked street in the downtown district.

Timeline

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Register your Organization in CAMS | ASAP |
| Application Submittal Deadline | April 5, 2024 |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Application Review | May & June 2024 |
| Anticipated Award Announcement | Summer 2024 |
| Successful Projects Under Contract | Fall 2024 |
| Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved | Fall 2025 |

Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted within 12 months from the contract start date.

Application Deadline

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted in DHCD’s Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) by 11:59 p.m. on April 5, 2024. See “Additional Information & Requirements” below for more information about CAMS.

Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified. Additional information can be found below in the “Additional Information & Requirements” section.

Application Questions (Project Description)

Enter the following information into the relevant text box within the Narrative Information tab on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project. What activities are you proposing to do with this funding? Where will this project take place – within the entire district or a specific location? Include as an attachment any design renderings, façade program guidelines or other supporting documents to demonstrate the scope of your project.
2. How and when will the proposed project be accomplished? Include a fully completed work plan with a detailed timeline. (See the template linked in the “Application Attachment” section.)
3. Who will be working on this project? List any/all organizational or municipal staff, committee members and/or volunteers that will be working to implement this project. What role(s) will they play and how will they contribute? (Note: This should provide more detail than the simple team member list included in the work plan.)
4. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community’s vision for the Main Street district, aligns with the mission of the Main Street organization, and addresses one or more of the board’s Transformation Strategies/goals for the Main Street district.
5. Describe outcomes that are expected from this project, both quantitative and qualitative. Examples of outcomes might be: number of new jobs created, number of new businesses created or supported, building renovation or construction, private and public investment, number of housing units created, public improvement, increased community engagement, percentage increase in foot traffic, percentage increase in shopper spending, and such. Describe how these outcomes will be tracked and reported and how these anticipated outcomes align with VMS’s priorities (denoted on page 3).

Application Attachments

The below supporting documents are **required**:

1. Mission/Vision: Include the community's vision statement for the Main Street district and mission statement for the Main Street organization.
2. Board/Committees: Include a current list of the organization's board and committee/project team members. For the board, include when they joined the board and when their term expires.
3. Strategic Plan/Transformation Strategies: Include the organization's strategic plan or work plan that lists the board's transformation/focused strategies/goals for the Main Street district.
4. Project Work Plan: Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline, and budget. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format. (Note: A strong score in this area will be based on appropriate board involvement in the project.)
5. Budget/Cost Estimates/Match Documentation:
 - a. Project Budget – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format.
 - b. Explanation of Cost Estimates – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.
 - c. Leverage Verification – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, memorandums of understanding/agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project. Include documentation and calculations for in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.

The below supporting documents are **optional** based on the project type:

- Design Projects – Include a map of the downtown with the location of the project identified on the map along with current photos of the proposed project area. Also, include design renderings of the project, if available.
- Program Designs/Programs – Include draft documents of proposed façade program, loan pools, or other plans and documents as appropriate.
- Plans/Studies – Upload any recent economic development plans or studies the organization or locality has completed that includes the downtown area. Include any plan or study that supports the proposed project.

Community Vitality Grants

Overview

Community Vitality Grants (CVGs) are designed to assist Main Street communities/organizations achieve their downtown revitalization goals. CVG projects are momentum generators that spark Main Street efforts and create long lasting positive impact on the historic downtown or neighborhood commercial district. CVG grants are available for downtown revitalization activities, including, but not limited to:

- Design projects;
- Wayfinding system development;
- Non-profit organizational development;
- Strategic planning (including vision/mission development);
- Work plan and budget development;
- Market studies;
- Downtown organization website development;
- Entrepreneur support programs;
- Economic vitality projects; and
- Consultant services that will positively contribute to the historic downtown or neighborhood commercial district and for which other funds are not available.

Eligibility

Grants are available to all of Virginia's active Exploring Main Street (EMS) and Mobilizing Main Street (MMS) communities and organizations. "Active" as defined in the [2022 VMS Program Guidelines](#). Applicants must be current on all VMS and DHCD reports (as applicable) and comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements denoted below.

Award Amount

The maximum award amount for a community or organization is \$15,000.

Match Requirements

All projects require a 2:1 match. For every \$2 of grant funding applied for, there must be \$1 in match funding committed. In-kind services provided by local government, consultants, and other stakeholders and partners may be included. Time contributed solely to the implementation of the project by volunteers may be included.

Funding Priorities & Anticipated Outcomes

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project or service is an effective organizational or economic development strategy for the commercial district. Proposed organizational development projects via consultant services must advance the sustainability of the local organization through the development of bylaws and organizational structure, mission/vision statements, work and budget plans, market studies, or the creation of entrepreneur support programs that will positively contribute to the revitalization of downtown. Proposed economic vitality, promotion or design related projects must directly support existing work plans and identified strategies for improving the functionality and/or usage of the downtown district. Projects or services that enhance or complement other DHCD resources the community or organization is currently receiving will be prioritized.

Competitive applications will make it clear that the applicant is capable of successfully completing the service or project and that it will increase organizational readiness, strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems, or enhance the built environment for the district. As noted above (in the “VMS Grants at a Glance” section), visibly impactful, physical improvement projects that will result in one or more of the preferred outcomes will be prioritized.

Unallowable Activities

Except for 10% or less of grant administration fees, CVG funds may not be used for continuing operations, program administration, or any other ongoing operational expenses. Funds are not available for predictable expenses for which the community or organization could have reasonably planned (for example, general marketing materials, financial management expenses, etc.).

Scoring Rubric

Grant applicants are scored on a 0-100 point scale. Grant funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. Funds will be allocated from top scoring until all funds are exhausted.

The project scoring methodology is as follows:

| Criteria | Points |
|---|------------|
| Project’s impact on organizational development or the commercial district | 35 |
| Relation to community/organization’s strategies/goals | 20 |
| Organizational capacity/readiness | 15 |
| Realistic project work plan and budget | 15 |
| Alignment with VMS’s priorities | 15 |
| Total | 100 |

Sample Projects

1. [City of Buena Vista’s Downtown Beautification Project](#) - The City of Buena Vista received a \$7,500 CVG to purchase and install ADA-compliant benches and all-weather planters in key locations throughout the historic district making downtown a more welcoming place for all.
2. [Clifton Forge Main Street’s LOVE Sculpture Project](#) - Clifton Forge Main Street (CFMS) leveraged a \$12,500 CVG to funding a LOVE sculpture that reflects the local culture and history. The sign is part of Virginia Tourism Corporation’s (VTC) LOVEworks program, which is a state-wide branding initiative designed to promote travel in Virginia.
3. [Pulaski on Main’s Pocket Park and Mural Project](#) - A \$7,500 CVG supplemented the cost of a mural in a new pocket park in Pulaski’s Downtown Historic Commercial District, which was originally funded by a CDBG through DHCD.

Timeline

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Register your Organization in CAMS (See below) | ASAP |
| Application Submittal Deadline | April 5, 2024 |
| Application Review | May & June 2024 |
| Anticipated Award Announcement | Summer 2024 |
| Successful Projects Under Contract | Fall 2024 |
| Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved | Fall 2025 |

Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted within 12 months of the contract start date.

Application Deadline

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted in DHCD's Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) by 11:59 p.m. on April 5, 2024. (See Additional Information below for more information about CAMS.) Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified. Additional information can be found below in the "Additional Information & Requirements" section.

Application Questions (Project Description)

Enter the following information into the relevant text box within the Narrative Information tab on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project. What activities are you proposing to do with this funding? Where will this project take place – within the entire district or a specific location? Include as an attachment any design renderings, façade program guidelines or other supporting documents to demonstrate the scope of your project.
2. How and when will the proposed project be accomplished? Include a fully completed work plan with a detailed timeline. (See the template linked in the "Application Attachment" section.)
3. Who will be working on this project? List any/all organizational or municipal staff, committee members and/or volunteers that will be working to implement this project. What role(s) will they play and how will they contribute? (Note: This should provide more detail than the simple team member list included in the work plan.)
4. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the commercial district, addresses one or more of the community's strategies/goals for the district, and aligns with VMS's priorities (page 3).
5. What impact will the project have on sustainable organizational development? OR what impact will the project have on the improved functionality or usage of the commercial district?
6. Describe all outcomes that are expected from this project, both quantitative and qualitative. Outcomes might be increased visitors, new jobs created, additional private investment or changes in perception of the district. For projects involving technical services from a

consultant, describe how the end project will be used, communicated and/or lead to a more sustainable organization.

Application Attachments (Supporting Documents)

The below supporting documents are **required**:

1. Vision/Mission: Include the community's vision statement for the district and mission statement for the organization (if applicable).
2. Strategic Plan/Transformation Strategies: Include any community or organizational strategic plans that outline goals for the commercial district.
3. Project Work Plan: Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline, and budget. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format.
4. Budget/Cost Estimates/Match Documentation:
 - a. Project Budget – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format.
 - b. Explanation of Cost Estimates – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.
 - c. Leverage Verification – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, memorandums of understanding/agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project. Include documentation and calculations for in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.

The below supporting documents are **optional** based on the project type:

- Design Projects – Include a map of the downtown with the location of the project identified on the map along with current photos of the proposed project area. Also, include design renderings of the project, if available.
- Program Designs/Programs – Include draft documents of proposed façade program, loan pools, or other plans and documents as appropriate.
- Plans/Studies – Upload any recent economic development plans or studies the organization or locality has completed that includes the downtown area. Include any plan or study that supports the proposed project.

Financial Feasibility Grants

Overview

Financial Feasibility Grants (FFGs) allow Main Street communities to work with owners of significant “white elephant” buildings or structures with non-productive upper floor space. These buildings could be (functionally) vacant and/or deteriorated properties whose poor condition creates a notion of physical and economic blight in the surrounding area, which is often a deterrent for development. This grant also allows for small-scale development by providing feasibility resources to new or beginning developers for buildings within the district.

The purpose is to identify the highest and best use of such properties and develop any necessary plans or studies that will assist the owner in developing the property or allow the Main Street organization to “shop” the rehabilitation and reuse of said property to private developers and investors. FFGs typically fund the development of preliminary design reports and renderings, building code and zone assessments, pro forma development and construction estimates, as well as environmental reports, market demand studies, and gap-financing research as needed for identified properties. However, all projects will receive consideration.

Eligibility

Grant funds are available to all VMS communities on a first-come, first-serve basis. Grants can be administered through the designated local Main Street organization or local government. Applicants must be current on all VMS and DHCD reports (as applicable) and comply with DHCD’s financial auditing requirements denoted below.

No organization and/or locality will be allowed to have more than one open FFG at a time.

Award Amount

Award amounts will be based on expressed project needs and a tiered structure (outlined below). The maximum award amount per organization/project is \$25,000.

Level 1

- I. Code and zoning assessment
- II. Building programming – identification of highest and best use
- III. Professional market demand study for proposed new building use
- IV. Pro forma development and construction budget
- V. Environmental assessment (Phase 1)

Level 2

- VI. Assessment of all available incentives and tax credits
- VII. Letters of Intent (LOIs) for Historic Tax Credit investors, where applicable or available
- VIII. Financing plan
- IX. Identification of tenants or end users, residential and commercial (if applicable)
- X. Preliminary design concepts and basic rendering sketches

For projects that only require Level 1 assessment, payment will be made upon the completion of those activities listed above. Should the project prove to be viable after Level 1, the grantee may request funding to complete Level 2, which is project specific studies and reports. DHCD, at its discretion, may

continue funding for Level 2 activities. At no point will DHCD grant more than \$25,000 per project.

DHCD reserves the right to only fund Level 1 activities for any project application. DHCD reserves the right to only fund Level 2 activities for any project, if it is determined that Level 1 activities have been satisfactorily completed previously.

Match Requirements

No match is required; however, it may be necessary to secure additional leverage funding from other resources in order to meet all components needed to determine feasibility and full assessment of the property.

Funding Priorities & Anticipated Outcomes

A strong application will clearly explain how the redevelopment of the proposed building would be catalytic for the Main Street community. The application should demonstrate that the successful redevelopment of this property will have significant economic benefits for the Main Street community and will result in a stronger, more diversified business environment in the Main Street district and/or increased downtown housing.

An effective application will indicate the strong likelihood of redevelopment, based on owner willingness or identified willing developers, and that these feasibility funds are necessary to move the project forward.

Funds are for use in projects directly benefiting the VMS community, and as noted above (in the “VMS Grants at a Glance” section), projects that will result in one or more of the preferred outcomes will be prioritized.

Unallowable Activities

Except for 10% or less of grant administration fees, FFG funds may not be used for continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts, or any other operational expenses. Additionally, funds are not available for marketing, advertising, or printing costs.

Scoring Rubric

Grant applicants are scored on a 0-100 point scale. Grant funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. Grant proposals are reviewed and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds are exhausted.

The project scoring methodology is as follows:

| Criteria | Points |
|--|---------------|
| Likelihood of future redevelopment | 30 |
| Impact of the building on the Main Street district | 30 |
| Organizational capacity/readiness | 20 |
| Relation to community/organization's vision | 10 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Realistic project work plan and budget | 10 |
| Total | 100 |

Sample Projects

1. [Altavista's Historic Vista Theatre](#) - The Town of Altavista secured a \$25,000 FFG to determine the highest and best use of the community's historic Vista Theatre, which was constructed in 1930 and served as a theatre / live performance center until the mid-1980s when it was closed due to a fire.
2. [Danville's White Mill Building](#) - The River District Association (RDA) utilized a \$25,000 FFG to conduct a feasibility study for Danville's historic White Mill building which will transform the iconic property into a multi-use residential and commercial space. The first phase of the rehabilitation is currently estimated at \$65 million upon completion.
3. [Orange's Earl's Glass Shop Building](#) - Love Orange Virginia (LOVe) received a \$25,000 FFG to identify the highest and best adaptive use of the former Earl's Glass Shop building in downtown Orange and formulate plans that will help the property owner redevelop the property or allow the local Main Street organizations to "shop" the rehabilitation and reuse of the building to private developers.

Timeline

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Register your Organization in CAMS (See below) | ASAP |
| Applications Open | February 1, 2024 |
| Application Review | Ongoing (February - August 2024) |
| Anticipated Award Announcement | Ongoing (by August 31, 2024) |
| Successful Projects Under Contract | Ongoing (by September 30, 2024) |
| Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved | May 31, 2025 |

Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted no later than May 31, 2025.

Application Deadline

DHCD will open applications on February 1, 2024. Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a first come, first serve basis and will remain open until program funding is fully obligated. It is anticipated that all program funding will be fully obligated by August 31, 2024.

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted in DHCD's Centralized Application Management System (CAMS). (See Additional Information below for more information about CAMS.) Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified. Additional

information can be found below in the “Additional Information & Requirements” section.

Application Questions (Project Description)

Enter the following information into the relevant text box within the Narrative Information tab on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a description of the property. Include the location within the district, any historic uses and the current use.
2. Describe how addressing the property identified for the feasibility study furthers the community’s vision for the Main Street district and aligns with VMS’s priorities (page 3).
3. Discuss any current threats and opportunities posed by the property to the ongoing revitalization of the Main Street district. If nothing is done, what impact will that have? If redevelopment is done, what impact will that have?
4. Discuss the willingness of the current property owner to facilitate a feasibility study. Is the current owner willing to act as the developer or will the property be “shopped” to other developers?
5. What staff, volunteers, professional services, etc. team has been assembled to conduct this feasibility study? What will their role be and what is their experience with development/building projects? (Note: This should provide more detail than the simple team member list included in the work plan.)
6. Describe the timeline of activities for the project to complete the study. (See the template linked in the “Application Attachment” section.)

Application Attachments (Supporting Documents)

The below supporting documents are **required**:

1. Mission/Vision: Include the community’s vision statement for the Main Street district and mission statement for the Main Street organization (if applicable).
2. Project Team: Include a current list of team members and what their roles will be. Identify any team members that have not yet been selected and the timeline for when they will be brought onto the team. Provide documentation of the property owner’s willingness to participate.
3. Project Work Plan: Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline, and budget. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format. (Note: A strong score in this area will be based on appropriate board involvement in the project).
4. Budget/Cost Estimates/Leverage Documentation:
 - a. Project Budget – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format.
 - b. Explanation of Cost Estimates – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.
 - c. Leverage Verification (not required) – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, Memorandums of Understanding/Agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project.
5. Visual Documentation: Upload any photographs of the building and a map showing the condition and location of the property must be submitted.
6. Plans/Studies: Submit any studies or additional background information that have already been completed on the building.

Additional Information & Requirements

Note: The below sections are applicable to all VMS grants.

Audit Requirements

DHCD has instituted an agency-wide audit policy. All applicants must upload a copy of the organization's W-9 and most recent audit or financial statements, as applicable, to DHCD's Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) by the grant's application deadline. All grantees that receive funding during a specific program year are required to submit financial documents or audits in accordance with the agency policy. The full DHCD Audit Policy, including an explanation of the specific document requirements, can be found online at: <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/audit-policy/dhcd-audit-policy.pdf>

Memorandum of Understanding

If the application is selected for funding, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DHCD and the grantee must be executed and the organization must be in compliance with DHCD's audit policy (denoted above) before any funds are disbursed. The MOU will outline project deliverables, conditions, fund disbursement, and termination.

Grant Payments (Remittances)

Funds may only be used for eligible expenses incurred after the signing of the MOU. Funds will be disbursed as outlined in the MOU. Financial support documentation for all project related expenses and leverage must be uploaded to CAMS prior to closeout as outlined in the MOU.

DHCD reserves the right to end funding at any point should the project prove nonviable. This includes, but is not limited to, lack of progress in conformance with the approved MOU.

To apply for direct deposit of funds, register for Electronic Data Interchange with the Virginia Department of Accounts. Forms must be mailed via post mail and can be downloaded here: <https://www.doa.virginia.gov/forms.shtml#edi>.

Reporting

Reporting through CAMS is required for projects. This includes interim progress reports and/or a final report as outlined in the MOU.

Administrative Costs

A portion of the awarded grant funds (up to 10% of total award amount) must be used to cover administrative costs. The administrative section of the project budget will be based on activities completed or milestones achieved—such as completing progress and final reports—rather than for time and materials. These milestones are negotiated between DHCD and the grantee and outlined in the MOU.

Calculating Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours are calculated at the rate of \$31.80 per hour based on: https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time.

CAMS

Applications for funding must be submitted through DHCD's Centralized Application Management

System (CAMS). You can access CAMS using the following link:

<https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx>.

Google Chrome is the recommended browser for CAMS. Please remember to SAVE often.

In order to access CAMS and complete an application for funding, a locality must establish a CAMS profile. A profile request can be made by going to the CAMS site and selecting the “Registration” option. In order to register your organization, you will need your organization's Unique Entity ID (UEI) and Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). Please allow up to five business days for DHCD to process and approve your registration request.

Once your organization has been registered, you may log in with your username and password and select the “Applications and Programs” option. From this page, select the “Apply” option and select the program from the dropdown menu. A description of the program will appear. Click the “Apply” button next to the pencil icon to begin an application.

As you complete the application, be sure to save each page. You have the option to close out of CAMS and return to the application at any time until the application is submitted or the deadline has passed.

The CAMS User Guide can be found online at:

<https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/ResourceDocs/CAMS%20User%20Guide%202021.pdf>. CAMS technical support is available weekdays Monday-Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. If you need assistance with registration or the completion of the application in CAMS, please reach out to the CAMS Help Desk at camshelp@dhcd.virginia.gov.

Application Instructions

The application in CAMS will require the organization to complete each tab:

1. **Project Information:** Include the primary point of contact, primary location of the project and service area.
2. **Project Budget:** Complete budget information, including grant requested funding and other match funding. Within the budget narrative space, describe how the budget was derived and sources of other funding.
3. **Narrative Information:** Answer narrative questions related to the project, timeline, budget and outcomes. For additional information, please see respective “Application Questions” sections for each grant.
4. **Attachments:** Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments. For additional information, please see respective “Application Attachments” sections for each grant.
5. **Additional Information:** This is not necessary to complete, but if you have additional information to describe or share that was not asked in the application, please include it here.

For more information please contact:

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Richmond, Virginia 23219
mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov