



2021

Commercial District Affiliate Grant Application Manual

Applications accepted on CAMS starting:
January 2, 2020

Last day applications accepted on CAMS:
March 16, 2020

Grant awards announced: **Summer 2020**

Grant funded projects must be complete
and grants closed: **May 31, 2021**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Better Communities

Department of Housing and
Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219
804-371-7171

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Virginia Main Street (VMS) Commercial District Affiliates (CDA) and Virginia Downtowns Grants

The [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 to their historic commercial districts the substantial private and public investment necessary 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 once again 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 2018 alone, VMS designated communities reported:

- \$172 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings;
- \$9 million in public improvements to help encourage private investment in downtowns;
- more than 163 unique businesses created, expanded or retained in historic commercial districts, and;
- more than 900 jobs created or retained for local community members seeking employment.

DHCD Affiliate Grants are designed to assist organizations and communities in achieving their downtown revitalization goals. Ideal for former or current Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grantees or communities in the Virginia Downtowns program, these grants are available for downtown revitalization efforts, including, but not limited to:

- non-profit organizational development
- vision/mission development; work plan and budget development
- market studies
- downtown organization website development
- design projects
- entrepreneur support programs
- wayfinding system development
- economic vitality projects
- or other consultant services that will positively contribute to the historic downtown neighborhood and for which other funds are not available

DHCD invites projects that will create a positive impact on the downtown neighborhood's long term goals.

Grant Eligibility

Grants are available to all active DHCD Commercial District Affiliate (CDA) and Virginia Downtowns communities and organizations. "Active" is defined as participating in one Virginia Main Street sponsored training or event within the previous calendar year.

All applicants must comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements by uploading to CAMS a copy of the organization's W-9 and a copy of the organization's most recent audit or financial statements, as applicable, by the grant's application deadline (March 16, 2020). See <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/audit-policy/dhcd-audit-policy.pdf> for more information on the policy.

Funding Priorities

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 development of bylaws and organizational structure, mission/vision statements, work and budget planning, market studies, or create 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. In addition, projects or services that enhance or complement other DHCD resources the community or organization is currently receiving will be prioritized.

A strong application will make it clear that the applicant is capable of successfully completing the service or project and that it will enhance organizational readiness, entrepreneurial ecosystems, or the built environment for the district.

Funds **are not available** 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 (ex. general marketing materials, financial management expenses, etc.).

Award Amounts: Up to \$7,000 each.

Grant Payment

If the application is selected for funding, grant funds will be paid upon completion of agreed upon project milestones which will be negotiated and included in a memorandum of understanding that will be signed by both DHCD and the grantee prior to the start of the project. Projects must be completed no later than May 31, 2021. Before any funds are disbursed, the organization must be in compliance with DHCD's [audit policy](#).

Leverage Requirement

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. Volunteer hours are calculated at \$25.43 per hour (https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

Scoring

Grant proposals will be 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. Projects scoring above 70-points are not, however, guaranteed to be funded based on the total number of applications received and funding available. The project scoring methodology is as follows:

Scoring Criteria	Points
Project's relation to identified strategies or goals	20
Project Impact: Impact on organizational development OR impact on the commercial district	40
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Realistic project work plan and budget	20
Total	100

Instructions for Application Submission

Please note that applications must be submitted electronically through the Agency's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS). To access CAMS, visit the website at www.dhcd.virginia.gov and click on the CAMS icon in the upper-right hand corner.

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

Submission Requirements

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted on CAMS by 11:59 PM on March 16, 2020. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified. Please note: Technical support with CAMS is available weekdays between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments.

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 (see the questions below.)
4. Attachments: Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments (see required and optional attachments below).
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.

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 detailed timeline. Use the template provided in the attachment section and Appendix A.
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?

4. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the commercial district and addresses one or more of the community's strategies/goals for the district.
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 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 project involving technical services from a consultant, describe how the end project will be used, communicated and/or lead to a more sustainable organization.

Attachments - Required Supporting Documents

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 a format similar to the one included in Appendix A.
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.
 - 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.

Attachments - Optional Supporting Documents (based on project type)

Optional: 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.

Optional: Program Designs/Programs – Include draft documents of proposed façade program, loan pools, or as appropriate.

Optional: Include a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services, scope of work or other outline of tasks that will be contracted for as part of this project.

Optional: 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.

Project Implementation Period: July 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021 (final report due); all disbursements must be completed by May 31, 2021. Quarterly reporting through CAMS is required. All projects must be underway no later than October 1, 2020.

