



2020

Financial Feasibility Study Application Manual



Applications accepted on CAMS starting:
January 2, 2019

Grant applications will be accepted on a first
come basis as funds allow until:

October 1, 2019

Grant funding will be available: **July 2019**

Grant funded projects must be complete and
grants closed: **May 31, 2020**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Better Communities

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Virginia Main Street (VMS) Financial Feasibility Grant

The [Virginia Main Street Program](#) is a community economic development program that follows the Four Point 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 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 2017 alone, VMS designated communities reported:

- \$121 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings;
- \$44 million in public improvements to help encourage private investment in downtowns;
- more than 325 unique businesses created, expanded or retained in historic commercial districts, and;
- more than 1,300 jobs created or retained for local community members seeking employment.

Financial Feasibility Grants allow Main Street organizations to work with owners of significant “white elephant” buildings or those with non-productive upper floor space. These buildings could be (functionally) vacant and deteriorated properties whose poor condition creates a notion of physical and economic blight in the surrounding area, and often is a deterrent to surrounding development. The purpose is to identify the highest and best use of such properties and to develop sufficient information to allow the owner or Main Street organization to “shop” the rehabilitation and reuse of the property to private developers and investors. Feasibility grants generally fund the development of preliminary engineering reports, environmental reports, and market demand studies for an identified highest and best use and gap-financing research for identified properties, though all projects will receive consideration.

Financial Feasibility funds will not be awarded for continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts or any other operational expenses. Funds are for use in projects directly benefitting the Virginia Main Street (VMS) community, with a preference to projects involving multiple partners, and cannot be used to cover marketing and printing costs.

Award Amounts: Not to exceed \$25,000.

Match Requirement: No match requirement

Project Implementation Period: July 1, 2019 - May 31, 2020 (final report due); all disbursements must be completed by May 31, 2020. Quarterly reporting through CAMS is required.

Submission Requirements and Instructions

Applications with supporting documentation must be submitted electronically through the Agency’s Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS). Applications will be accepted through

11:59 PM on October 1, 2019. To access CAMS, visit the website at www.dhcd.virginia.gov and click on the CAMS icon in the upper-right hand corner. Please note: Technical support for CAMS is available weekdays between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.

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

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

Grant Eligibility

Grants are available only to designated VMS communities and must be administered through the designated local VMS organization. Special exceptions may be made for high functioning Commercial District Affiliates. Applicants must be current on all VMS reports at the time of application and must remain in compliance throughout the grant period. Nationally accredited communities are given first priority.

All applicants must comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements by uploading on CAMS a copy of the organization's W-9 and a copy of the organization's most recent audit or reviewed financial statement, as applicable, with the grant application.

Characteristics of a Strong Application

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project is an effective economic development strategy for the Main Street district. The project will support the community's economic development vision for the Main Street district, will clearly align with the mission of the Main Street organization, and will address one or more of the Main Street board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district.

A strong application will make it clear that the successful completion of the redevelopment of this property will have significant economic benefits for the Main Street district and is likely to result in a stronger and more diversified business mix in the Main Street district and/or increased downtown housing.

Grant Payment

Funding will be reimbursed on a performance basis. The following chart is a sample of typical performance measures.

Initial payment for project kick-off	\$5,000.00 or 20%
Submission of initial and interim analysis	\$10,000.00 or 40%
Submission of a Final Feasibility Report	\$10,000.00 or 40%
Total	\$25,000.00 or 100%

If a feasibility grant is awarded to a Main Street organization, DHCD reserves the right to end funding at any point should the project prove nonviable. This includes, but may not be limited to, lack of progress in conformance with the approved Memorandum of Understanding.

Leverage Requirement

No match is required for FY2020 Financial Feasibility Grants.

Scoring

Grant proposals will be scored on a 0-100 point scale. Feasibility grant funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. The project scoring methodology is as follows:

Scoring Criteria	Points
Relation to organizational mission and vision	15
Relation to Economic Vitality goals	15
Likelihood of future redevelopment	20
Impact of the building on the Main Street District	20
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Realistic workplan for project	10
Total	100

Application Instructions

The application on CAMS will require the organization to:

1. Provide a description of the proposed project and its relationship to the organization's vision, mission and goals.
2. Provide the organization's vision, mission and strategic goals for the Main Street district.
3. Provide a list of the current board members and committee chairs.
4. Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments.
5. The applicant's Commonwealth of Virginia W-9 form must be submitted with the application.

Project Description

Enter the following information into the relevant text box 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.
2. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the Main Street district.
3. List current threats and opportunities posed by the property to the ongoing revitalization of the Main Street district.
4. Detail the willingness of the current property owner to facilitate a feasibility study.
5. Explain the prospective impact of the building's redevelopment on the Main Street District.
6. Describe how the building's redevelopment is related to the economic vitality goals of the local Main Street organization.

Required Supporting Documents - Organizational Leadership

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

1. Community's **Vision statement** for the Main Street district.
2. **Mission statement** for the Main Street organization.
3. Strategic Plan or Work Plan that lists the board's **Transformation Strategies** or priority **goals** for the Main Street district.
4. A list of **current board members and committee chairs**.

Required Supporting Documents - Project Implementation Capacity

Upload the following documents as attachments in CAMS.

1. **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**.
2. **Mini-Resumes** - Provide “mini-resumes” that describe the project related expertise of each individual/organization listed on the work plan. No more than one paragraph of relevant information per individual/organization.
3. **Budget** – Provide the following budget information:
 - 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.
4. **Photographs** and a map showing the condition and location of the property must be submitted.
5. **Studies** or background information that have already been completed must be submitted.

