

NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program FAQ

1. Q. What is the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

- A. The NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program offers grants to municipalities to assist in the rebuilding and to support the recovery of economic activity in commercial corridors in the most impacted towns and cities throughout the State. This program will provide financial assistance to support improvements such as, but not limited to, streetscapes, lighting, sidewalks, façade enhancements, code-related and other physical upgrades to commercial areas in a minimum amount of \$125,000 and a maximum amount of \$1.5 million per project.

2. Q. What are the eligibility requirements for the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

- A. Under the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program, entities must meet **ALL** of the following eligibility criteria:

- 1) Projects located in one of the nine (9) “most impacted” counties must demonstrate that either (i) they are contributing to the revitalization of an area damaged by Superstorm Sandy, or (ii) they have themselves been physically damaged by Superstorm Sandy. Projects located outside the nine (9) counties must demonstrate that they have been physically damaged by Superstorm Sandy.

- 2) The project meets one of the following Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) National Objectives:

- a. Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Employment Creation
- b. Low and Moderate Income Area Benefit where the area is primarily residential
- c. Slum and Blight Reduction
- d. Urgent Need

NOTE: “LMI” refers to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of low and moderate incomes based upon median incomes by census tract; “Slum and Blight” refers to Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation, as defined by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq. and other conditions such as vacant property.

- 3) The project must provide revitalization to buildings or infrastructure in the project area.

- 4) The project must show the ability to disburse the awarded funding to the project based upon work completed by December 31, 2015.

Please visit the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Programs’ website at <http://www.njeda.com/ncr-streetscape> for more details on eligibility. If you still have questions or need further guidance, please email streetscape@njeda.com. A formal determination of eligibility only can occur if you apply.

3. Q. What project costs are eligible for the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

A. The following project costs are eligible for the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program:

- a. Demolition
- b. Environmental investigation or remediation, when required.
- c. Site Preparation
- d. Site Improvements
- e. Construction
- f. Soft Costs (legal accounting, financing costs, and insurance, other fees, professional consultants, engineering, surveyor, construction management)*
- g. Contingency**

*Soft costs cannot exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total approved project budget.

**Contingency amount cannot exceed 10% of the total approved project budget.

NOTE: CDBG monies cannot be used to cover routine or deferred maintenance costs.

4. Q. Is the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program funded by federal monies received by the State of New Jersey for Superstorm Sandy recovery?

A. Yes. Of the approximately \$1.8 billion New Jersey has received to date through HUD's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, the State has allocated \$460 million to support economic recovery and revitalization programs. Of that amount, \$10 million will fund the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program.

5. Q. Who can apply for a NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant?

A. Eligible applicants include any Sandy-impacted New Jersey municipality with one or more established traditional business districts. A 'main street' district is defined as a commercial, neighborhood retail, or mixed-use zoned area with a concentration of older or historic buildings within its boundaries. To be responsive to HUD requirements regarding the allocation of CDBG-DR funds, projects located in one of the nine (9) most impacted counties as determined by HUD (Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union) will receive priority consideration.

6. Q. Is there a filing deadline?

A. There will be two rounds of evaluation for this program.

Round One Allocation: up to \$5 million

Deadline for submittal of application for Round One is December 6, 2013

Round Two Allocation: Remaining project funds, including the balance of any funds remaining from Round One

Deadline for submittal of application for Round Two is January 21, 2014*

*Projects considered for funding in Round Two will be: (i) eligible but unfunded project applications submitted for Round One and (ii) eligible project applications submitted between December 7, 2013 and January 21, 2014.

7. Q. Are New Jersey municipalities the only parties that can apply for NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program grants?

A. Yes. Business Improvement Districts, Special Improvement Districts, and similar entities, may partner with a municipality in order to submit an application. However, the applicant must be a municipality. As part of the application, the applicant must submit a resolution, partnership agreement or other binding documentation that is sufficient to demonstrate the business relationship. If you have questions regarding this requirement, please contact an NJEDA Real Estate staff person.

8. Q. Is there a cap on how much assistance a municipality can receive under the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

A. The following parameters and terms apply to the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program:

Grant award per project:

- i. minimum amount: \$125,000
- ii. maximum amount: \$1.5 million

Assistance is subject to availability of funds.

Municipalities can submit more than one application but the maximum amount received by a municipality under this program cannot exceed \$1.5 million in the aggregate.

9. Q. What is a DUNS number?

A. A DUNS number is an individual identification number assigned to registered entities by Dun and Bradstreet. All entities must register with Dun and Bradstreet in order to receive federal funds. To register, visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

10. Q. What kinds of HUD regulations will I encounter if I seek funding?

A. Per HUD regulations, you will need to stop construction activities on the project immediately upon applying for construction-related expenses under the Program. Applicants should also note that, due to federal statutes and regulations, the State generally cannot disseminate funds without additional reviews, environmental clearances, and either proof of, or exemption of, the National Flood Insurance Program requirements. These federally required steps can cause delays in the distribution of grant monies.

11. Q. What if my project needs exceed the total amount of funding for which the municipality is eligible?

- A. If a gap in capital needs for the project exceeds the total amount for which an applicant is eligible under the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program, the applicant will be asked to show additional sources of funding that will cover the difference. This ensures project completion is feasible before funding under the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program is disseminated.

12. Q. Will I be notified if more information is required?

- A. Yes. After receipt of the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program application, an NJEDA Real Estate Division staff person will contact you at the address provided in your application to confirm receipt of your application and to inform you if any additional information is needed.

13. Q. Will my application be declined if any of the paperwork is missing?

- A. An application cannot be considered complete until all required documentation is received. An application will be closed and no longer considered for funding if all required documentation has not been provided within thirty (30) days of written notice from NJEDA. Documentation is required to satisfy federal regulations associated with the dissemination of CDBG-DR funds.

14. Q. If my insurance claim has not yet been closed, am I eligible to apply to the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

- A. To address federal duplication of benefits restrictions, all insurance claims due to storm-related damages must be closed prior to submitting an application for the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program. Additionally, per federal requirements, if the applicant has been approved for any insurance payouts, that must be accounted for when ensuring that NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program funds are not provided in a manner that would duplicate benefits.

15. Q. If I have questions about filing the application, how can I contact NJEDA?

- A. If you have not yet submitted your application and have questions, start by visiting NJEDA's website, <http://www.njeda.com/ncr-streetscape>, for a Program overview and information about filing requirements. If you have additional questions, a customer service representative or NJEDA Real Estate Division staff person can be reached at: streetscape@njeda.com.

16. Q. How long will it take to complete an application?

- A. The length of time it will take to complete an application depends on the type of funding sought and whether the applicant has the required documents and information readily available. NJEDA has tried to set forth an application that is easy to complete, while still complying with federal regulations. For additional assistance,

please email streetscape@njeda.com.

17. Q. Can I save my application and finish it later?

- A. Yes. The pdf application permits entries into each field, and can be saved to a hard drive or portable storage device (e.g., disk, thumb-drive).

18. Q. How do I submit large scale drawings or oversize files?

- A. While we require a complete electronic version of the application and associated submittals, we also require 2 sets of all full size drawings or oversize documents that are part of the submittals. In addition to these hard copies of plans, Applicants should submit one (1) complete application and all submittals on CD/DVD or thumbdrive. These should be mailed to:
NJEDA
36 West State Street
P.O. Box 990
Trenton, NJ 08625
ATTN: Streetscape

19. Q. How soon after approval will I receive the grant?

- A. Consistent with federal guidelines, the grant is delivered as a reimbursement for costs incurred as documented by a requisition request form submitted by the municipality. It may be in multiple disbursements depending on the nature of the project and the ability to complete portions of work as the project progresses. Per HUD requirements, construction reimbursement can only cover work done up to the point of submitting the application, because at that point, HUD requires an applicant to comply with CDBG regulations, which include stopping all work until an environmental review is completed. Construction yet to be completed can also be funded through this program. This means that a project that is partially complete and in need of assistance to finish, would still have to stop work at time of application and wait to see if it is awarded.

20. Q. How will I be notified if my application is declined?

- A. An application will be declined if it does not meet threshold eligibility requirements. Declination is different from projects that are deemed eligible but are unfunded. During the application, you will be asked for your preferred method of communication (e-mail or U.S. mail). A notice of determination regarding your application will be sent to you. Certain forms of communication may be sent via certified U.S. mail as required by law. If you have any questions please call or email the assigned NJEDA Real Estate Division staff person.

21. Q. If my application is declined, is there an appeal process?

- A. Yes. For more information on the appeal process, please contact your NJEDA Real Estate Division staff person.

22. Q. If my application is declined, am I able to re-apply based on the same project? If so, when?

A. No.

23. Q. If my NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program application is declined, are there any other programs that I could apply to for help?

A. Perhaps. We encourage you to contact the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management as well as the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for more information on other programs that may address the municipality's needs.

DCA website for local government services: <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dlgs>

OEM website for local government officials: <http://www.state.nj.us/njoem/plan/local-officials.html>

24. Q. If the project is located in a flood zone, does that preclude me from receiving funds through the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

A. Not necessarily. Please refer to the National Flood Insurance Program Summary of Coverage for Commercial Property regarding flood insurance eligibility and exclusions. The Summary is available on NJEDA's website, <http://www.njeda.com/ncr-streetscape>. Applicants with eligible projects located in a flood zone are encouraged to submit an application.

25. Q. Are communities that are not low- to moderate-income communities as defined by HUD eligible guidelines able to apply for the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program?

A. Yes. However, to address HUD requirements that CDBG-DR funds target low- to moderate-income ("LMI") communities, a project located in an LMI community is more likely to be funded than a similar project in a non-LMI community.

26. Q. Will municipalities be able to compensate their existing professional service consultants with funding from this program e.g., municipal engineering firms and planning consultants to prepare plans and specifications for the proposed streetscape projects?

A. Yes, provided that the firms were procured in accordance with HUD guidelines through a competitive process.

27. Q. Can NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program funds be used for land acquisition and right-of-way purchases required to construct the proposed streetscape project?

A. No. Land acquisition is not an eligible cost under this Program. Land acquisition must be funded from other sources.

28. Q. Can NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program funds be used to improve facades of privately owned buildings in a commercial district?

- A. Yes. However, applications for projects that would include work to be performed on privately owned property must include letters of support from the private parties that indicate that the private property owners will grant rights of access, will comply with the requirements of the Program, and will allow or undertake any additional steps necessary to facilitate completion of the proposed project. If, subsequently, a private property owner refuses to allow necessary steps to facilitate completion of the proposed project, NJEDA, at its discretion, may withdraw from the project any additional funding from this program.

29. Q. When will Applicants be notified that their projects have been approved for funding and the amount of the funding approval?

- A. Applicants will be notified when their applications have received preliminary approval. Only applications that have been preliminarily approved by NJEDA will be sent to NJDEP for the required environmental and historical reviews. To comply with federal regulations, those Applicants will be required to submit additional forms to NJDEP. Upon submission of the additional documentation, NJDEP will be requested to perform an environmental and historical review. Applicants will be notified of NJDEP's conclusions once the reviews are completed. Only applications that receive NJDEP clearance will be deemed approved and be eligible for a grant award. The funding approval will be conditioned upon the municipality's execution of a Subrecipient Agreement, as required by regulations governing the use of CDBG-DR funding. The grant funding will be conditioned upon the municipality's completion of all of the terms and conditions of the Subrecipient Agreement. Final approval is subject to the Applicant meeting all of the programmatic criteria of the NCR Streetscape Revitalization Grant Program.

30. Q. Will municipalities be required to fund any cost overruns or can additional funds be secured from NJEDA if that occurs?

- A. State funding for approved projects will be capped at the grant approval amount.

31. Q. Will the municipality be invoiced by NJDEP for any costs attendant to performing federally required environmental and historical reviews?

- A. No, NJDEP will not charge the municipality for assessments. However, any remediation/mitigation requirements that come out of the review are the responsibility of the applicant.

32. Q. Will the streetscape improvement projects be required to comply with current storm water management requirements?

- A. Yes.

33. Q. Will the municipality be required to submit reports to NJEDA?

- A. Yes, approved projects will be subject to all reporting required by the CDBG-DR Program, including, but not limited to: National Objectives, labor requirements, procurement requirements, and environmental requirements. To the extent other reporting requirements may apply, the municipality will be made aware of those

requirements and will have to provide information sufficient to satisfy those requirements. This information will be specified in the Subrecipient Agreement that will be a precondition of receiving funding under this program.

34. Q. Can a Municipality apply for funding for a project that was already constructed?

A. No, These projects are not eligible.