

Virginia Main Street Grants Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

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 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 2021 alone, VMS designated communities reported:

- Over \$61 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings;
- Over \$14 million in public improvements to help encourage private investment in downtowns;
- More than 221 unique businesses created, expanded or retained in historic commercial districts, and;
- More than 717 jobs created or retained for local community members seeking employment.

Table of Contents

VMS Grants at a Glance	2
Downtown Investment Grants	4
Community Vitality Grants	8
Financial Feasibility Grants	12
Virginia Business District Resurgence Grants	16
Additional Information & Requirements	21

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)	Virginia Business District Resurgence Grants
Who is eligible?	Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) organizations	Exploring (EMS) & Mobilizing Main Street (MMS) communities*	All VMS communities with priority to AVMS*	Local governments, economic development organizations, planning district commissions, non-profit organizations, and Chambers of Commerce
Maximum Award	\$75,000	EMS: \$15,000 MMS: \$30,000	\$50,000	\$150,000**
Match Requirement	2:1***	2:1	N/A	5:1
Project Types	Downtown economic improvement & community revitalization	Downtown revitalization & organizational development	Downtown redevelopment	Organizational capacity building, small business support & technical assistance
Application Deadline	April 28, 2023	April 28, 2023	Rolling****	April 28, 2023
Expected Project Completion	May 31, 2024	May 31, 2024	May 31, 2024	May 31, 2024

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

**Up to \$50,000 for organizational capacity building projects and up to \$100,000 for small business support projects.

***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, 2023. 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 seeks 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. Promote 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 How-to-Apply Webinars for VMS grants on January 10, 2023. These 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

Total funding for FY24 is \$1,225,000. 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 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), 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 impact/outcomes	25
Organizational capacity/readiness	15
Relation to organization’s mission and vision	10
Realistic project work plan and budget	10
Organization is Nationally Accredited	5
Alignment with VMS’s priorities	5
Total	100

Sample Projects

1. [Farmville Downtown Partnership’s Wayfinding](#) - A \$25,000 DIG helped Farmville fabricate and install a new downtown wayfinding system for their historic commercial district, ensuring that once a visitor reaches downtown, a clear directional and parking lot identification system exists to help them get oriented in the historic downtown area.
2. [Love Orange Virginia’s Commemorative African-American Park](#) - A \$25,000 DIG supported the creation of a park that illuminates the history of the Town of Orange’s former African-American commercial district, as well as commemorates the contributions of local African-Americans. A formerly overgrown and underutilized lot is now an attractive and inviting spot for residents, workers, and visitors to spend time.
3. [Staunton Downtown Development Association’s Little Things](#) - A \$25,000 DIG funded the establishment of a little, streetfront space in Downtown Staunton, along with the purchase of a little truck and little cart. All three work in conjunction to showcase their community’s history and unique assets, while supporting downtown businesses, organizations, products, services, and happenings.

Timeline

Register your Organization in CAMS	ASAP
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Application Submittal Deadline	April 28, 2023
Application Review	May & June 2023
Anticipated Award Announcement	Summer 2023
Successful Projects Under Contract	Fall 2023
Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved	May 31, 2024

All projects must be underway no later than October 1, 2023. Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted no later than May 31, 2024.

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 28, 2023. 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. Explain why this is an effective strategy that aligns with VMS’s priorities (page 3), will attract private investment to the Main Street district, and will result in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction, and/or increase retail and residential opportunities.
5. Describe outcomes that are expected from this project, both quantitative and qualitative. Examples of outcomes might be: percentage increase in foot traffic, percentage increase in shopper spending, number of new jobs created, number of new businesses created or supported, amount of increased community engagement, and such. Describe how these outcomes will be tracked and reported.

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:

- Non-profit organizational development;
- Strategic planning (including 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; 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 total funding for FY24 is \$330,000. The maximum award amount for an EMS community or organization is \$15,000. The maximum award amount for a MMS community or organization is \$30,000.

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), projects that will result in one or more of the preferred outcomes will be prioritized.

Unallowable Activities

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 (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 impact on organizational development or the commercial district	40
Relation to community/organization’s strategies/goals	25
Organizational capacity/readiness	15
Realistic project work plan and budget	15
Alignment with VMS’s priorities	5
Total	100

Sample Projects from Previous Grant Recipients

1. [Nelson County’s Lovington Market Study](#) - Building upon previous Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) planning grant efforts, Nelson County received a \$7,000 CVG to hire a consultant to conduct a market and retail gap analysis of Lovington's commercial district.
2. [Main Street Petersburg Community Listening and Planning Project](#) - Main Street Petersburg leveraged a \$7,000 CVG to implement a community listening and planning project to identify what its residents want most for downtown and how to achieve it.
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
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Application Submittal Deadline	April 28, 2023
Application Review	May & June 2023
Anticipated Award Announcement	Summer 2023
Successful Projects Under Contract	Fall 2023
Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved	May 31, 2024

All projects must be underway no later than October 1, 2023. Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted no later than May 31, 2024.

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 28, 2023. (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

Total funding for FY24 is \$525,000. Award amounts will be based on expressed project needs and a tiered structure (outlined below). The maximum award amount per organization/project is \$50,000.

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 \$50,000 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

Funds will not be awarded for marketing or printing costs, continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts, or any other operational expenses.

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	25
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Relation to community/organization’s vision	10
Realistic project work plan and budget	10

Alignment with VMS's priorities	5
Total	100

Sample Projects

1. [Altavista's Spark Innovation Center](#) - Altavista On Track (AOT) secured a \$25,000 FFG that helped the community identify the highest and best use for a former fire station and develop the plans needed to effectively begin the rehabilitation process.
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, 2023
Application Review	Ongoing (February - August 2023)
Anticipated Award Announcement	Ongoing (by August 31, 2023)
Successful Projects Under Contract	Ongoing (by September 30, 2023)
Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved	May 31, 2024

All projects must be underway no later than October 1, 2023. Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted no later than May 31, 2024.

Application Deadline

DHCD will open applications on February 1, 2023. 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, 2023.

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.

Virginia Business District Resurgence Grants

Overview

The Virginia Business District Resurgence Grant fund seeks to advance and accelerate the post-pandemic recovery of Virginia's business and commercial districts. Specifically, these funds will support historically economically disadvantaged communities and other business districts that were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and subsequent recession. Through expanding organizational and business support grants, funding is envisioned to provide a more inclusive framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization and vitality.

Times of economic crisis spur entrepreneurship and small business creation as those who lose jobs and are unable to find new ones begin to create their own. Small businesses are more resilient when they are able to develop/grow their e-commerce capacity and small-scale production/manufacturing. Local economies are more resilient with investments in small businesses and entrepreneurs.

The objectives of Resurgence Grants are to:

- Provide grants to organizations that serve historically economically disadvantaged communities, such as small, women-owned, minority-owned, and immigrant-owned businesses within a targeted business district.
- Provide grants for consultant services, technical assistance and training opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners.
- Provide grants for consultant services, technical assistance and training opportunities for commercial and mixed-use building owners, including small-scale real estate developers.
- Offer capacity building technical services to create and strengthen local networks and organizations supporting community and economic development in targeted business districts.
- Expand e-commerce opportunities for micro, small, and sole proprietorship businesses that are producing, creating, and making products in Virginia.

Eligibility

Grants are available to the following entities:

- Local governments or economic development organizations
- Regional economic development organizations, including planning district commissions
- Non-profit and local organizations with a focus on small businesses within a commercial district
- Local Chambers of Commerce

Applicants must demonstrate adequate capacity to implement the project within budget and within contract deadlines. Applicants must be current on all VMS and DHCD reports (as applicable) and comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements denoted below.

Award Amount

Total funding for FY24 is \$1,000,000. The maximum award amount per organization/project is \$150,000. Organizational capacity building projects are eligible for up to \$50,000 of funding. Small business support projects are eligible for up to \$100,000.

Match Requirements

All projects require a 5:1 match. For every \$5 of grant funding applied for, there must be \$1 in match funding committed. Leverage can be cash or in-kind services provided by any other public or private source. Time contributed solely to the implementation of the project by volunteers may be included.

Other complementary resources that can be leveraged include: Community Business Launch, GO Virginia, and funding from the Small Business Administration, among others.

Funding Priorities & Anticipated Outcomes

The program will allow for Organization Capacity Building and Business Support. Proposed projects should draw from a comprehensive approach that considers Design/Placemaking, Economic Vitality/Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, Organization/Resources, and Promotions. The following are examples of eligible grant activities under each category. While these lists are not exhaustive, they are the types of activities the program is seeking to support with this funding.

1. Organizational Capacity Building (up to \$50,000):
 - a. Strategic planning for the organization
 - b. Master planning, including small area plans, for the community
 - c. Market studies and prospectus development
 - d. Planning for community-initiated development
2. Small Business Support (up to \$100,000):
 - a. Direct Small Business and Entrepreneurial Support and Training
 - b. Other innovative SWAM business support projects, as needed by the community
 - c. Business retention and expansion strategies
 - d. Professional and non-professional services to help set a business up for long-term success (i.e. legal, financial, accounting, marketing, social media, e-commerce, etc.)
 - e. Support building and real estate improvement programs
 - f. Building feasibility studies
 - g. Development of marketing and promotional campaigns in support of local businesses
 - h. Façade renderings and floor plan development
 - i. Placemaking in support of local businesses
 - j. Small scale production / manufacturing business support
 - k. Other innovative organizational capacity building or technical assistance projects, as needed by the community or organization
 - l. Local municipal matching grant program with business support outcomes

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project will result in one or more quantifiable outcomes such as:

- Businesses created
- Businesses served
- Businesses improved
- Jobs created
- Jobs retained
- Leveraged private investment (LPI)
- Programs implemented
- Communities served
- Communities improved
- Organizations served
- Organizations improved
- Participants served
- Participants improved
- Buildings improved
- E-commerce platforms created
- Plans developed
- Plans implemented
- Others, as appropriate for the specific activities of the proposed project

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.

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 targets fund program objectives	40
Project impact/outcomes	30
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Leverage Funding	5
Alignment with VMS’s priorities	5
Total	100

Sample Projects

1. [Inner Peace Coalition, Inc.'s Childcare Business Support in Virginia’s Historic Triangle](#) - A \$100,000 Resurgence Grant helped IPC successfully break down many of the barriers to entry for child care providers and created a pathway for new providers in James City County.
2. [Partnership Development Foundation’s Bloom](#) - A \$100,000 Resurgence Grant, along with other state grant funding, supported the renovation of a new co-working space and provided subsidized rent and wraparound supportive services and technical assistance to underserved business owners in Olde Towne Portsmouth.
3. [New Hill Development Corporation’s BEACON Project](#) - A \$150,000 Resurgence Grant, along with other state grant funding, supported the creation of the business accelerator boot camp, commercial kitchen, and co-working space in Charlottesville.

Timeline

Register your Organization in CAMS (See below)	ASAP
Application Submittal Deadline	April 28, 2023
Application Review	May & June 2023
Anticipated Award Announcement	July 2023
Successful Projects Under Contract	August 2023
Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved	May 31, 2024

All projects must be underway no later than October 31, 2023, and projects must be completed and all disbursements made no later than May 31, 2024. A final report on all project activities and outcomes will be required by June 30, 2024.

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 28, 2023. (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 specific activities will be undertaken with this funding?
2. Describe how the proposed project furthers the grant's objectives of supporting historically economically disadvantaged communities and other business districts that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and aligns with VMS's priorities (page 3).
3. Where will this project take place (describe the business/commercial district)? Why is this district targeted for the project? If the project is capacity building, describe how the activities will support the organization's work in a specific district(s).
4. 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.)
5. Who will be working on this project? List any/all organizational staff, community partners and/or volunteers that will be working to implement this project. What role(s) will they play and how will they contribute? Describe how the organization and/or staff have completed past projects in a timely manner within deadline, budget and achieving project outcomes. (Note: This should provide more detail than the simple team member list included in the work plan.)
6. Describe outcomes that are expected from this project, both quantitative and qualitative. Examples of outcomes are provided in the "Anticipated Outcomes" section of this document. Describe how these outcomes will be tracked and reported.

Application Attachments (Supporting Documents)

The below supporting documents are **required**:

1. Project Team: Include list of staff, community partners and/or volunteers that will work on this project. Identify any needed consultants and whether the role is filled or not.
2. 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.
3. 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.
- 4. Maps/Photographs: Provide a map with outlines of target business/commercial district along with photographs that show current conditions.
- 5. Other Attachments: Provide documents and information that would be helpful to evaluate the proposed project. This might include program designs or program outlines, studies, plans, or master plans.

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 \$29.95 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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