

Downtown Improvement and Business Assistance Program

1. Program Overview

The City of Biddeford administers the Downtown Improvement and Business Assistance Program to provide financial assistance to downtown businesses and property owners who wish to make physical improvements to the interior or exterior of their buildings and to encourage establishment of new business downtown. The program is designed to create visual improvements or assist businesses in the downtown, (see attached map for eligible area).

The Program is divided into two funding sources: Biddeford Business Assistance Loan Funding and CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funding. Applicants may apply to one or both funding sources. The funds are dispersed on a first-come, first-served basis by the date received in the Economic Development Department at City Hall provided the activities meet the criteria listed below.

The CDBG funding source has a maximum \$15,000 per-project with a dollar for dollar match by the applicant. The CDBG source is grant funding. An applicant may seek additional loan assistance funds through the Southern Maine Finance Authority (SMFA), from a fund designated for such purposes in Biddeford. These funds can be used for a variety of facade improvement and slum blight activities listed in the "Eligible Projects" section below. The Business Assistance loan funding is unrestricted in size, but may be limited based on available resources.

2. Administration

The Biddeford Planning and Economic Development Department will vet the initial applications for appropriate funding sources, and submit to City Council or its designee for approval, with all projects subject to approval from the Historic Preservation Commission where required. The work performed under approved projects shall conform to all federal, state and local codes.

3. Program Guidelines and Eligibility

- a. Business Assistance and CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funds (24 CFR 570.208 (b)(2) are available on an on-going basis until existing funds are exhausted.
- b. Maximum grant award for CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funds is \$15,000. Loan funding is restricted only by availability.
- c. Grants are available for up to 50% of the total cost of the improvement project and therefore must be matched at a ratio of 1 to 1. *The amount of grant funds, when appropriate, shall be up to 50% of the actual total. **UNLESS the actual total is greater than the estimated total, in which case the grant fund reimbursement shall be up to 50% of the estimated total.***
- d. The grant applicant may be the property owner or tenant. If the applicant is a tenant, he or she must have the property owner's signed approval of the proposed building improvements. No more than one matching grant per funding source per building will be awarded during the grant period.
- e. Building owners must be willing to provide proof of property ownership.
- f. All City real, personal property taxes and sewer charges must be paid to date.

- g. Funds may only be awarded to any property within the eligible district (see map below), on Main Street or connecting streets.
- h. Grant funds will be paid directly to the contractor performing improvements, and **only upon completion and inspection of the project. The awardee's match must be spent first.**
- i. All projects must be completed within one (1) year of award. A request for an extension may be granted, if delay is due to a legitimate cause. Requests for an extension must occur before the one-year deadline has elapsed.
- j. When CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funds are awarded, all federal requirements shall be met and coordinated through the City's Community Development Coordinator (see the additional requirements regarding process and record keeping below).

4. Eligible Projects

Business Assistance Loan Funding:

- a. Signage
- b. Awnings
- c. Storefront improvements
- d. Restoration of original/historic appearance, including windows, doors, and trim where applicable
- e. Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and trim
- f. Cleaning and/or painting of wood surfaces
- g. Cleaning and/or repointing of surface brick or stone
- h. Removing paint from brick or stone
- i. Exterior lighting
- j. Removal of "modernization" efforts and/or inappropriate non-historic alterations/additions
- k. Cleaning and repair or installation of approved siding
- l. Roofing visible from street-level
- m. Removal or repair of fire escape
- n. Hardscapes
- o. Interior leasehold improvements may be eligible for loan funds if the improvements are part of larger project that includes exterior facade improvements.
- r. Capital equipment needs, provided they are permanent improvements to the structure in question.

CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Grant Funding:

- a. Rehabilitation, including that of historic structures that eliminates code violations that are detrimental to public health and safety such as;
 - 1. Faulty wiring
 - 2. Falling plaster
 - 3. Lead based paint
 - 4. Asbestos
 - 5. Leaking roof
 - 6. Leaking windows-
 - 7. Mold
 - 8. ADA requirements.
 - 9. Deteriorated heating or cooling systems
 - 10. Contamination

11. Exit and entrance improvements to meet life safety requirements
12. Similar conditions as listed above.

All activities under these program funds must be limited only to Code violations that are detrimental to the health and safety of occupants or potential occupants.

5. Ineligible Projects

- a. New building construction
- b. Routine maintenance
- c. Routine interior improvements

6. Application Process

- a. To apply for Business Assistance or CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funding fill out the attached application. Include available drawings and descriptive project information, and the design of the project and products to be used. The City will meet with you if awarded to determine which funding source(s) are available and applicable.
- b. Provide both material and labor cost estimates for each item (see attached form for more details). Deliver your completed application(s) to the Planning and Economic Development Department at City Hall. The Planning and Economic Development staff will contact you to acquire additional application information for final review. All funding awards are pending approval from the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council approval. For those seeking to apply for CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Grant Funding, please see the additional requirements regarding process and record keeping below.
- d. One building may receive multiple improvement grants, provided each award is dedicated to separate business storefronts. However, no more than one matching grant per building will be awarded within a 90-day period and other applicants will take precedent over multiple application awardees after an initial award.
- e. Successful applicants will sign an agreement with the City. The agreement will provide the terms of the loan or grant and program requirements and timelines. **No improvements begun prior to this signed agreement will be eligible for reimbursement.**
- f. Upon completion of the project, the business/property owner shall submit invoices from the contractors for work completed. Business and property owners must sign a statement that all work has been completed to satisfaction.
- g. The Planning and Economic and Development Department will complete an inspection to determine that the work was completed in accordance with the scope of work included in the contract.
- h. Payment is made directly to the contractors.

7. Required Procedures and Record Keeping for CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Grant Funding

- a. An environmental review process is required and the City is required to forward the project to the State's Historic Preservation Office for review. This review includes the project in its entirety not just the scope using CDBG grant funds.
- b. Documentation of the completed Environmental Review requirements must be on file in the Community Development Office regarding the project.

- c. A letter from Code Enforcement is required that a site visit was performed and confirming the specific condition(s) of blight or physical decay, and that this/these conditions are detrimental to public health and safety.
- d. The applicant will be required to produce 3 cost estimates including materials per activity and the lowest and most responsible estimate will be selected to ensure that costs are reasonable and necessary.
- e. The Community Development Coordinator will review all scopes of work and determine that costs are allocable to the CDBG award, review the details and scope of the work, and ensure the work is completed in accordance with the specification. Documentation of materials and labor, including time sheets will be reviewed and kept on file.
- f. The Community Development Coordinator will ensure by reviewing the Debarred Contractor's List that no contractors will be awarded that are debarred/suspended from receiving CDBG funding.
- g. Davis Bacon Wage Rates must be used where applicable and will be issued by the Community Development Coordinator prior to any work being implemented. All payrolls must be received and reviewed, and in compliance prior to any sign off or payment to a contractor regarding completion of work.
- h. All requested documentation must be on file in the Community Development Coordinator's Office, an inspection of the site for completion of work as specified in the executed agreement with the City and a Document of Completion signed by the Community Development Coordinator and property owner (tenant if applicable), before paying a contractor.
- i. A Receipt of Payment and Project Closeout, that includes a release from the billing for additional time and/or materials will be signed by the Contractor, Community Development Coordinator and property owner (tenant if applicable).

8. Historic Preservation

All projects will occur in Biddeford's designated Historic District, therefore all Facade Improvement Program projects will be subject to Historic Preservation standards. The application for Historic Preservation Certificate of Appropriateness can be obtained from the City's Planning Department or downloaded here:

http://www.biddefordmaine.org/vertical/sites/%7BFAD9934F-594E-4DFE-8950-698C92DACFDD%7D/uploads/Certificate_of_Appropriateness_Application.pdf.

All projects accepting CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funding will be subject to a site specific review at the local, state and federal levels.



Downtown Improvement and Business Assistance Program Program Application

1. Name of Applicant: _____

2. Please check one: ____ Property Owner ____ Tenant (See "Required Documents" list on p. 2)

3. Business Name (if applicable): _____

4. Property Address: _____

5. Mailing Address (if different from above): _____

6. Daytime Phone: _____

7. E-Mail: _____

8. Description of the project (See "Eligible Projects" list on p. 4)

- a) Please provide a brief written description of each proposed activity, along with materials to be used. (For example: (1) Paint entire street facade with 3 colors, a base wall color, a trim color and an accent color (2) Remove existing internally illuminated sign and replace with a new Historic Preservation Commission-approved sign. (3) See list of Slum and Blight activities) Attach additional sheets as necessary. **Note:**

All projects must comply with Code and Historic Preservation requirements. Slum and Blight activities must have a letter of Slum and Blight Determination from the Code Enforcement Office.

- b) Please attach a photo of where each proposed activity will take place as well as design sketch(es) showing what it should look like when finished. Please include any information that will help in the processing of your application (see "Required Documents" list on p. 2).

9. Total Estimated Cost of Improvements: _____

On a separate page, provide a cost breakdown for labor and material, based on an estimate from a qualified and insured contractor or design professional for each proposed activity (see "Required Documents" list on p. 2).

10. Funding

Total Grant Amount Requested: _____

Total Matching Funds: _____

Source of Matching Funds: _____

If awarded verification of Matching Funds will be required.

11. *I have read and understand the attached Program Overview and Guidelines. I understand that this is a matching grant program and that the money is granted on a reimbursement basis, following completion of work. I also understand that improvements not pre-approved by the Biddeford Economic and Community Development Department will not be funded.*

Applicant's Signature

Date

12. Property Owner's Acknowledgement (if Applicant is a Tenant)

I am the Property Owner of the above address. I have been informed of the Applicant's intention to perform the improvements described in the attached documentation, and I hereby approve the proposed improvements.

Property Owner's Signature

Date

13. Property Owner's Contact Information (if different from Applicant)

Full Name: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

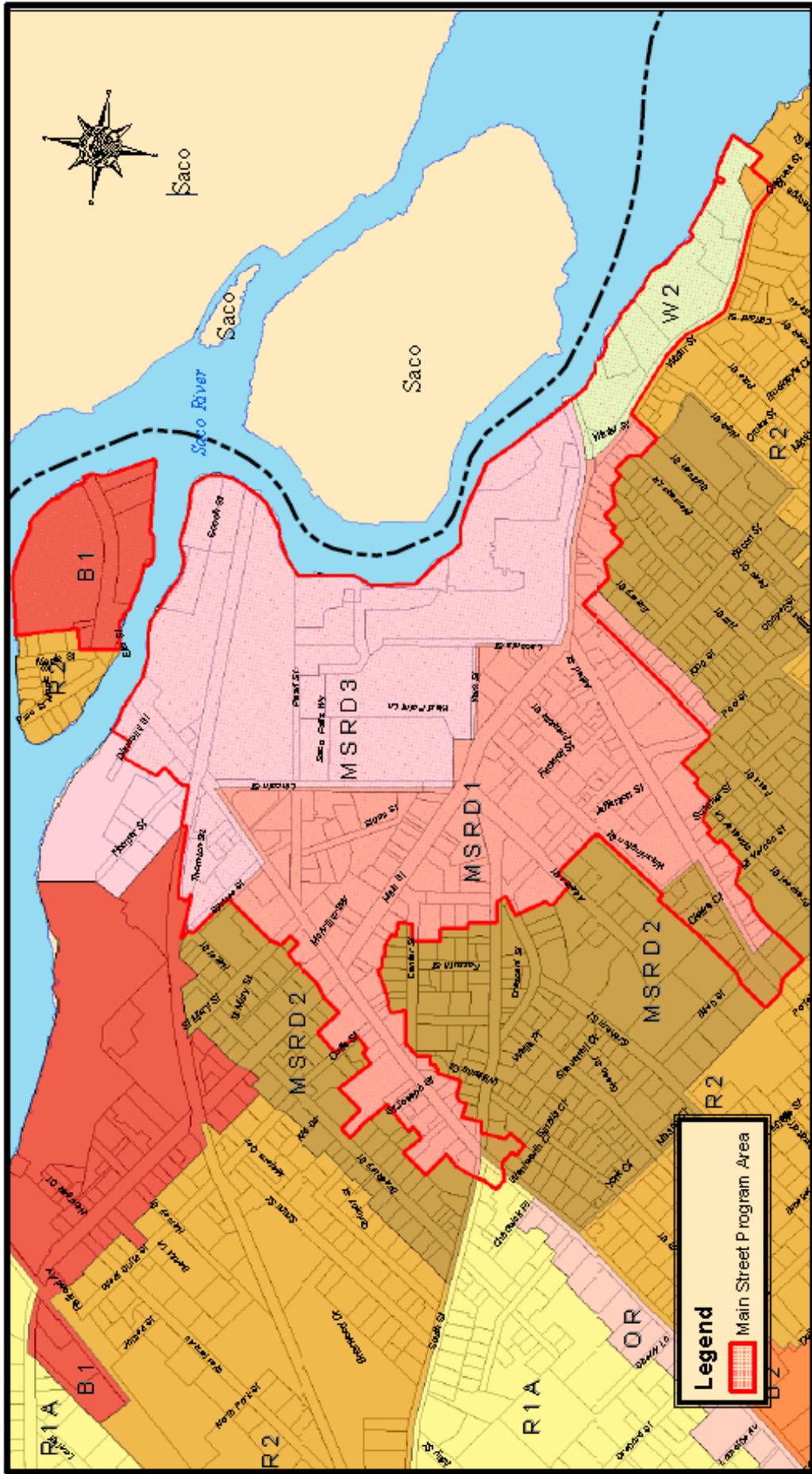
Please return your completed application along with documentation listed below to:

Biddeford Economic and Community Development Department
Downtown Improvement Program
P.O. Box 586
Biddeford, Maine 04005.

- Facade Improvement Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis after the program is announce until current funds are exhausted.
- Applicants will be notified of decision within two weeks of receipt of application.

Required documentation:

- 1) Business tenants must provide copy of the lease.
- 2) Provide a cost breakdown for labor and material, based on an estimate from a qualified and insured contractor or design professional for each proposed activity. Then, provide a detailed estimate from your chosen contractor along with an explanation for why this is the lowest responsible and responsive estimate.
- 3) Preliminary sketch or other graphics of the proposed improvements.

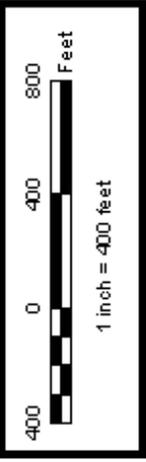


Legend
 Main Street Program Area

The City of Biddeford, Maine
 Engineering Department - GIS Mapping
 205 Main Street P.O. Box 386 Biddeford, Maine 04005-0386
 Tel. 207.286.9118 Fax 207.286.9128



Main Street Program Area



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