

Homes and Community Renewal

NY Main Street (NYMS) Program

Q1: I own a downtown mixed-use building, can I apply for a NYMS grant?

A1: Units of local government and organizations incorporated under the NYS Not-for-Profit Corporation Law are eligible applicants for NYMS grants. Municipal and not-for-profit recipients of NYMS funds then provide grants to local building owners. NYS Homes and Community Renewal does not contract directly with property owners. Please contact your local government or county planning office to find out if existing NYMS funds are available in your community.

Q2: Property owners in our community are not currently interested in completing building renovation projects, but we would like to install benches, garbage cans and bike racks on Main Street. Can we apply for Streetscape funds to purchase and install these fixtures?

A2: NYMS Streetscape funds may not be requested as a standalone activity. Streetscape funds must be ancillary to a multi-project building renovation program.

Q3: We have a project that could use New York Main Street Technical Assistance funds and New York Main Street Building Renovation funds. Can we submit applications for both?

A3: No. NYMS Technical Assistance proposals must be for future NYMS projects. Given the two-year contract term, it is not feasible to fund a technical assistance project for a building renovation project that does not have an anticipated construction start date.

Q4: Can we apply for multiple activities? For example, both a Traditional NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Program and a NYMS Downtown Anchor Project or a Technical Assistance project?

A4: No. An applicant is encouraged to focus its efforts on a single activity. The application will allow applicants to select only one.

Q5: Are restrictions placed on buildings that receive NYMS funds?

A5: Property owners participating in the NYMS Program must sign a Property Maintenance Declaration. The Property Maintenance Declaration states that the property owner will maintain all NYMS assisted improvements in good condition for a five-year term. If residential units are assisted, the rent limit will be imposed for the five-year term. This Declaration document must be filed with the County to secure the investment.

Q6: If a residential unit is assisted with NYMS funds - does the owner need to verify tenant income?

A6: Assisted residential units must be marketed to and made affordable to persons of low to moderate income. This requirement is met through a rent limit imposed on the assisted unit(s) during the five-year regulatory term.

Q7: If windows are being replaced in a residential unit, but no other interior work is completed within the unit, do rental restrictions still apply?

- A7: Repairing or replacing windows can be considered an exterior improvement and the rent regulations may not apply. Please note that if renovation projects disturb lead based paint and impact a residential unit, the Local Program Administrator must refer to the NYMS Lead-Based Paint Policy.
- Q8: **If a building has existing vinyl windows, do they have to be replaced for the building to participate in the New York Main Street program?**
- A8: Generally, existing vinyl windows or siding will not preclude a building from participating in the NYMS Program. Each Local Program Administrator must develop project selection criteria and design guidelines and work with participating property owners to develop agreed upon scopes of work. The State Historic Preservation Office reviews the scope of work for each participating building to ensure that the planned renovation will not have an adverse impact on historic resources.
- Q9: **Can New York Main Street building renovation funds be used to improve a building's parking lot?**
- A9: NYMS funds cannot be used for site work such as parking lots, driveways, sidewalks or general landscaping.
- Q10: **Can we use New York Main Street funds to add an addition to a building or tear down a vacant building?**
- A10: No, NYMS funds cannot be used for new construction or demolition.
- Q11: **Are in-kind labor and donated materials eligible as match for NYMS?**
- A11: No. Match for NYMS projects must be realized on a building by building basis, and eligible expenses and payments will be verified prior to reimbursement.
- Q12: **Our City Hall needs repairs, can we use NYMS funds for renovations?**
- A12: No, municipally-owned buildings, used for municipal purposes are not eligible to receive NYMS program funds.
- Q13: **Are costs incurred prior to award eligible for reimbursement or as match?**
- A13: No. Costs incurred prior to award are not eligible for reimbursement or as match. Additionally, applicants are advised against incurring costs prior to contract execution and environmental review.
- Q14: **If my application is funded, how do I access the awarded New York Main Street money?**
- A14: Before New York Main Street funds can be drawn down, awardees must execute the New York Main Street grant agreement and designate a bank account to receive NYMS funds in the form of a direct deposit. New York Main Street is a reimbursement program, therefore, individual projects must be complete and paid for before funds will be disbursed. NYMS funds may be requested on a per building/project basis. 40% of awarded administrative funds may be drawn down prior to completion of building and streetscape projects. Administrative funds beyond the initial 40% will be available based on overall program completion.
- Q15: **Do specific buildings need to be identified in the application and are financial commitment letters required for those projects?**

A15: A NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Program application that identifies specific buildings proposed to be assisted is generally more competitive because project readiness is demonstrated. Applications demonstrating formally committed funds will also score more competitively than those without funds committed. NYMS Downtown Anchor and Downtown Stabilization Project applications must identify the specific project and identify funding commitments and construction financing since this project activity is for “shovel ready” projects only.

Q16: **What is new for NYMS this year?**

A16: In conjunction with Target Area Building Renovation Activities or a Downtown Anchor Project, applicants may request to use funds to alleviate the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Requests must be specifically outlined in the application. COVID Relief activities must be directly related to a building renovation activity and awarded on a per project basis. Funds will be awarded only for activity ancillary to a traditional NYMS building renovation or Anchor project and cannot be applied for on its own.

Q17: **Where can we get more information about the NYMS program? If we have questions, who should we contact?**

A17: Please send an email to HCR_CFA@hcr.ny.gov and your question will be directed to the appropriate program staff. Additional information is also available on HCR's website, here: <https://hcr.ny.gov/new-york-main-street#funding-round-materials>