



North Country

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COALITION

1. INTRODUCTION

North Country Rural Development was awarded \$600,000 through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) to create the Small Projects Fund, which provides matching grant funds to commercial properties in the Ticonderoga Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) target area. Property owners, business owners, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funds for interior and exterior building improvements, site upgrades and enhancements, and changes or upgrades to businesses. Projects should meet the goals of the DRI and advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization.

The online application can be found at <https://form.jotform.com/250435345367155>. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and completed applications will be sent to the project review committee on the 15th of each month.

All applicants are required to attend one info session before applying. Please contact info@northcountryruraldevelopment.org or 518-585-6366 to set up a meeting.

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2. ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Eligible applicants include owners of properties and businesses within the Ticonderoga DRI target area (see Target Area Map on page 12).
- Typically, a building owner is the applicant, but occasionally a business owner that is a building tenant or leaseholder may apply, provided several conditions are met. Please consult NRDC for more information.
- Only properties currently with all property taxes, utility payments, mortgage payments and fees are eligible to apply.
- For business assistance projects, only businesses open year-round are eligible to apply.

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Religious organizations applying for renovations to a property used for any religious purpose

- Private membership-based organizations applying for renovations to a property used solely for private membership-based events
- Any other business or organization that proposes projects to buildings, spaces or properties that would be closed to the general public based on age, race, gender, religion, etc.
- Municipally owned and operated buildings
- Applicants that are not current with their mortgage, utility or tax payments.
- The final determination of applicant eligibility is at the discretion of the project review committee.

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3. AVAILABLE FUNDING

Category	Description	Minimum Award	Maximum Award	Minimum Match
Building Renovations & Site Improvements	Exterior building improvements such as painting, brick repair, window & door repair/replacement, awnings, decks, & storefront renovations. Interior building improvements such as upgrades to commercial spaces. Site improvements	\$25,000	\$100,000	25%

	including construction of walkways, outdoor seating areas, decks, patios, and landscaping.			
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The grant award will not exceed 75% of the total eligible project cost, up to the maximum award amount under each category.

The minimum match requirement is 25% of total project cost.

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4. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

BUILDING RENOVATIONS & SITE IMPROVEMENTS

- Interior and exterior building renovations for commercial, e.g. façade/storefront renovations, interior fit-out, HVAC, MEP, and other permanent building improvements. Permanent landscape installations to improve sense of place are eligible, if ancillary to the building renovation project.
- ADA accessibility improvements
- Soft Costs – architectural, engineering, environmental
- Interior and exterior improvements to support adjusted business practices, e.g. pick-up windows, outdoor seating areas and patios

*Renovations must meet local design guidelines and standards, the NYS Building Code, and NYS historic preservation standards.

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5. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

BUILDING RENOVATIONS & SITE IMPROVEMENTS

- Renovation or creation of residential units

- Material purchases made by the owner. All materials must be purchased, installed, and invoiced by the contractor.
- Property acquisition
- Demolition of an entire building or new construction
- Construction for an additional story on an existing building
- Certain construction materials, including vinyl siding or windows
- Improvements to single or multi-family homes
- Improvements to structures where the sole beneficiary is a religious or private membership-based organization
- Improvements to structures where the sole beneficiary is a municipally owned or municipally operated structure
- Furnishings (other than approved outdoor seating), appliances, electronics, tools, disposable supplies, non-permanent fixtures and equipment, hardware, vehicles, computers, and temporary artwork.
- Site work or ancillary activities on a property including but not limited to: septic systems/laterals, grading, parking lots, sidewalks, garages, sheds, fences, free standing signs, general maintenance or repairs
- Energy system upgrades and installation of new windows (unless part of a larger façade restoration and/or commercial space improvement project) and roofing are eligible only if part of larger facade renovation
- Funds cannot be used for participant, participant's family or participant's staff labor
- In-kind labor
- Repayment of debt
- Loan, finance, interest and/or tax fees
- Reallocation of funds to other organizations (other than approved subcontractors for the project)
- Salaries, wages and benefits
- Expenses reimbursed from any other source or agency
- Projects that do not further the priorities of local and regional plans.
- Work that in the opinion of the project review committee, is inconsistent with or detracts from approved downtown design guidelines

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6. BUDGET & FINANCING

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The match requirement for this grant is 25% of total project cost. In-kind match or labor is not eligible. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement and not eligible as a match.

SOFT COSTS

Eligible soft costs include architecture and engineering design services and environmental testing expenses. Soft costs require matching funds, and in-kind match is not eligible. Soft costs are to be paid by the property or business owner and can be partially reimbursed upon project completion. Soft costs incurred for work on buildings that eventually prove infeasible and do not receive other investments will not be reimbursed.

FINANCING

Property or business owners are responsible for securing financing for their project.

REIMBURSEMENT

This grant program is a reimbursement program, meaning that the property owner must pay all expenses directly and then submit documentation for eligible expenses for reimbursement. Soft costs for canceled projects are not eligible for reimbursement. Please see section 8 below for more information on the reimbursement process.

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7. PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Project Review Committee will use the following criteria to score and recommend projects for funding:

I. VISUAL IMPACT

- Visual prominence within the target area
- Transformative renovations beyond normal maintenance
- Restoration or preservation of historic structures or building elements, especially those in danger of being lost in part or in total to disrepair or damage
- Compliance with applicable design guidelines

II. ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Reduction of blight and vacancies
- Contribution to the economic recovery of the target area
- Stabilization or expansion of downtown tax base, businesses and/or jobs

- Creation of new jobs
- Expansion of business service offerings

III. PROJECT READINESS

- Proof of ownership
- Proof of financing or reasonable and achievable financing plan
- Reasonable estimated project budget
- Percentage of total project cost funded by applicant
- Reasonable and achievable design and approval plan
- Reasonable construction timeline

IV. QUALITY OF LIFE

- Accessibility improvements
- Contribution to sense of place

V. DRI PRIORITIES

Projects that advance the goals and priorities of the DRI Investment Strategy, including:

- Four Season Destination: Accelerate efforts to reinforce Ticonderoga as a welcoming, four-season Adirondack community and destination with a variety of year-round activities, amenities, shopping, lodging, and dining.
- Environment and History: Celebrate and interpret Ticonderoga’s value for and connection to the natural environment and history.
- Energize the Economy: Energize the Ticonderoga economy to attract and support businesses, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities.
- Quality of Place: Enhance the ‘Quality of Place’ in Ticonderoga to draw and retain residents, families, and businesses.

PROJECT SCORING & SELECTION

The project review committee will assign a score to each project using the following scoring system:

Criteria	Max Points
Visual Impact	20
Economic Impact	20

Project Readiness	20
Quality of Life	10
DRI Priorities	30
Total	100

The project review committee will recommend which projects to fund at what amounts to the NRDC Board of Directors. The NRDC Board of Directors will approve the final awards.

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8. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & REIMBURSEMENT

All projects receiving public funds must follow State procurement and reimbursement procedures.

Property owners are required to pay contractors directly and then submit documentation for reimbursement. Please note that if construction begins before all steps under program development are completed, reimbursement cannot be issued. Upon notice of funding award, the applicant must work with NRDC to advance the project. Failure to meet milestones will result in the deobligation of funds.

All projects must proceed through the steps outlined below:

Step	Description	Responsible Party
1. Award Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Return signed award letter to NRDC ● Pay \$1,500 refundable commitment fee (fee is only refundable for completed projects) 	Property Owner
2. Develop Project Scope of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with construction manager to develop project workscope ● Ensure design meets local code and design standards ● For larger projects: Complete floor plans, drawings, renderings, written workscope or any other needed construction documents 	Property Owner

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For smaller projects: Complete written workscope ● Finalize project budget ● Secure development board approval if required ● Receive clearance from NRDC on final design 	
3. Environmental Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ALL projects require an environmental review ● NRDC will secure State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) approval ● NRDC will obtain floodplain determination letter, zoning letter, site contamination report and any other needed documentation ● NRDC will complete environmental checklist ● Environmental testing (asbestos & lead paint) as needed 	Property Owner & NRDC
4. Project Setup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NRDC will submit project setup to the State for approval 	NRDC
5. Bidding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NRDC will advertise project and do direct solicitation ● Owner will communicate with contractors to solicit bids ● Obtain a minimum of two bids or 2 quotes for each 	Property Owner & NRDC

	<p>phase of work and select contractor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bids must be submitted directly to NRDC 	
6. Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRDC will provide all agreement templates • Owner will execute agreement with contractor • Owner will execute agreement with NRDC • Owner will sign Property Release Form • Owner will sign Bid Selection Form 	Property Owner & NRDC
<p>7. Construction</p> <p>*Please note that if construction begins before all previous steps are completed, reimbursement cannot be issued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor will secure building permit and provide NRDC with a copy • Receive Notice to Proceed from NRDC • Owner will take before photos • NRDC will provide project sign to be installed • Owner will take after photos • Code Enforcement will do inspection and issue Certificate of Compliance or Certificate of Occupancy • NRDC will complete environmental clearances (only required if there was hazardous material abatement) 	Property Owner, Contractor & NRDC

<p>8. Reimbursement</p> <p>*Property owners are required to pay contractors directly and then submit documentation for reimbursement.</p>	<p>- Owner will send NRDC all invoices and proof of payment (only canceled checks or bank/credit statements are acceptable proof of payment)</p> <p>- Invoices must be typed and acceptable to NYS, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Date ● Name & address of contractor ● Name & address of person being billed ● Detailed description of what is being invoiced ● Information about what has previously been paid (if applicable) and the balance for current invoice ● The invoice amount must match the proof of payment amount ● Proof of payment date must be after invoice date ● Deposits for materials must be invoiced <p>- Owner will sign and notarize Property Maintenance Declaration</p> <p>- NRDC will prepare and submit disbursement request to State</p>	<p>Property Owner & NRDC</p>
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	- Receive reimbursement	
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9. PROGRAM CONDITIONS

- Grant awards will be merit based. Applicants that can communicate a compelling need that directly fulfills criteria with quantifiable results will be given higher consideration.
- Projects selected by the Project Review Committee and approved by NRDC Board of Directors will be submitted to Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) for review and approval prior to notifying the property or business owner of formal funding approval.
- Awarded funds may be subject to conditions. The award letter and agreement will clearly outline all conditions.
- NRDC reserves the right to award a project less funding than requested.

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10. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Additional information about this program, including contact information and the program application form, is available at www.northcountryruraldevelopment.org.

I acknowledge that I have read the program guidelines in their entirety. I understand that failure to comply with the program guidelines may result in my inability to get reimbursed.

Signature

Date

Ticonderoga DRI Target Area Map

