

RESTORE NY Program Webinar FAQs (July 13, 2022)

Funding-related Questions

- **How can NY's land banks factor in? Do municipalities receive higher scores for partnering w/ LBs or can LB's receive funds directly?**
 - To the extent that the landbank is investing in the project as well, scoring could be higher. The municipality needs to be the applicant, and funds would be sub granted to LB.
- **Can residential projects get \$150,000 or \$70,000 per unit?**
 - Single family residential projects are allowed \$150,000. In apartment buildings, \$70,000 per unit. If these units are considered affordable housing, applicant will be eligible for up to \$150,000 in addition to the per unit allowance.
- **Max we can apply and match %?**
 - Match is always no less than 10% of the award amount. Max funding amount is based off the project specs and the population of the municipality. See guidelines.
- **Does this funding apply to both private sector and municipal buildings?**
 - Yes, but municipal buildings cannot be used for municipal purposes.
- **Eligible costs, prevailing wage, max award?**
 - Eligible Costs: Cost resulting from the rehabilitation, reconstruction, deconstruction or demolition of the subject property or properties.
 - There is no statutory requirement for prevailing wage in a project funded by Restore, however depending upon the project it could be triggered by another provision of law.
- **How is the amount available for a project calculated?**
 - Funding amount is based off the individual project specs.
- **Can Land Banks apply for the grants?**
 - The project applicant must be a municipality. The landbank can work with a municipality to submit a project, then the municipality can subgrant the funding to the landbank.
- **Will the \$\$ cover demolition and removal/disposal or just demolition? Will the \$\$ include asbestos or other abatement costs?**
 - You need to specifically request hazmat on the application. As far as removal of demo debris, this is an eligible cost.

- **A county is preparing an application to create a Land Bank. Will the county be allowed to apply if the Land Bank is not yet?**
 - A municipality will need to be the applicant. The municipality can then sub grant the funds to whoever they deem appropriate to fulfill the project.

- **Can Restore NY grants be used in collaboration with other grant funding?**
 - Absolutely.

- **Can a municipality request funding for more than one property? If so, would it require two separate applications?**
 - Yes, but there must be some kind of connection between the properties (think several buildings on a stretch of a main street). This would be one project with one application, but you will need to provide information on each property.

- **Is this a matching funds grant or total grant? What type of pre-demo or construction documentation is needed?**
 - There is no pre demo or construction documentation needed at the time of application. This is not a matching grant program, although there is a 10% match requirement of total award amount. However, projects that have other private or public investment score better.

- **What is the municipality's % match of any funding?**
 - 10% of the project award is needed.

- **When will funding be available?**
 - Funding will be awarded upon project completion.

- **The 2022-23 State Budget provided \$250 million in new funding for Restore NY, which will be awarded in two rounds. Explain.**
 - \$100M in the first round (“Round 6”); applications due October 11th
 - \$150M in the second round (“Round 7”); applications due on or around January 11th

- **Can this funding be used to acquire blighted property through eminent domain?**
 - Acquisition of a property is not an eligible activity in the Restore NY program.

Eligibility, Requirements, Process-related, & Other Questions

- **Can not-for-profits apply also?**
 - Municipalities are the only eligible applicants. If a not-for-profit has a potential project, we encourage them to approach the municipality the project is located in.

- **Can an EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant be used as match?**

- Yes
- **Are public/private partnerships permitted or required? Also, can this program be paired with CDBG funding such as a Section 108?**
 - Yes, permitted, not required. Yes, can pair with CDBG funds.
- **Would the program be administered by the State directly or the municipality where the project is located?**
 - The municipality that the project is located within will be the applicant and will be awarded the funding. At that point they can choose to execute the project however they feel appropriate. The State will act as project management and administer the program.
- **Will a city be able to apply for a project during each round?**
 - Yes.
- **If the municipality Local Dev. Corp owns the building with a developer interested in a project. Should the LDC retain property?**
 - This does not matter, as long as the building is not being used for municipal activities.
- **What exactly constitutes "reconstruction" vs "new build?"**
 - RECONSTRUCTION shall mean the construction of a new building, which is similar in architectural style, size and purpose to a previously existing building at such location, provided however, that to the extent possible such reconstruction is architecturally consistent with nearby and adjacent properties, or in a manner consistent with a local revitalization or urban development plan.
 - Greenfield construction is not eligible.
- **Can a municipality apply for more than one project?**
 - A municipality can only apply for one project in each round. An additional application for a special project, if eligible, is also possible.
- **Are scattered site projects eligible for this funding?**
 - Likely not. If multiple buildings are being proposed there needs to be some kind of concrete connection to them (think several buildings on main street).
- **Can a County and a City both apply with different project applications within the same city?**
 - Yes.
- **Eligibility of Counties vs. Towns/Villages/Cities**
 - Eligibility is the same for normal project funding. Funding caps for counties are based off the municipality the project is located in.

- Special projects are only eligible for counties under 400,000 and cities, towns, and villages with less than 100,000 population.
- **Can we demolish an abandoned home on private property?**
 - Yes.
- **How does this work if the owner of the property is in dispute?**
 - ESD would not support a project at such a property until ownership is clarified.
- **Are buildings required to be owned by the municipality?**
 - No, but you will need a completed Site Control Affidavit from the building owner.
- **Can improvements to buildings for Municipal use be funded by the program?**
 - No.
- **Can the money be used to purchase an old church to be used as a community center?**
 - The funds cannot be used to acquire a property.
- **Who, within the municipality, would be eligible for grant funding...Businesses, non-profits, private individuals?**
 - The project applicant must be a municipality. The municipality can then subgrant the funds as they see appropriate, based on how they plan to execute the project.
- **Is there a minimum for the grant award? Is it a matching grant? If so, can we do work in kind?**
 - No minimum. This is not a matching grant program. Projects with other private or public investment will score better.
- **Can a proposal represent one component of a larger development project, or only a discrete project?**
 - Yes. This is fine.
- **Please clarify if the project can no longer be a municipally owned project when complete?**
 - It can be municipally owned but cannot be for municipal uses.
- **Can funds be used to acquire, demolish dilapidated buildings, anticipating resale? Preliminary study for new sewer district?**
 - Funds cannot be used to acquire properties or studies. Demolition is an eligible activity.
- **We have unsafe structures that need to be removed to clean up the town. What would make a structure qualify for this program?**
 - Blighted structures are eligible for demolition.
- **What projects would qualify for our small rural town?**

- Residential, mixed use, or commercial structures that need to be demolished, deconstructed, reconstructed, or rehabilitated.
- **Our main focus is rezoning for a mixed-use transit-oriented development. Funding for rezoning/GEIS would be great.**
 - This is not an eligible activity for the Restore NY program.
- **Is it for homeowners?**
 - Residential properties are eligible assuming they are blighted, vacant, and/or condemned. The municipality would need to be the applicant and subgrant the funds.
- **Many "blighted" structures are owned by private individuals that cannot afford to restore or demolish.**
 - Buildings can be privately owned. The municipality would need to be the applicant and subgrant the funds.
- **Is there an amount designated to rural communities?**
 - No, but there is a goal of increasing rural projects in this round.
- **Will abandoned buildings be included in the program?**
 - Abandoned structures are eligible. The municipality would need a Site Control Affidavit from the building owner.
- **Do you need to own the building before you apply?**
 - No. The applicant must be the municipality and they would need a Site Control Affidavit from the building owner.
- **Brownfield applicability?**
 - Brownfield development is eligible for the program.
- **What is the shovel readiness threshold?**
 - Vacant sites are not eligible for assistance unless the vacant site is a brownfield. "Shovel readiness" is not a consideration of the program.
- **What is the most a town can apply for?**
 - \$2M. They are also eligible to apply for a special project which is up to \$10M in funding.
- **Same lot demo and reconstruction of mixed use/residential buildings is allowed, correct?**
 - Yes.
- **Can this program apply to investments in building upgrades already begun (2020-2022)?**
 - Costs incurred before October 11, 2022 are not eligible to be reimbursed by the Restore NY program.

- **Is this funding only for demolition? Can this funding be used for partial restoration on an otherwise sound building?**
 - Demolition and restoration are both eligible activities under the Restore NY Program. The program is targeted for blighted buildings, so if the restoration is cosmetic, it may be eligible but likely will not score well.
- **Might this funding be used to renovate/demolish town-owned facilities for re-use by private business +/- or subsidized housing opp?**
 - Yes.
- **Would like to know more information about the focus on historic properties/districts.**
 - There is no direct focus on historic properties or districts.
- **Can this money be used for buildings that are not abandoned?**
 - The property must be considered vacant to be eligible.
- **Can the funds be used for green spaces like run-down parks?**
 - If there is a vacant, abandoned, condemned, or surplus building in the green space. Land restoration is not an eligible activity.
- **Is funding available for sewer/water infrastructure?**
 - The program is for restoring buildings. If there is sewer/water infrastructure needs that are directly related to the rehabilitation of the approved property, then this would be an eligible cost.
- **Does the municipality have to first go through a condemnation process before the property is eligible?**
 - No.
- **Is a BLIGHT Study of my municipality vital to support the exercise of the provisions through this grant?**
 - No, but likely helpful.
- **Are there any income requirements?**
 - The applicant must be a municipality, therefore no.
- **Is this only for existing commercial structures that have fallen into disrepair? What about vacant commercial lots?**
 - This program is strictly for residential, mixed use, or commercial buildings. Vacant lots are not eligible unless they are a brownfield.
- **Can a municipality use the funds themselves to demolish a building without a developer involved? Sell as vacant land?**

- Yes. A municipality can choose to demolish a building themselves. They can sell the vacant land but having a plan for it would score better.
- **Will an application submitted apply for a municipal park?**
 - No. This program is strictly for the demolition, deconstruction, rehabilitation, and/or reconstruction of vacant, abandoned, condemned, or surplus residential, mixed use and/or commercial buildings.
- **Is there a minimum community poverty level to participate?**
 - No, but there is an emphasis on projects in economically distressed communities.
- **Is a municipality eligible to apply for both round 1 and round 2 of the Restore NY program?**
 - Yes.
- **Can we use the grant for our village Hall and Building?**
 - Buildings that are being used for municipal activities are not eligible for this program.
- **Can it be used for vacant lots?**
 - No, unless it is a brownfield.
- **Would an abandoned, polluted mill site (in a flood plain) that needs to be demolished be eligible if the end use is a park?**
 - The demolition of a vacant abandoned building would be eligible.
- **Specifically, what are the contributions that the Village would be responsible for and how it works with the private partners.**
 - The funds will be granted to the municipality, and they can then subgrant to whomever they feel appropriate to complete the project. There is a 10% of project award match required by the applicant.
- **Do you have to acquire properties at auction in order to be able to demolish them?**
 - No. The municipality needs to be the applicant, but a Site Control Affidavit can be completed between the property owner and the municipality.
- **Do the properties need to be owned by the municipality? If not, does the owner need to be a for profit business?**
 - No. The property owner can be anybody. The municipality needs to be the applicant, but a Site Control Affidavit can be completed between the property owner and the municipality.
- **Changes since last round. Improvements in disbursement requirements, soft cost allowances? Incentive for facade and streetscape?**
 - No changes have been made in disbursement requirements or soft cost allowances.

- Façade work may be eligible if the building is. Streetscape is not eligible.
- **Are said properties required to BZA approvals for development?**
 - If you mean ZBA approval, yes, ESD would only fund projects consistent with current zoning.
- **Can funds be used for new construction/reconstruction of a building that was destroyed in fire?**
 - We would need more information, but likely yes.
- **Will this initiative include housing for homeless individuals and families?**
 - This initiative does have an additional incentive for projects that create affordable housing.
- **Can this program also support repurposed properties from commercial buildings to residential projects?**
 - If a blighted commercial building is included in an application with the intended reuse of residential, that is eligible.
- **Funding for municipality with less than 2000 people. How does it work with a private owner?**
 - The municipality needs to be the applicant, but a Site Control Affidavit can be completed between the property owner and the municipality.
- **Our downtown currently has an abandoned lot and a gas station that we are looking to develop them. Would they qualify?**
 - The gas station and the lot it is on would likely be eligible.
- **Is Redevelopment underutilized commercial into housing eligible?**
 - If the commercial building is blighted, then yes.
- **Are any local community leaders a part of the process?**
 - The municipality needs to be the applicant and can choose to do the project themselves or subgrant the work to a developer. If the latter option selected, we encourage community leaders to stay up to date with project milestones. A resolution of support from the legislative body of the municipality that has land use control must be provided.
- **Can you explain in simple words what can the grant be use for?**
 - This program is designed for the demolition, deconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of vacant, abandoned, condemned, and surplus residential, mixed use, and commercial buildings.
- **Does the Restore NY program provide aide to restore properties when the purchaser is a first-time homebuyer?**

- Yes, a municipality could provide a subgrant to rehabilitate a home that is being acquired by a first-time home buy. However, it must be vacant. If it is inhabited, it is not eligible.
- **May funds be used to redesign and rebuild our public park, making it accessible and a stronger community asset?**
 - No.
- **If someone has started the restoration, can this grant come in after the project has started?**
 - Yes, but costs incurred before October 11, 2022 are not eligible for reimbursement.
- **Please define (eligibility) and discuss Brownfield Opportunity Areas**
 - Brownfields are eligible for Restore NY funding. You can find additional information at <https://dos.ny.gov/brownfield-redevelopment>
- **How long is the grant period?**
 - Project must be started within 2 years from the award date unless an extension is granted.
- **How can we help low-income families?**
 - This program does have an additional incentive if the project has an affordable housing aspect.
- **Will funds be available for demolition to support growth or expansion of public safety (fire department facilities)?**
 - No. This is a municipal use.
- **What strategies do you recommend for smaller communities in terms of applying for a special award project?**
 - The special project category is designed for smaller communities. A well thought out plan will score better.
- **Do town hall projects qualify?**
 - Projects for municipally owned properties to be used for municipal purposes are ineligible for assistance.
- **What if the blighted property still is having its taxes paid?**
 - This is fine.
- **When will grants be awarded and what is the grant time frame?**
 - Awards will be announced toward the end of Q4 2022 or early Q1 2023. Funds will be disbursed upon project completion.
- **Are communities able to go in together on joint applications?**

- No. Funding is based on project location, which would come down to one single municipality.
- **How detailed of a plan will we need for the application process?**
 - Detail is not necessarily required, but the more detailed and thought out the plan is for the property the better the application is going to score.
- **Will an existing abandoned blighted building with large amounts of asbestos qualify for funding through this program?**
 - Yes, please select hazmat funding while completing the application.
- **Is it better to have multiple applications for buildings in the town or combine them all together?**
 - Municipalities can only submit one application. If you want to apply for multiple properties, they will have to have a clear strategic connection to each other, but can all be included in the property packet.
- **Can multiple projects within a municipality receive the grant per round or different rounds but before first project is complete?**
 - Municipalities can apply for one project per round. The work on the first project does not need to be completed to submit a new project in the second round.
- **Does the grant cover Net Zero community Recreational parks?**
 - No.
- **Can the fund be used to clean contaminated sites?**
 - Assuming this question is either referring to a brownfield or a building needing hazmat funding, both are eligible.
- **If your municipality is currently involved in a Restore NY grant, can that municipality apply for this new round?**
 - Yes, but not for the same project.
- **Will the funding cover a complete renovation of old dairy barn to food processing?**
 - Renovation is an eligible activity for the program. The award amount will be based on the funding limits and the information provided in the application.