

CITY OF ONEONTA, NEW YORK

ONEONTA DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM II

PRE-APPLICATION

NOTE: This program is funded through the New York Office of Community Renewal and could provide low-interest loans and grants to qualified applicants for upper floor residential unit and building façade improvements. Special consideration will be given to projects that include energy conservation measures.

Owner/Business Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Contact Person _____

How long in business _____

AMOUNT NEEDED _____

PURPOSE(S) (Please check all that apply)

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

- Storefront improvements (awnings, signage, display windows, etc.)
- Other exterior building renovations (upper floor windows, re-pointing, painting, etc.)

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Heating/cooling/insulation upgrades/other energy conservation measures
- Interior residential renovation
- Lighting/bathroom/kitchen fixtures
- Other

Why funds are needed/ Project description: (Attach additional sheet to explain project needs.)

Number of residential units to be renovated: _____

Number of residents to be assisted: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO:

**Office of Community Development
City Hall, 258 Main Street
Oneonta, New York 13820**

If you have questions, please call 432-0114.

City Of Oneonta



Oneonta Downtown Improvement Program II

Pre-application, Program Design and Guidelines

January 2009

City of Oneonta

Oneonta Downtown Improvement Program II

Program Design and Guidelines

Based on prior successful downtown loan and grant programs, the City has received additional funds from the New York Office of Community Renewal to continue and expand the Oneonta Downtown Improvement Program.

Goals of the Oneonta Downtown Improvement Program II

The Oneonta Downtown Improvement Program II has been developed to help the City achieve the following goals:

- ① Improve the Downtown Business District area.
- ② Enhance building façades in the Main Street area.
- ③ Strengthen the commercial base in the City and downtown area by stabilizing existing businesses and attracting new ones.
- ④ Improve residential units for primarily low and moderate income persons in upper floors in commercial areas.
- ⑤ Stimulate new private investment within the City and downtown area.
- † Implement projects consistent with the Downtown Oneonta Strategic Plan and City of Oneonta Comprehensive Plan.
- ⑦ Utilize energy conserving equipment and fixtures such as “Energy Star” and other conservation measures to improve the general energy usage of downtown residential units.

Every project must address one or more of the program goals. All projects must assist low and moderate income persons.

Eligible Applicants

All commercial and retail businesses and property owners in the downtown area are eligible to apply for assistance through the program. Buildings and businesses must be current with City property taxes. Commercial properties must meet City building code requirements at the conclusion of project activities. If the project does not include rehabilitation, the building must meet building code requirements before project funds are disbursed.

Use of Funds

The following is a partial list of the types of uses which are eligible for loans and grants:

- ① Exterior facade improvements, if undertaken in conjunction with the City and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.
- ② Interior and exterior mixed-use residential building improvements including heating, cooling, insulation, energy efficient windows and doors, residential unit rehabilitation (bathroom, kitchen fixtures, etc.), particularly those improvements focusing on energy conservation measures.
- ③ Interior design and remodeling.

This list is given only as an example; for instance bars and taverns are not eligible for assistance. For more information on specific improvements, interested applicants are asked to call the Office of Community Development.

Loan/Grant Criteria and Priorities

Each loan/grant will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The intent of the program is to improve the Oneonta business and residential climate and downtown Oneonta and to improve mixed-use building viability and energy conservation while assisting low and moderate income persons. Loans/grants will be made which will have the greatest positive impact on downtown. These impacts include attracting new businesses, retaining existing businesses, improving living conditions and creating job opportunities.

Specific loan/grant review criteria and priorities are as follows:

- > Mixed-use building facades on Main Street/Chestnut Street/ Dietz Street.
- > Upper floor residential spaces, particularly energy conservation measures.
- > Consistency with the Strategic Plan for Downtown Oneonta.
- > Number of low income persons assisted.
- > Financial need demonstrated.
- > Quality of business plan, likelihood of success, and impact of project.
- > Private funds leveraged.

Loan/Grant Conditions and Requirements

Housing Rehabilitation Program

The City will rehabilitate a minimum of twelve (12) residential rental units in the target area. All units will be rehabilitated using Energy Star products and energy conservation practices.

Owners will be provided 50% loan and 50% grant assistance.

- > **Maximum loan/grant** - \$12,500 per unit for eligible project activities.
- > **Loan Interest rate** - The loan interest rate will be one (1) %.
- > **Loan term** - Loans will have a term of ten (10) years.
- > **Security** - All loans must be secured.

Facade Improvements

The City will rehabilitate a minimum of five (5) storefronts in the Main Street area. These improvements are proposed to improve individual stores and to support and compliment the restoration and reactivation of the former Bresee's Building located in the heart of this area.

- > **Maximum grant** – 80% of project cost up to \$20,000 in grant assistance. 20% of project cost private match required.

These Conditions and Requirements are subject to modification depending on building owner needs, expenses of the project, unique historic preservation needs, special energy conservation requirements and low income tenancy.

Other requirements:

- > **Code requirements** - If rehabilitation is part of the project, the building must meet City codes upon project completion. In all other cases, building assisted must meet City codes at the time of loan/grant closing and during the term of the loan/grant.
- > **Low-mod requirements** - All projects must assist principally low and moderate income persons.
- > **Tax obligations** - For applicants who are property owners, all City taxes must be current at the time of loan/grant approval and be kept current during the term of the loan/grant. Failure to keep taxes current will cause the loan/grant to become due and payable in full.
- > **Rehabilitation work** - For projects involving rehabilitation, applicants must obtain at least two bids for the work to be completed. Applicants will select contractors of their choice, but assistance may be based on the lowest responsible bid. If a contractor has employees doing rehabilitation work, the appropriate prevailing wage rate must be paid and documentation provided where applicable. For projects involving work on historic buildings, the State Historic Preservation Office must review and approve building plans.

- > **Closing fees** - All closing and legal fees must be paid by the applicant, and these may be included as part of the total project cost if approved by the City.
- > **Refinancing existing debt** - No funds may be used to refinance existing debt.
- > **Confidentiality** - Assistance provided will be subject to public disclosure, but all financial information will be kept confidential

Approval Process

The Office of Community Development will be responsible for providing support and technical assistance to building owners and businesses wishing to participate in the program. The City Community Development staff will assist in program delivery and oversee implementation of the program. Staff from Wilber National Bank, Key Bank and NBT Bank will assist in reviewing applications. The respective banks will service all loans.

Pre-applications may be obtained from the Office of Community Development, Wilber National Bank, NBT or Key Bank. Once a pre-application is approved for eligibility, a full application must be completed. The full application is very similar to a bank loan application.

Completed applications must be submitted to the City's Office of Community Development together with all documentation requested by the City. The application will require detailed financial and business information. All applicants must be able to demonstrate their ability to repay loans.

The Office of Community Development will review the application for completeness, and will determine the suitability and appropriateness of the project given the review criteria established for the program.

A Revolving Loan Fund Committee comprised of bank and downtown business representatives, the City Chamberlain, the Director of Community Development, and the Mayor or his/her designee, will review and recommend approval/disapproval. Upon approval by the committee, the applicant will be provided a commitment by the City outlining the terms and conditions of the assistance. This commitment must be returned to the City within ten days. The City Common Council approves all expenditures by voucher submittal.

For residential rehabilitation projects, loan/grant disbursement will be issued according to the one-half/one-half ratio of loan-to-grant funds. For façade grants, funds will be disbursed for 80% of the project cost. Funds will only be disbursed when the applicant submits evidence of eligible expenditures such as invoices, canceled checks, and other suitable documentation as may be acceptable to the City.

Post Approval Requirements

All loan/grant recipients are required to report the number of persons assisted and funds leveraged to the City on an annual basis. Failure to provide this information may constitute a loan/grant default.