



CITY OF BIDDEFORD
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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City Program Offers Assistance for Physical Improvements to Downtown Buildings

BIDDEFORD — Members of Biddeford’s downtown business community are encouraged to apply for funding assistance to restore their buildings through the Downtown Improvement and Business Assistance Program. The program, administered by the Planning and Development Department, is available to downtown business and property owners who wish to make certain eligible physical improvements to the interior or exterior of their buildings. These renovations to the downtown are intended to benefit the community as a whole by attracting new investment and businesses that create jobs, especially for low- to moderate-income persons.

The Downtown Improvement and Business Assistance Program offers two funding sources: CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Funding and Biddeford Business Assistance Loan Funding.

The CDBG Spot Slum and Blight Grant Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Businesses may apply for a maximum of \$15,000, and a dollar-for-dollar match by the applicant is required. These funds can be used for historic preservation or the elimination of code violations that are detrimental to the health and safety of the occupant, such as the removal of asbestos, lead-based paint, leaking roofs, mold remediation, ADA requirements, and faulty wiring.

In addition to the grant program, Business Assistance Loan Funding is also available for a broad variety of projects, but applicants must meet a number of lender requirements. Projects such as storefront improvements, exterior lighting and restoration of historic appearance may be considered, with the loans administered by the Southern Maine Finance Authority.

The City’s Planning and Development staff will review each application to determine if it fits the requirements for either program. Additional eligibility requirements include being current on real and personal property taxes, completing the project within one year, and complying with code, design, and Historic Preservation standards. Applicants selected to receive CDBG grants must also comply with all federal CDBG standards.

“The introduction of this program at this time is part of the City’s overall investment strategy to make downtown more appealing to businesses and more inviting to residents and visitors alike,” said Economic Development Director Mathew Eddy.

The Downtown Improvement and Business Assistance Program is an evolution of the Downtown Facade Program offered periodically to business owners since 2006. Last year’s funding program contributed to the rehabilitation of four downtown properties.

Requests for assistance will be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis. To read a full description of program guidelines and eligibility, please visit <https://www.biddefordmaine.org/DocumentCenter/View/3719/Downtown-Improvement-Program-2018>.

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