
Niagara Falls SMALL BUSINESS PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



N.F.C. Development Corporation
City of Niagara Falls, NY, Robert M. Restaino, Mayor
Revised January 2025



Empire State
Development



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.
FOUNDATION

KeyBank Foundation


The Niagara Falls Small Business Property Improvement Program is funded by the Regional Revitalization Partnership (“RRP”) is a multi-year \$300M collaborative initiative between The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, New York State’s Empire State Development (ESD), local municipalities and other private philanthropic partners. Building upon and accelerating collaborative, community-driven work that is already underway, this public/private initiative co-invests in three interconnected communities in Western New York (East Buffalo and the cities of Niagara Falls and Rochester) to create a comprehensive community-driven economic development vision to strengthen the regional economy and build pathways to individual wealth.

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N.F.C. Development Corp
 745 Main Street
 Room 300A
 Niagara Falls, NY 14301
 716.286.4482

GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Niagara Falls Small Business Property Improvement Program Grant Program (Program) is an economic incentive program that will help create jobs and encourage businesses to invest in new development projects in Niagara Falls. The goal of the Program is to create commercial, retail and residential development elements that will service several market segments and ultimately result in capturing more of the tourist and resident visitation to Niagara Falls. The Grant Program will play a vital role in the reactivation of Niagara Falls as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly city and experience for residents and tourists.

GRANT PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The Grant Program will provide financial assistance to projects that will achieve these objectives and create or retain jobs, and to business activity that would not occur without public sector investment. N.F.C. Development Corp. (“NFC”) will consider projects that demonstrate the ability to deliver a viable project including the following elements:

- Site Control.
- Eligible costs include site acquisition, demolition/renovations, remediation of existing structures, new construction and build-out, and new equipment purchases.
- Projects must be consistent with any existing local or regional comprehensive plan, building on efforts to redevelop downtown into a vibrant tourism destination.
- Project costs incurred prior to project approval by NFC may not be reimbursed.
- The Program will generally fund no more than \$100,000 or one-half (50%) of eligible project costs, whichever is less. Project cost must be a minimum of \$25,000.

REQUIRED APPLICATION INFORMATION

Grant applicants will be expected to complete a grant application and requirements attached.

GRANT CRITERIA FOR ALL APPLICATIONS

Major criteria to be considered by NFC in evaluating project proposals include:

- The extent and nature of job creation or retention resulting from the project. Highest priority if project selection will be given to those projects that NFC determines will result in the most long-term private sector job creation and/or retention and/or the creation of tourism related development.
- Whether the project promotes economic reuse through demolition and redevelopment of an available site.
- The impact of the project on tourism activity.
- Whether the project complies with the [adopted design standards](#).
- The likelihood that project costs accurately reflect market conditions.
- The likelihood that the project will actually be undertaken and completed within the timeframe stated by the applicant. Factors to be evaluated in this regard include, but are not limited to:

- proposed financing structure and presence of existing funding commitments within the same
- status of required permits
- environmental assessments of the proposed project
- financial viability of the project as proposed (e.g., will adequate revenues be available to meet ongoing costs)
- equity investment in the project
- effect of the proposed project on other NFC, City of Niagara Falls or USA Niagara Development Corporation initiatives.

ADDITIONAL LOCATION SPECIFIC GRANT CRITERIA

If the applicant is seeking assistance for a project along or within one of the following three locations:

- Pine Avenue (from Whirlpool Street to Hyde Park Boulevard, inclusive of the “City Market” area);
- Main Street (from Ferry Avenue to Portage Road); or
- Portage Road (from Main Street to Pine Avenue)

NF Small Business Property Improvement Program Areas

- Properties should apply to N.F.C.
- Properties should apply to USAN



The applicant will be required to meet the following additional criteria:

- All applicants, and all persons an ownership interest in any business or corporate applicant, must be a United States citizen or non-US Citizen who is lawfully in the United States as demonstrated by a current Resident Alien Card or Permanent Resident Card.
- Applicants must have a minimum credit score of 600. If an applicant's credit score is less than 600, the applicant may request that NFC order two additional credit reports, at the applicant's expense. NOTE: A credit score of 600 or greater does not guarantee approval of an application.
- All applicants must create or retain at least one (1) full time equivalent (FTE) job. The applicant/owner can qualify as all or a portion of an FTE job created or retained. An FTE is either one (1) full time job of at least forty (40) hours a week, or two (2) part-time jobs of at least 20 hours a week.
- The applicant cannot be a current recipient of any other N.F.C. Development Corporation grant or loan program, nor can the applicant apply for same for a period of two (2) years following an award pursuant to this program.
- Applicants cannot be a governmental agency, quasi-governmental agency or a not-for-profit organization. Additionally, the following project types are not eligible to apply: adult entertainment and media, massage parlors, gambling, liquor stores or any project that has a residential (home-based) component.
- All real property, school, refuse, water and sewer assessments and taxes must be current at the business location and all other properties in the City of Niagara Falls owned by the applicant or any individual with an ownership interest in the applicant. If the applicant is leasing space from another person or entity, the applicant must be current on all lease payments.
- Any applicant that is, at the time of application, incarcerated, under indictment, on parole, on probation or any alien unlawfully in the United States is ineligible to participate in the program. Additionally, any applicant having an owner or partial owner with 10% or more ownership interest that is, at the time of application, incarcerated, under indictment, on parole, on probation or any alien unlawfully in the United States is ineligible to participate in the program.
- Employees of NFC and/or the City of Niagara Falls are not eligible to apply during employment and for one (1) year thereafter, either as an applicant, the owner of an applicant or a partial owner of an applicant.
- Any individual applicant, or any applicant that is partially or wholly owned by any person, that is in default of any obligation to NFC or the City of Niagara Falls, or is currently engaged in legal action against NFC or the City of Niagara Falls, is ineligible to apply.

If the applicant is seeking assistance for a project located within the USA Niagara Development District, historically known as the south-end of Niagara Falls (area generally bounded by John B. Daly Blvd [east], Niagara Falls State Park [west], Niagara Scenic Parkway [south] and Main Street & Walnut

Avenue [north], as well as Niagara Street [Third Street to John B. Daly Blvd]), applicants must submit applications to USA Niagara. Please contact John Risio at John.Risio@esd.ny.gov for more information.

See map on page 4.

THE PROCESS:

Applications to N.F.C. may be submitted electronically to nfny.planning@niagarafallsny.gov or mailed to:

N.F.C. Development Corp.

745 Main St

Niagara Falls, NY 14301

Once N.F.C. receives your completed application along with the required documents, staff will review the application for completeness. They will also perform the following:

- Conduct a review of the project to ensure that it meets with the objectives of the organization.
- Review all the financial information and the pro forma to determine if the stated financials and job creation projections are reasonable.
- A credit report will also be requested on the applicant(s) and reviewed.
- If it is determined that the project is viable, a notice of approval is sent to the applicant.

FUNDS DISBURSEMENT:

Once the legal documents have been signed, the project can move forward. Funds will be disbursed upon project completion. Checks will be made payable to the applicant upon proof of payment to the vendor(s) and submission of all program requirements. If required, a current Certificate of Occupancy must be provided to NFC prior to the release of funds.

N.F.C. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

SECTION 1. DATA SHEET

PROJECT NAME

A PROJECT SITE

ZONING CLASSIFICATION

IS THIS A PERMISSABLE USE?

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

LEGAL NAME: D/B/A

STREET (NOT P.O. BOX)

CITY: ZIP: COUNTY:

B PHONE: EXT. FAX: E-MAIL:

CONTACT NAME AND TITLE:

FEDERAL TAXPAYER I.D./ DUNS NUMBER

PARENT COMPANY NAME: STREET:
(if applicable) (NOT P.O. BOX)

CITY: ZIP: COUNTY:

NAME OF ORGANIZATION RECEIVING FUNDING

Complete this section only if applying for funds that will benefit another entity. If your application is for a group project, please provide the following information for each funding recipient on a separate sheet.

LEGAL NAME: D/B/A

STREET (NOT P.O. BOX)

CITY: ZIP: COUNTY:

C PHONE: EXT. FAX: E-MAIL:

CONTACT NAME AND TITLE:

FEDERAL TAXPAYER I.D./:

PARENT COMPANY NAME: STREET:
(if applicable) (NOT P.O. BOX)

CITY: ZIP: COUNTY:

1. A- FORM OF BUSINESS

- SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP PARTNERSHIP
 LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY BUSINESS CORPORATION
 SUB-CHAPTER S CORPORATION

B- IS THE COMPANY:

- MINORITY-OWNED Yes No
 WOMAN-OWNED Yes No

(For a minority or Woman-owned Business, please attach a copy of your New York State Certification Letter.)

D C- CORPORATE DOCUMENTATION

Please attach a copy of all business organization agreements; include names of principals and titles. If LLC: Also attach copies of 1) Articles of Organization & Filing Receipt, 2) Operating Agreement, 3) Certificate & Affidavit of Publication and Filing Receipt

2. A- IS THE COMPANY CURRENTLY SEEKING ANY OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE? Yes No

B. HAS THE COMPANY EVER APPLIED FOR OR RECEIVED PRIOR NFC CORP. FUNDING? Yes No

(IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO EITHER 2a OR 2b, PLEASE DESCRIBE EACH PROJECT, ITS DATE, PURPOSE AND LOCATION, THE PUBLIC FUNDING REQUESTED/ PROVIDED AND FROM WHICH AGENCY FOR WHICH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WAS OR IS BEING SOUGHT.)

SECTION 2. COMPANY

Please provide a concise narrative describing the following:

- The Company's history.
- Pro forma balance sheet and profit/loss for three years
- A balance sheet and Profit/Loss statement for the previous three (3) years.
- Personal and business income tax statements for the past three (3) years
- Personal financial statement of principals

In response, you may reference and attach your **business plan**, annual report and other Company literature, if available.

SECTION 3. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Describe the specific activities that will be undertaken and funded through the project. If the proposed project involves:

- **the construction or renovation of buildings or infrastructure improvements**, describe.
 - A** • **the acquisition of machinery and equipment**, describe the equipment, where it will be installed, indicate whether it is new or used, whether it will be purchased or leased, its cost and its proposed uses. Provide all supporting documentation. e.g.. Construction quotes, invoices, equipment quotes, etc.
-

- B** Provide **renderings** of the project.
-

- C** Provide a **time schedule** for the project (e.g., consultant selection, draft report, design, site acquisition, construction start, time table, equipment installation, project completion date). Provide **renderings** of the project.
-

SECTION 4. JOB CREATION

Describe the type and number of existing full-time and part-time jobs and the number of each that will be created

SECTION 5. PROJECT BUDGET

Complete the following Project Budget with as much detail as is currently available, according to additional instructions on applicable attachment. Lengthen Use of Funds column as needed.

USE OF FUNDS	List Cost Amounts	SOURCES		
		APPLICANT	NFC CORP.	Other Sources
LIST DIRECT COSTS	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
LIST INDIRECT/ SOFT COSTS	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$	\$

B Attach commitment letters or letters of intent from each source of financing indicated (other than NFC).

SECTION 6. STATEMENT OF NEED & CRITERIA

Please provide an explanation of why NFC Development corporation assistance is being requested, using one or more of the following as a guide. Provide supporting documentation as applicable.

Financing Gap:	Sufficient funds cannot be obtained from other sources to complete the project without NFC Development corporation's assistance. (Include evidence that NFC's assistance is needed to subsidize, encourage, or leverage private investment.)
Feasibility:	The project cannot go forward on the basis of terms offered by private and/or public funding sources. (Indicate the expected terms that would be imposed by other sources and why these will not allow the project to proceed. Outline the terms that are required and explain how these will make the project feasible.)
Attraction/ Retention:	The project will induce the formulation of a new business venture and investment in a target area, or encourage an existing enterprise to invest in a project that contributes to the redevelopment of the target area.
Criteria:	<p>NFC Development corp. will consider projects that demonstrate the ability to deliver a viable project including the following general elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project cost must be a minimum of \$25,000. Eligible costs include site acquisition, demolition/renovations, remediation of existing structures, new construction and build-out, and new equipment purchases. • The Program will generally fund no more than \$100,000 or one-half (50%) of eligible project costs, whichever is less. • Project costs incurred prior to project approval by NFC Development Corp. may not be reimbursed. • Job creation consistent with program objectives.

SECTION 7. ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requires all state and local government agencies to complete an environmental review of all projects for which they issues a discretionary permit, license, or other type of approval. SEQRA also applies if any agency funds or directly undertakes a project.

However, Type II actions are not subject to review under SEQRA. Below is a list of Type II actions under Part 617.5 of SEQRA. Please note that this is not a complete list, but includes the most common project types for this program. Please check below if your proposed project falls under any of the listed Type II actions.

-
- Maintenance or repair involving no substantial changes in an existing structure or facility.
-
- Replacement, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of a structure or facility, in kind, on the same site, including upgrading buildings to meet building, energy, or fire codes.
-
- Retrofit of an existing structure and its appurtenant areas to incorporate green infrastructure.
-
- Maintenance of existing landscaping or natural growth.
-
- Construction or expansion of a primary or accessory/appurtenant, non-residential structure or facility involving less than 4,000 square fet of gross floor area and not involving a change in zoning or a use variance and consistent with local land use controls.
-
- Reuse of a residential or commercial structure, or of a structure containing mixed residential and commercial uses, where the resident or commercial use is a permitted use under the applicable zoning law or ordinance, including permitted by special use permit.
-
- Purchase or sale of furnishing, equipment, or supplies, other than the following: land, radioactive material, pesticides, herbicides, or other hazardous materials.
-

If your project is not classified as a Type II action, it will require environmental review under SEQR. Please follow the instructions on the next page to fill out and submit Part 1 of a Short Environmental Assessment Form with your application. If you need assistance understanding the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"), identifying a lead agency or obtaining and completing an appropriate Environmental Assessment Form, please contact the City of Niagara Falls Planning Department office at (716) 286-4477.

**BASIC SEQR
APPLICANT
INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Using your internet browser, navigate to: <https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/eafmapper/>
2. As per the text box on the left hand side of the welcome page, follow the instructions regarding popup blockers and press enter.
3. Click the tab marked "Locate Address" on the right hand side of the page under "Navigate To Area (Step 1)".
4. Type the site's address into the box, including city and zip code and press the "Locate" button.
 - a. The map will zoom to the general area of your address - but not all the way.
5. Zoom in to your identified address point so that parcel ID numbers are visible and you can identify your exact property.
6. Click "Select Tax Parcel" under the section labeled "Define Project Site (Step 2)".
7. Select your property with the mouse.
8. Click "Short Form" in the last box on the bottom, unless instructed otherwise by Niagara Falls' Planning / Environmental Office.
 - a. There will be a popup box informing you that it might take awhile. Click OK.
 - Note that it might take a number of minutes for the process to complete.
9. Once the EAFMapper's process is complete, it will download a PDF file labeled "download.pdf"
10. Navigate to the downloaded file and open it using Adobe Acrobat or equivalent.
11. Fill out ALL of the lines contained within part 1 (pages 1, 2, and 3).
 - a. Note that some of the questions will already have check marks (questions 7, 12a, 12b, 13a, 15, 16, and 20). These answers came from the DEC and cannot be changed.
 - The Planning & Environmental Office will make any determination of applicability to the project site.
12. As you fill out the form, if there are ANY questions on how or what to put in the fields, click on the question and it will take you to DEC's website (you may have to give permission to access the internet) to get detailed instructions for that question.
 - a. If you cannot find the answer, please contact us! Do not make any "assumptions".
13. Once Part 1 is complete, save, print and sign.
 - a. Note: Use the print command in Acrobat - not the print button on the form.
14. Submit the completed SEQR Part 1, including the page labeled "EAF Mapper Summary Report" with your site N.F.C. application.

SECTION 8. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Is the Company or any of the principals presently the subject of any litigation, or is any litigation threatened, which would have a material adverse effect on the Company's financial condition?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Has the company, any of its principals or any of its affiliates ever been involved in bankruptcy, a creditor's rights or receivership proceeding, or sought protection from creditors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Has the company ever settled a debt with a lending institution for less than the full amount outstanding?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Has any senior manager or principal of the Company ever been convicted or any felony or misdemeanor, other than a minor traffic violation, or are any such charges pending?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Has the Company or any of its affiliates, been cited for a violation of federal, State or local laws or regulations with respect to labor practices, hazardous wastes, environmental pollution or operating practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6. Are there any outstanding judgments or liens pending against the Company other than liens in the normal course of business?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Is the Company delinquent on any New York State, federal or local tax obligations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

(NOTE: If your answer is "YES" for any of the above questions, please provide an explanation.)

8. Have all required permits been received?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
9. Does the Company have general liability insurance for the property?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

SECTION 9. PERSONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

To be attached by applicant

SECTION 10. CERTIFICATIONS

CERTIFICATION OF APPLICANT AND RECIPIENT

The undersigned does/do solemnly affirm that to the best of my/our knowledge, information and belief, all statements in this Application, including all schedules, appendices and additional information submitted in connection herewith, are true and accurate. I/we hereby authorize the City of Niagara Falls NFC Development Corporation to order credit reports or other financial background information on the Company, and any individual or entity proposed as a guarantor, as may be necessary to provide the assistance requested.

Applicant Signature:		Date:
Print Name:	Title:	
Beneficiary/Recipient Signature:		Date:
Print Name:	Title:	

ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST

The following list is provided to help applicants ensure that all required information has been attached to the application before submission. **Most applicants will complete only a few of these attachments.** Please ask a NFC staff member for help if you are unsure which attachments are required in your case.

Section	Attachment Name/Type	Must be submitted if:
1D	NYS Certification Letter	Applicant is an MWBE
1D	Corporate Documentation	All applicants must submit
1D	Info on prior public applications/projects	Applicant has applied for or received public assistance
2	Company and market info	All applicants must submit
2	Business & personal tax returns	All applicants must submit
3A	Project description	All applicants must submit
3B	Renderings	If Available
3C	Project time schedule	All applicants must submit
4	Job Creation	All applicants must submit
5A	Project Budget	All applicants must submit
5B	Commitment/intent letters	All applicants must submit
6	Statement of Need	All applicants must submit
7	SEQRA information	Your project requires environmental review
8	Info on litigation, violations, etc.	You answered “yes” to any question (except #8 in Section 8)
9	Personal Financial Statement	All applicants must submit
10	Proof of General liability insurance for property to be funded	All applicants must submit
11	Certifications	All applicants must submit
12	Check Payable to NFC Development Corporation for \$25.00 to cover cost of Credit report	All applicants must submit