



DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Distressed Property Fund

Request for Applications

CITY OF SYRACUSE
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DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
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Distressed Property Fund | Request for Applications Information + Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Using funding allocated from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City of Syracuse has created an investment program designed to support the redevelopment and improvement of vacant, distressed commercial, mixed-use, and historic properties located within eligible census tracts within the City of Syracuse. The City of Syracuse sees this as integral to the ongoing recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, reactivation of commercial uses, and foster new growth. Please see information and instructions on how to apply below.

1. What is the ARPA Distressed Property Fund?

In order to help address the economic challenges and hardship experienced by city neighborhoods and the real estate community in Syracuse since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City of Syracuse has established a new capital improvement grant program to spur redevelopment and improvement of vacant, distressed commercial, mixed-use, and historic properties. The program is intended to serve as gap financing for redevelopment projects and serve to bring those projects to fruition thus generating new investment within Syracuse neighborhoods. The program is designed to promote economic recovery, and leverage new investment within commercial, mixed-use and historic properties, with particular emphasis placed on those projects with immediate timelines and in the final pre-development financing phases.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible applicants include those who own or are under contract to purchase an existing property in the City of Syracuse that is classified with a commercial use – this may include mixed-use buildings that contain residential apartments. Eligible properties must be one hundred percent vacant as of February 1st, 2023. Both for-profit and nonprofit / 501c3 or c4 organizations are eligible to apply. Additionally all real estate and capital upgrades may only include properties located within a qualified ARPA census tract ([see map here](#)). A copy of the map can also be found on Page 14 within the request for applications document. Finally, all projects considered must have a minimum estimated total development cost of at least \$10 Million (\$10,000,000.00). Under limited circumstances, a project with a total development cost less than \$10 Million may be considered eligible but will only be considered if the property is A) are currently listed on the Federal National Register of Historic Places, and/or B) under contract to be purchased from the Greater Syracuse Land Bank or the City of Syracuse. Properties under contract with the City of Syracuse will still be considered eligible if they are not one hundred percent vacant. Please note the total development cost does not include acquisition of a property.

3. How much funding is available? How much funding can an applicant apply for with this program?

\$1 million (\$1,000,000.00) has been appropriated by the City of Syracuse Common Council for this program. The maximum amount of funding that can be awarded is up to \$250,000 per project. No more than 50% of the total project cost of a specific property will be funded by this program.

4. What uses qualify to receive funds through the Corridor Improvement Program?

Qualifying expenses and purchases may include but are not limited to activities relating to building stabilization, structural repairs, infrastructure, and interior/exterior improvements in order to facilitate successful redevelopment of a property and return it to productive use. Projects that involve new construction and development are not eligible. Projects should identify the name of the design and construction professionals they will be working with as part of the application process. Funds cannot be used for acquisition of a building or property.

This program cannot reimburse previous expenses dated after March 16, 2023. All eligible expenses assisted by this program must be expended after the program launch date.

5. Is my project eligible if the project costs are not above the \$10 million threshold?

Other projects considered eligible below the \$10 Million threshold will include A) property listed on the Federal National Register of Historic Places, B) owned by the Greater Syracuse Land Bank, and/or C) owned by the City of Syracuse. Properties under designation (B) and (C) require the applicant to have the property under contract to be purchased from the respective entity.

To determine if a property is on the National Register of Historic Places, [please visit the hyperlink provided here to the National Register Database and Research webpage](#) created by the National Park Service.

We encourage those potential applicants to reach out to the City's Division of Business Development (business@syr.gov) to discuss the details of the project and eligibility if one of these designations or ownership considerations apply.

6. Can a commercial tenant of a building that needs improvement apply for this program?

No, this program is for the redevelopment and rehabilitation of vacant, unoccupied properties.

7. How will funds be disbursed if my project is selected?

This program will have the ability to reimburse expenses as phases of the project are completed in partial draws. Grant proceeds will be disbursed upon approval from the City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood & Business Development and following execution of the necessary contract agreement and closing documents. Projects selected through the program will have the ability to receive partial draws upon completion of critical steps in the development process.

As part of the application process, proposed expenses and project costs should be itemized and explain how ARPA funds will be used as part of the project. The city may approve some requested expenses and disapprove others if the proposed costs do not meet the program requirements to receive funding. The City of Syracuse reserves the right to provide a smaller grant amount than originally requested.

8. Is there a match requirement from applicants?

No specific match requirement, but total project costs must be \$10 million or more. For those projects with special designations and below the \$10 million threshold, no more than 50% of the total project cost will be funded through this program.

9. Are there Minority and/or Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Goals as part of this program?

Yes. The City of Syracuse will require all projects to the minimum threshold of 30% utilization of City and/or New York State certified MWBE firms. All eligible vendors, contractors, and subcontractors must be certified at the time the work is being completed.

10. Can a property owner or business submit multiple applications if the project involves more than one property?

No. Only one application may be submitted by an applicant and should select the project and/or property they would like to prioritize for this program.

11. How can eligible applicants submit the necessary paperwork, including the application and supporting documentation?

Funds are limited. In order to seek funding, all interested applicants are required to fill out the application form beginning on Page 5 of the request for application (RFA) document. Electronic copies of the RFA are available online at the City of Syracuse Website at www.syr.gov. Please see the "Application Instructions" on Page 4 of this document for more information.

Fully completed applications and required supporting documentation can be submitted starting on **Thursday, March 16, 2023**. Applications will be accepted through **Wednesday, April 26, 2023, by 3:00 PM**. Only fully completed applications with all supporting documentation will be considered.

Applications and supporting materials can be submitted one of the following ways:

- A) Email electronically to business@syr.gov
- B) Applications can be dropped off physically or mailed to the following address: City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood & Business Development, 201 East Washington Street, Suite 612, Syracuse, NY 13202

12. How will funding requests be reviewed?

Funding requests will be considered by City of Syracuse staff and members of the Syracuse Common Council Economic Development Committee. This review committee will oversee the decision-making process of all completed applications received. Following careful review and analysis, funding decisions will be made on or about June 1st, 2023, and a contract agreement must be executed with approved applicants prior to disbursement of any grant funds can occur.

13. What is the timeline of the program?

Any project that is selected and approved to receive funding must have design plans completed and submitted to the City of Syracuse within 6 months of the award date. Following review by the City's Central Permit Office and Office of Zoning Administration, all projects must commence within one (1) year of the award date. All projects must be completed with a certificate of occupancy within two (2) years of the award date.

14. Are there any job creation requirements for this program?

There are no minimum job creation requirements. However, we expect eligible projects will have both construction-related and full-/part-time jobs created through the redevelopment of these projects. The estimates of potential jobs created in each category will be part of the overall consideration in awarding funding to a particular project. Actual jobs created must be included with reporting requirements upon completion of the project in accordance with federal ARPA guidelines and requirements.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Access and download the ARPA Distressed Property Fund application on the City of Syracuse Website (application also begins on Page 5 of this document): <https://www.syr.gov/Departments/NBD>
2. Carefully review and fill out/complete the application form. Please note in addition to the completed application, the proposal must provide the required supporting documentation items included in the application form.
3. Assess the checklist of items needed in order to ensure your application is complete at the time of submission. Please be aware of timelines required to receive 3rd party contractor quotes or estimates from design professionals in order to render services for cost projections and develop a detailed scope of work.

Please note in addition to the aforementioned list of required items, the City reserves the right to request additional financial or other corporate governance or other materials or information it deems necessary to adequately review and assess the application following submission.

4. Submit the completed application and supporting materials by email (preferred method) or by mail as noted above no later than **3:00 PM on Wednesday, April 26, 2023**. All questions regarding this program and application materials should be directed to City of Syracuse Staff and sent by email to: business@syr.gov.

5. Applicants shall cooperate with the City of Syracuse to satisfy any State or Federal mandated reporting requirements.