

SARANAC LAKE ENERGIZE DOWNTOWN FUND

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

The Saranac Lake Energize Downtown Fund (Energize Downtown) provides matching grant funds to commercial and mixed-use properties in the Saranac Lake DRI target area. Property owners, business owners, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funds for interior and exterior building improvements, site upgrades and enhancements and commercial rent assistance. Projects should meet the goals of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization. Energize Downtown is administered through the Franklin County Local Development Corporation (FCLDC). The Village of Saranac Lake Community Development Department (SLCDD) and Saranac Lake Local Development Corporation (SLLDC) will assist FCLDC with administration of the Energize Downtown Fund.

The goals for Energize Downtown are Prosperity, Destination, Urban Design and Livability achieved through:

- Fewer vacant storefronts
- Thriving businesses and entrepreneurs
- Enhanced physical environment through high-quality design
- Additional high-quality year-round apartments
- Additional professional office space on upper floors
- Expanded availability of products, services, and experiences

Funding through Energize Downtown is available for projects in the following categories:

1. Building & Site Improvements
2. Details Matter
3. Commercial Rent Assistance

2. ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include owners of properties and businesses within the DRI target area or owners of prospective businesses that will be located within the DRI target area (see attached Target Area Map).

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Ineligible applicants include businesses or organizations that propose projects to buildings, spaces or properties that would be closed to the general public based on age, race, gender, religion, etc. For example:

The owner of a bar or tavern that does not allow admittance to anyone under the age of 21 is ineligible to apply for funds to renovate the tavern. The owner of the building where the bar or tavern is located would be eligible to apply for funds to renovate the facade or other commercial spaces within the building.

A religious-based or private membership-based organization would be ineligible to apply for funds to renovate a building or portion of a building that is normally closed to the general public. However, the same organization would be eligible to apply for funds to renovate the facade or other commercial spaces within the building that are generally open to the public.

The final determination of applicant eligibility is at the discretion of FCLDC.

3. AVAILABLE FUNDING

Funding is available for projects within three (3) categories. Applicants may only apply for funding within one category.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM AWARD	MINIMUM MATCH
BUILDING & SITE IMPROVEMENTS	<p>Exterior building improvements such as painting, brick repair, window & door repair/replacement, awnings, decks, & storefront renovations.</p> <p>Interior building improvements such as upgrades to commercial spaces and conversion of vacant upper floors in mixed-used buildings into quality living options.</p> <p>Site improvements including construction of walkways, outdoor seating areas, decks, patios, and landscaping.</p>	\$50,000*	50%
DETAILS MATTER	High quality building or site enhancements including signage, lighting, awnings, outdoor furniture, publicly accessible art installations, etc. that improve the urban design of downtown and contribute to a sense of place.	\$10,000	50%
COMMERCIAL RENT ASSISTANCE	Rent assistance for commercial spaces to incentivize the location of new businesses within downtown.	Up to 2 years/ \$18,000 maximum total	N/A

* Projects that address multiple components (interior and exterior improvements) may be eligible for additional funding.

4. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

In general, eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Interior and exterior building renovations including facades, retail and office space improvements
- Site improvements including outdoor seating, permanent landscaping, signage, and private walkways and patios.
- Rent assistance for new commercial businesses
- Creation and renovation of residential units
- Project soft costs (see details in section 6)
- Publicly accessible art installations on private property

5. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Property acquisition
- Improvements to structures where the sole beneficiary is a religious or private membership-based organization
- Improvements to structures where the sole beneficiary is a municipally owned or municipally operated structure
- Furnishings (other than approved outdoor seating), appliances, electronics, tools, disposable supplies, business equipment and non-permanent fixtures, hardware, vehicles, computers, etc.

- Grading, utility work, fences, etc. and other site work that is not part of a finished landscaping project or building renovation.
- Construction of or repaving of parking lots and driveways
- General maintenance or repairs
- Roof and window replacement unless part of a comprehensive renovation
- Repayment of debt
- Loan, finance, interest and/or tax fees
- Reallocation of funds to other organizations (other than approved subcontractors for the project)
- Salaries, wages and benefits
- Expenses reimbursed from any other source or agency;
- Work that in the opinion of FCLDC, is inconsistent with or detracts from the character of Downtown Saranac Lake, or that is otherwise reasonably objectionable.
- Projects that do not further the priorities of the [Strategic Investment Plan](#).

COMMERCIAL RENT ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

In addition to the eligibility considerations listed above, commercial rent assistance proposals must meet the following eligibility requirements:

Businesses seeking Commercial Rent Assistance must submit an application and meet all the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

1. The proposed business must meet one of the following criteria:
 - A. The business must be a new business venture or an existing business that is proposing to relocate from outside of the Village of Saranac Lake municipal boundary to a location within the DRI Target Area or the business must be an existing business located outside of the DRI Target Area that is willing to open a location within the DRI Target Area.
 - B. The proposed businesses must occupy storefronts or buildings within the DRI Target Area. First-floor and upper-floor office or commercial spaces are eligible.
2. Up to 24 months of rent assistance may be provided not exceeding \$18,000. Commercial rent subsidy for year one of agreement term will be covered up to full cost but not to exceed \$1,000/month. Rent subsidy for year two of term will be covered at half cost. The business must maintain an arms-length lease with the landlord and operate its business at the tenant space for a minimum of three (3) years. The business must occupy the space for the entire assistance period. In the event the business leaves the space during the assistance period, the full amount of the subsidized payments made by FCLDC to the Landlord shall be repaid by the applicant.
3. The applicant must agree to remain in business and to not sell or assign such business to another person or entity for a period of twenty-four (24) months from the date of initial funding.
4. To be eligible for funding under the program, the proposed business must be complementary to downtown and existing businesses and should meet a demonstrated need. Commercial rent assistance awards will not be provided to businesses that are: (1) in direct competition with existing businesses within the Village of Saranac Lake, (2) inconsistent with or detract from the character of Downtown Saranac Lake, or that are otherwise reasonably objectionable, and (3) that do not further the priorities of the Downtown Saranac Lake Strategic Investment Plan. FCLDC reserves the right to determine whether the proposed project meets the goals and intent of Energize Downtown.
5. In its application for funding and/or business plan, the proposed business must demonstrate its impact on the downtown area. Key considerations in demonstrating impact include:
 - A. The number of clients/patrons expected to visit the business daily.
 - B. How the project/business fills a niche market and/or diversifies offerings available in downtown.
 - C. Overall investment in the building/lease area.
 - D. Number of jobs to be created.
6. Governmental agencies and not-for-profits organizations are not eligible for Commercial Rent Assistance.

- Commercial Rent Assistance will not be provided for rents that are above fair market value. FCLDC reserves the right to determine the fair market rent for a commercial space. Priority will be given to projects where the landlord provides a discounted rent.

6. BUDGET & FINANCING

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Match requirements must be realized on a building-by-building basis.

In-kind match is not eligible.

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement and not eligible as a match.

SOFT COSTS

Eligible soft costs include Architecture, Engineering, and Environmental Testing expenses.

Soft costs require matching funds, and in-kind match is not eligible.

Soft costs incurred for work on buildings that eventually prove infeasible and do not receive other investments will not be reimbursed with DRI funds. Therefore, reimbursements for soft costs may not be requested as part of a partial payment prior to project completion.

FINANCING

FCLDC will offer funding assistance to eligible projects that enhance and strengthen Downtown Saranac Lake and promote the goals of the Strategic Investment Plan. The Plan can be found at www.franklinida.org/sledf. Please contact the FCLDC for more information on financing options.

7. PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Project Review Committee will use the following criteria to review, score and recommend projects for funding:

Please note

A. ALIGNMENT WITH THE 5 VSL DRI STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN GOALS

I. PROSPERITY

Attract and support entrepreneurs to create new employment opportunities for the next-generation workforce.

Encourage redevelopment of priority areas to accommodate a mix of commercial and office development.

Nurture a business environment that offers opportunities for locally owned businesses and residents from all walks of life.

II. DESTINATION

Attract and support the establishment of new arts, culture, and entertainment venues and events for residents and visitors of all ages, incomes and interests.

Develop new and support existing programs and events that provide opportunities for people to remain in downtown in the evening and on the weekends.

Achieve and maintain a balanced mix of businesses and organizations that attract visitors and provide necessary goods and services to regional residents.

III.URBAN DESIGN

Encourage high quality urban design of privately-owned buildings and places

Maintain the historic character of downtown by promoting preservation and restoration of historic buildings.

Support placemaking to promote an attractive, walkable, dynamic downtown.

Utilize green infrastructure and green building techniques to create a more sustainable downtown.

IV.CONNECTIVITY

Identify, prioritize and correct accessibility barriers within downtown.

Enhance visual and pedestrian connections to Upper Broadway and Depot area from the rest of downtown.

Invest in streetscape improvements that will promote walkability and increase safety for all ages and abilities.

V. LIVABILITY

Support the creation of quality market rate and workforce housing that serves year-round residents and supports continued employment growth.

Diversify housing options downtown including a range of affordability and type.

B. PROJECT READINESS CRITERIA

Complete scope of work;

Reasonable estimated project budget;

Percentage of total project cost funded by applicant;

Reasonable and achievable financing plan;

Reasonable and achievable design and approval plan;

Reasonable project timeline.

C. PROGRAM PRIORITIES CRITERIA

Whether the project is located within one of the Priority Redevelopment Areas;

How comprehensive is the proposed project;

Whether the project was proposed for DRI funding but not awarded funds;

How cost effective is the project (e.g. does the project cost justify the potential community benefit).

PROJECT SCORING & SELECTION

The project review committee will assign a score to each project using the following scoring system:

Criteria	Max Points
Alignment with VSL DRI Strategic Investment Plan Goals	50
Project Readiness	40
Program Priorities	10
Total	100

The project review committee will recommend which projects to fund at what amounts to the FCLDC Board of Directors. The FCLDC Board of Directors will approve the final awards.

Individuals, organizations and businesses may not receive more than one funding award.

Selected applicants will be required to sign an award acceptance letter and pay a \$500 commitment fee prior to FCLDC commencing any work on the project. The fee may be reduced or waived for projects under \$5,000 or a rent subsidy.

8. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Upon notice of funding award the applicant must work with FCLDC to complete project design, obtain necessary approvals, select a contractor and begin work. The project development phase includes the following steps:

1. Pay commitment fee
2. Work with FCLDC to develop project scope of work*
3. Complete architectural/engineering plans as necessary
4. Coordinate environmental review and clearance
5. Secure SHPO approval
6. Finalize budget
7. Execute contract with FCLDC
8. Receive clearance from FCLDC on Design Standards
9. Secure development board approval
10. Obtain a minimum of two bids for each phase of work and select contractors*
11. Execute agreements with contractors
12. Obtain building permit

*FCLDC will assist in development of the project scope of work and administer the bidding process.

Steps 1-7 must be completed by December 31, 2020 or FCLDC reserves the right to revoke the funding award. Not all steps may apply to your project. Renovation work may begin as soon as all these steps are complete but no later than October 31, 2021. Work must be completed by October 31, 2022.

9. PROGRAM CONDITIONS

- Grant awards will be merit based. Applicants that can communicate a compelling need that directly fulfills Energize Downtown goals with quantifiable results will be given higher consideration.
- Projects selected by the Project Review Committee will be submitted to Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) for review and approval prior to notifying property or business owner of formal funding approval.
- Awarded funds may be subject to conditions. The award letter and agreement will clearly outline all conditions.
- FCLDC reserves the right to award a project less funding than requested.

10. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The application must be submitted to the FCLDC electronically and in typed form. No handwritten applications will be accepted. All attachments must be sent as digital files. FCLDC reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant.

11. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Additional information about this program, including contact information and the program application form, is available at www.franklinida.org/sledf

