

Vibrant Communities Program

Grant Funding Guidelines

The Vibrant Communities Program was established to assist distressed, small and mid-sized cities with catalytic development projects that fulfill a market need and represent a significant reinvestment in the community. This program recognizes that distressed communities often do not have adequate resources to support these types of economic development projects that can attract private investment and create new jobs opportunities. The Vibrant Communities Program intends to reduce risk and remove barriers the community faces in moving these investments forward. The definition of catalytic may vary community-to-community and JobsOhio intends to evaluate each project on its merits.

Guiding Principles for Program

- The primary focus is on generating reinvestment in eligible distressed communities that have experienced chronic disinvestment.
- Projects must have at least one identified end-user, however, this end-user does not have to align with JobsOhio target industries.
- Projects will lead to significantly improved quality of place in order to improve employer and employee retention and attraction. The projects should be catalytic in nature, making the surrounding area more attractive for future development.
- JobsOhio seeks to invest in projects that demonstrate leverage of outside funds and encourages the utilization and formation of public-private partnerships.
- Projects will align with broader JobsOhio goals and programs. As such they will increase real estate inventory, real estate appraisal value, attract capital investment, and job creation potential in participating communities.
- JobsOhio will support a diverse set of projects in varied geography of eligible communities across the state.



Funding

- JobsOhio Funding will typically not exceed \$1 million per Project and should not exceed 50% of eligible costs unless authorized by the JobsOhio President.

Eligible Applicants and Communities

- Municipalities with populations under 75,000 and poverty rates that are at or above the state's average poverty rate are eligible for support.
- The lead applicant should be the eligible community or appropriate local/regional economic development organization. The Project Beneficiary (Beneficiary is the recipient of the grant funds) may be the owner of the building/property, developer, or other Project company. The beneficiary will be discussed as part of the application process. All key partners in the Project should be active participants in the application process and understand their commitments as presented in the application for the Program.
- Ideally, either the applicant or Project Beneficiary should have control of the property in question or have a cooperative agreement with property owners. However, at minimum, the community must present a feasible plan to control the property.
- The Project Beneficiary cannot be the contaminator of environmental issues, if such issues exist.
- The JobsOhio President may allow a project in townships contiguous to an eligible municipality if the project meets all other eligibility criteria.

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Eligible Projects

- Projects must be in an eligible community as defined above in Eligible Applicants.
- Projects will typically be in downtowns or a similar commercial district.
- The Project site should be in an area where added inducement is needed to reduce risk and attract new investment.
- Projects may include renovation of existing buildings, new construction, or a combination of both.
- The Project may be defined as a single building or parcel, or multiple buildings and parcels in the same area.
- Projects must have an Eligible Anchor Tenant, or Tenants, committed to at least 30% of the Project's usable square footage. (See next section for Eligible Required Anchor Tenants and End Users.)
- Mixed-use projects are eligible and encouraged.
- Operated Shared spaces such as business incubators, accelerators, innovation centers, maker spaces, and co-working spaces that contribute to the business community as well as workforce may be an Anchor Tenant, however, must meet additional requirements, including:
 - » Shared spaces must target appropriate users, preferably within defined JobsOhio target industries but may also include small and early-stage businesses.
 - » Operation of the space must be managed by an experienced entity. Applications must include a business plan, financials and proforma for review.
 - » Co-working spaces must also provide programming such as small business assistance, technical training, and other workshops that assist businesses or individuals in a targeted way.

Eligible Required Anchor Tenants and other End-Uses

Anchor tenants may fall outside of JobsOhio targeted industries; however, the number and quality of jobs are a program consideration.

- Eligible Anchor Tenants (must be at least 30% of usable square footage)
 - » Office
 - » Co-Working Spaces
 - » Business Incubators
 - » Business Accelerators
 - » Research and Development Spaces
 - » Innovation Centers
 - » Maker spaces
 - » Light Industrial
- Eligible as part of mixed-use developments
 - » Retail
 - » Housing
 - » Hotel
 - » Healthcare*
 - » Education (i.e. Universities, Technical Centers)
- Ineligible
 - » Recreational Facilities and Parks
 - » Streetscaping (sidewalks, lighting, signage)
 - » Parking lots/garages*
 - » Sports or entertainment venues
 - » 100% speculative development projects

**Special Consideration*

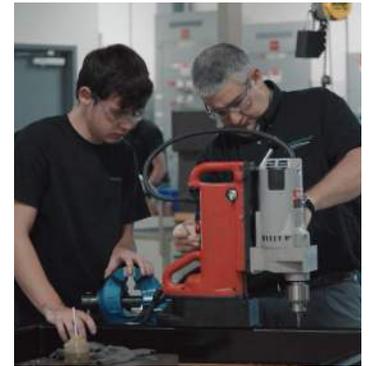
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Project Selection and Funding Determination

Projects will be evaluated on criteria to include:

- Financial feasibility and strength of capital stack
- Experience and strength of developer, anchor tenant(s), and/or entity leading the Project
- Degree of community and economic impact
- Job Creation and Retention
- Level of community distress
- Alignment with broader JobsOhio goals
- Alignment with community plan and vision
- Local support for project, including public and private stakeholders
- Additional public or private sector participation (additional funds leveraged)
- Demonstrated need/funding gap



Eligible & Ineligible Project Costs:

- Eligible
 - » Building construction & expansions
 - » On-site infrastructure
 - » Environmental remediation
 - » Demolition, removal & disposal of universal construction waste
 - » Asbestos abatement
 - » Lead-based paint abatement
 - » Machinery & equipment (fixed assets)
 - » Building Renovation
- Special Consideration (must be approved in advance)
 - » Administrative or general project management costs
 - » Engineering services
 - » Planning fees and material costs
 - » Other relevant professional fees
 - » Parking lots and structures
 - » Real estate acquisition
 - » Legal fees associated with engagement & site marketing
 - » Tenant improvements
 - » Furniture & fixtures
 - » Marketing & site visit education
 - » Off-site infrastructure
 - » Phase I studies
 - » Phase II studies
 - » IT equipment
- Ineligible
 - » Signage, lighting, landscaping
 - » Environmental insurances & clearances
 - » Operational costs
 - » Meals, entertainment, travel expenses
 - » Fees or owed promised money such as
 - Fines & costs from violation of law
 - Contributions & donations
 - Interest on borrowed money
 - Debt servicing
 - Rolling stock
 - Taxes
 - Lease & rent payments
 - Retirement of bonds or other interest vehicles
 - Legal fees



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Application Process

- Eligible communities should contact their JobsOhio Regional Network Partner to discuss eligibility and preliminary vetting of the Project.
- While program eligibility requirements exist, meeting those requirements is not indicative the Project will receive approval or support.

Eligible Municipalities

- Municipalities with a population of under 75,000 and a poverty rates equal to or greater than the state's average poverty rate are eligible. Data source is the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, updated annually.

