

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“Downtown Revitalization Grant Application”



The City of Norfolk is applying for \$30,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds to participate in a Downtown Revitalization program which is offered through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED).

“In order to have a competitive grant application for Phase I funding, there needs to be significant evidence from the business community that it will commit resources and support downtown revitalization efforts. The City of Norfolk and downtown businesses have a strong history of public and private investment through multiple façade improvement projects, business relocation to the downtown area, creation of upper story housing rental units, City infrastructure improvements, the work of the Vehicle Parking District and the formation of the NorthFork Riverfront Development Committee,” said Tina Engelbart, Deputy Director of the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District that filed the application on the City’s behalf.

This project will be Phase I of the Downtown Revitalization program and is the pre-development phase which includes the completion of a pre-development study that will define specific desired outcomes with goals and action steps for improvements to a defined downtown business district.

Through public participation, the pre-development study will include: proposed redevelopment plans; proposed needs/activities that will be completed during project implementation (Phase II); needs/activity priorities selected for each project; and reasons for those priorities. The primary goal of the pre-development study will be to create a solid working document that will allow for efficient implementation of project activities once funds for the implementation phase (Phase II) are provided.

Potential eligible projects include:

Infrastructure improvements (water/sewer)

Street improvements including curb, gutter and sidewalks, which may include energy efficiency improvements for lighting;

Loans/Forgivable Loans to businesses for façade improvements, which may include energy efficiency improvements

Forgivable Loans to businesses to improve deficiencies in meeting local codes
Acquisition, clearance and code enforcement activities which support other revitalization activities
Historic restoration, rehabilitation and preservation for physical structures and infrastructure

Grant application is due May 27th after which the NDED will conduct site visits (tour downtown area) in June. Communities selected to receive the grant for Phase I will complete a pre-development study (the City will hire a firm to do this with public participation and input) which will be submitted to NDED in February 2017. The Phase II grant application for up to \$350,000 will also be submitted with the pre-development study. Phase II funds will be awarded in May 2017 and will have a two year contract (meaning the funds must be expended with two years)

“In an effort to assist with making this grant application very competitive, downtown business assistance is needed. Please consider writing either a letter of support stating the importance of receiving these funds and the significant impact they will have on our downtown and the community as a whole or a letter of intent to commit resources to the project (i.e. matching private funds with grant funds similar to what has been done with the façade improvement program and the upper story housing rental units),” said Engelbart.

Letters should be addressed to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and delivered, mailed or emailed Tina Engelbart, Deputy Director, Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District, 111 South 1st Street, Norfolk, NE 68701 or via email to: tina@nenedd.org. Letters are needed no later than Wednesday, May 25th.