

A scenic photograph of a wooden boardwalk or bridge extending over a body of water at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. On the right side of the boardwalk, a person is standing, looking out over the water. The boardwalk is made of dark wood and has a railing. The background is filled with lush green trees.

CRATER PLANNING DISTRICT GRANTS

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Main Street in the Crater Planning District Grants (CPD)

Background

The Fiscal Year 2024 State Budget included an allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for localities in the Crater Planning District to implement special initiatives in support of small business relief within the framework of Virginia Main Street.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Virginia Main Street Program (VMS) is a community economic development program that follows the Main Street Approach™ of the National Main Street Center. Each year local Main Street organizations work to attract the necessary public and private investment to their historic commercial districts to: (1) breathe new life into blighted and vacant buildings; (2) establish and expand independent businesses that make downtowns fun and unique consumer destinations; and (3) create mixed-use downtowns where people live above bustling commercial establishments and property owners maximize the productive use of every floor of downtown buildings.

Eligible Applicants

This grant opportunity is limited to localities in the Crater Planning District. Eligible applicants include nonprofits and units of local government located in the Crater Planning District and charged with Main Street activities, including:

- Chambers of Commerce
- City, Town, or County Government
- Economic or Industrial Development Authorities
- Main Street Organizations

Grants

Grant applications will open in the CAMS system on July 29, 2024, and will close on August 19, 2024, with funded projects completed no later than September 30, 2025.

Up to \$650,500 in funding is available for this program. DHCD reserves the right to partially fund applications and projects based on the availability of funds, proposed scope of work, project timeline, project budgets, and compliance with the [ARPA Final Rules](#).

Use of Funds

Proposed projects must occur within a designated Main Street district or be to the benefit of the small businesses located within the district. The use of all funds received through the Virginia Main Street Crater Planning District Grant (CPD) must conform to the [ARPA Final Rules](#).

Match Requirements

All projects require a 2:1 match. For every \$2 of grant funding applied for, there must be \$1 in match funding committed. In-kind services provided by local government, consultants, and other Main Street stakeholders and partners may be included but cannot constitute more than 75% of the match.

Funding Priorities & Anticipated Outcomes

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project will result in measurable economic improvement for the small businesses in the Main Street district. The project will:

- Support the community’s vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district;
- Clearly align with the mission of the Main Street organization, adopted local Strategic and Master Plans; and
- Address specific market-based strategic planning goals for the Main Street district.

Grantees can refer to the Consultant Services (see pages 10-13 in the [VMS Program Guidelines](#)) to develop design projects, as well as the planning and organizational support components for economic vitality projects.

Scoring Rubric

Grant applicants are scored on a 0-100 point scale. Grant funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 80-point threshold will be considered for funding. Funds will be allocated from top scoring until all funds are exhausted.

The project scoring methodology is as follows:

Criteria	Points
Relation to organization or locality’s strategies/goals	30
Project’s impact/outcomes and alignment with VMS’s priorities	30
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Realistic project work plan and budget	15
Secured Match	5
Total	100

Sample Projects

1. [Downtown Blackstone, Inc.’s Façade Improvement Grant Project](#) - A \$25,000 Downtown Investment Grant (DIG) funded a façade improvement grant matching program to help enhance the exterior appearance of buildings and stimulate private investment in Blackstone’s historic commercial district.
2. [The Metropolitan Business League’s Virginia Statewide Business District Resurgence Grant Project](#) – A \$100,000 Resurgence Grant provided 10 businesses in the Richmond Arts District

with legal, accounting, marketing, and website design training, along with one-on-one business coaching and mentoring and mini-grants.

3. [The Retail Alliance’s Virginia Statewide Business District Resurgence Grant Project](#) - \$100,000 to support educational workshops for Hampton small business owners, and a select five downtown Phoebus businesses will receive one-on-one consultation, along with a micro grant to implement recommendations for small businesses in Phoebus.

Timeline

Register your Organization in CAMS	ASAP
Application Submittal Deadline	August 19, 2024
Application Review	August 2024
Anticipated Award Announcement	September 2024
Successful Projects Under Contract	September and October 2024
Project Completion & Outcomes Achieved	Fall 2025

Projects must be completed, all disbursements made, and final reports on project activities and outcomes submitted within 12 months from the contract start date.

Application Deadline

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted in DHCD’s Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) by 11:59 p.m. on August 19, 2024. See “Additional Information & Requirements” below for more information about CAMS.

Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified. Additional information can be found below in the “Additional Information & Requirements” section.

Application Questions (Project Description)

Enter the following information into the relevant text box within the Narrative Information tab on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project. What activities are you proposing to do with this funding? Where will this project take place – within the entire district or a specific location? Include as an attachment any design renderings, façade program guidelines or other supporting documents to demonstrate the scope of your project.
2. How and when will the proposed project be accomplished? Include a fully completed work plan with a detailed timeline. (See the template linked in the “Application Attachment” section.)

3. Who will be working on this project? List any/all organizational or municipal staff, committee members and/or volunteers that will be working to implement this project. What role(s) will they play and how will they contribute? (Note: This should provide more detail than the simple team member list included in the work plan.)
4. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the Main Street district, aligns with the mission of the Main Street organization or Locality, and addresses one or more of the board's Transformation Strategies/goals for the Main Street district.
5. Describe outcomes that are expected from this project, both quantitative and qualitative. Examples of outcomes might be: number of new jobs created, number of new businesses created or supported, building renovation or construction, private and public investment, number of housing units created, public improvement, increased community engagement, percentage increase in foot traffic, percentage increase in shopper spending, and such. Describe how these outcomes will be tracked and reported and how these anticipated outcomes align with program priorities.

Application Attachments

The below supporting documents are **required**:

1. Mission/Vision: Include the community's vision statement for the Main Street district and mission statement for the Main Street organization.
2. Board/Committees: Include a current list of the organization's board and committee/project team members. For the board, include when they joined the board and when their term expires. Local governments should provide the same for Town Council, City Council, or County Board of Supervisors.
3. Strategic or Master Plan/Transformation Strategies: Include the organization or locality's strategic plan, downtown master plan, or work plan that lists the strategies and priorities for the Main Street district.
4. Project Work Plan: Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline, and budget. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format. (Note: A strong score in this area will be based on appropriate board involvement in the project.)
5. Budget/Cost Estimates/Match Documentation:
 - a. Project Budget – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources. Please use this [template](#) or a similar format.
 - b. Explanation of Cost Estimates – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.
 - c. Leverage Verification – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, memorandums of understanding/agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project. Include documentation and calculations for in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.

The below supporting documents are **optional** based on the project type:

- Design Projects – Include a map of the downtown with the location of the project identified on the map along with current photos of the proposed project area. Also, include design renderings of the project, if available.
- Program Designs/Programs – Include draft documents of proposed façade program, loan pools, or other plans and documents as appropriate.

- Plans/Studies – Upload any recent economic development plans or studies the organization or locality has completed and adopted that includes the downtown area. Include any plan or study that supports the proposed project.

Additional Information & Requirements

Audit Requirements

DHCD has instituted an agency-wide audit policy. All applicants must upload a copy of the organization's W-9 and most recent audit or financial statements, as applicable, to DHCD's Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) by the grant's application deadline. All grantees that receive funding during a specific program year are required to submit financial documents or audits in accordance with the agency policy. The full DHCD Audit Policy, including an explanation of the specific document requirements, can be found online at: <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/audit-policy/dhcd-audit-policy.pdf>

Memorandum of Understanding

If the application is selected for funding, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DHCD and the grantee must be executed and the organization must be in compliance with DHCD's audit policy (denoted above) before any funds are disbursed. The MOU will outline project deliverables, conditions, fund disbursement, and termination.

Grant Payments (Remittances)

Funds may only be used for eligible expenses incurred after the signing of the MOU. Funds will be disbursed as outlined in the MOU. Financial support documentation for all project related expenses and leverage must be uploaded to CAMS prior to closeout as outlined in the MOU.

DHCD reserves the right to end funding at any point should the project prove nonviable. This includes, but is not limited to, lack of progress in conformance with the approved MOU.

To apply for direct deposit of funds, register for Electronic Data Interchange with the Virginia Department of Accounts. Forms must be mailed via post mail and can be downloaded here: <https://www.doa.virginia.gov/forms.shtml#edi>.

Reporting

Reporting through CAMS is required for projects. This includes interim progress reports and/or a final report as outlined in the MOU.

Administrative Costs

A portion of the awarded grant funds (up to 10% of total award amount) must be used to cover administrative costs. The administrative section of the project budget will be based on activities completed or milestones achieved—such as completing progress and final reports—rather than for time and materials. These milestones are negotiated between DHCD and the grantee and outlined in the MOU.

Calculating Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours are calculated at the rate of \$31.80 per hour based on: https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time.

CAMS

Applications for funding must be submitted through DHCD's Centralized Application Management

System (CAMS). You can access CAMS using the following link:
<https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx>.

Google Chrome is the recommended browser for CAMS. Please remember to SAVE often.

To access CAMS and complete an application for funding, a locality must establish a CAMS profile. A profile request can be made by going to the CAMS site and selecting the “Registration” option. To register your organization, you will need your organization's Unique Entity ID (UEI) and Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). Please allow up to five business days for DHCD to process and approve your registration request.

Once your organization has been registered, you may log in with your username and password and select the “Applications and Programs” option. From this page, select the “Apply” option and select the program from the dropdown menu. A description of the program will appear. Click the “Apply” button next to the pencil icon to begin an application.

As you complete the application, be sure to save each page. You have the option to close out of CAMS and return to the application at any time until the application is submitted, or the deadline has passed.

The CAMS User Guide can be found online at:

<https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/ResourceDocs/CAMS%20User%20Guide%202021.pdf>. CAMS technical support is available weekdays Monday-Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. If you need assistance with registration or the completion of the application in CAMS, please reach out to the CAMS Help Desk at camshelp@dhcd.virginia.gov.

Application Instructions

The application in CAMS will require the organization to complete each tab:

1. **Project Information:** Include the primary point of contact, primary location of the project and service area.
2. **Project Budget:** Complete budget information, including grant requested funding and other match funding. Within the budget narrative space, describe how the budget was derived and sources of other funding.
3. **Narrative Information:** Answer narrative questions related to the project, timeline, budget and outcomes. For additional information, please see respective “Application Questions” sections for each grant.
4. **Attachments:** Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments. For additional information, please see respective “Application Attachments” sections for each grant.
5. **Additional Information:** This is not necessary to complete, but if you have additional information to describe or share that was not asked in the application, please include it here.

For more information please contact:

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

600 East Main Street, Suite 300

Richmond, Virginia 23219

mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov