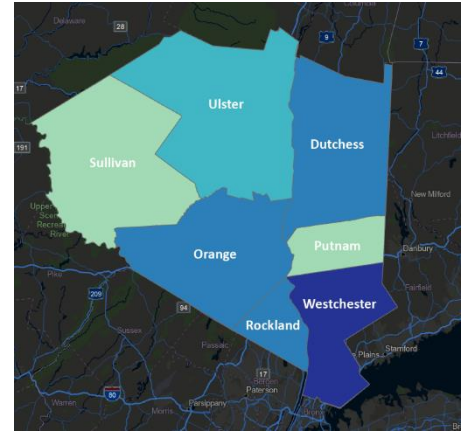




Hudson Valley Regional Council

The Hudson Valley Regional Council ([HVRC](#)) was established in 1978 as an organization of county governments by Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties. HVRC is one of nine regional councils in New York State and one of over 600 in the United States. HVRC offers impartial, transparent, and actionable technical assistance to local governments.

Supporting downtown revitalization and existing Main Streets can come in many forms. This informational guide lists a variety of [incentives](#) and [loans](#) for small businesses as well as [grant opportunities](#) and [programs](#) for local governments that bolster successful downtowns. Additional resilience and disaster related information can be found in HVRC's [CARES Project webinars](#).



INCENTIVES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Central Hudson: [Business Incentives](#)

Eligibility: Varies depending on the program

Description: The Business Incentives program offers incentives for state-of-the-art energy efficient equipment that improve building operations for small- to industrial-sized facilities. Trade allies and industry partners can perform energy audits, recommend the most cost-effective upgrades, and advise on available rebates and incentives to help cover upfront costs. Incentive programs include lighting, HVAC, kitchen equipment, refrigeration, natural gas, heat pumps, elective vehicle infrastructure make-ready program, multifamily efficiency program, and farming and agriculture.

Central Hudson: [Upgrade for Efficiency](#)

Description: Upgrade for Efficiency offers small businesses a way to upgrade to energy-efficient lighting and refrigeration equipment. Qualifying businesses can receive up to 70% of the upgraded project cost, energy and maintenance cost savings, and increased business value and visual appearance. Businesses interested can fill out the Central Hudson Small Business Direct Program form and schedule a no-cost energy assessment.

Main Street America: [Backing Small Businesses Grant](#)

Deadline: Grant historically has opened in March and closed by end of April

Eligibility: Brick-and-mortar businesses located in a historic main street, downtown, or commercial district

Description: In partnership with American Express, the Backing Small Businesses grant program supports economically vulnerable and under-resourced small businesses with community reach and/or cultural significance. The most recent round of funding awarded 500 \$10,000 grants to US businesses.





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NYSEG: Commercial Rebate Program

Eligibility: NYSEG nonresidential customers of all types, including: commercial, industrial, institutional, municipalities, agriculture, motels/hotels, group homes, dormitories, shelters, monasteries, religious convents, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation facilities and nursing homes, houses of worship, and more.

Description: The Commercial and Industrial Rebate Program is designed to help businesses save energy and money by offering rebates to make projects more affordable and shorten payback periods. Upgrading to newer energy-efficient equipment can reduce operational costs and enhance the reliability, safety, comfort and appearance of businesses. Rebates are available for retrofits, add-ons, major renovations, and new construction projects.

There are two types of rebates: prescriptive rebates and custom rebates. Prescriptive rebates are for a broad range of common upgrades with defined rebate amounts. Current categories include lighting, HVAC, processing systems, kitchen equipment and refrigeration, and agriculture. Custom rebates are performance-based and are available for non-lighting energy efficiency projects that require site-specific analysis and energy saving calculations.

NYSERDA: Charge Ready NY 2.0

Deadline: Rolling until December 31, 2025

Eligibility: Public, private, and not-for-profit organizations

Description: Charge Ready NY 2.0 offers incentives to install Level 2 EV charging stations at workplaces, multi-unit dwellings (MUD's) or public facilities that are owned and operated by municipal or state government entities.

NYSERDA provides incentives on a per-port basis at varying amounts, based on location type and whether it is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DAC):

- \$4,000 per charging port installed at a public facility (must be located within a DAC).
- \$2,000 per charging port installed at a workplace or multi-unit dwelling location.

The Charge Ready NY 2.0 program will also offer bonus incentives to equipment owners at a workplace and MUD locations who complete additional actions to promote EV adoption in their own fleets or with their employees/tenants. Workplace and MUD locations are eligible for bonus incentives of varying amounts depending on workplace/MUD size.

Verizon: Verizon Small Business Digital Ready

Deadline: December 13, 2024, 11:59 PM PT

Eligibility: Small businesses; Not-for-profit organizations are ineligible

Description: The Verizon Small Business Digital Ready Grant gives small businesses the tools and resources they need to thrive in today's digital economy and ultimately benefit their local communities. In addition to the free courses, coaching sessions, and mentoring offered through the Verizon Small Business Digital Ready program, Verizon, in partnership with LISC will award grant funding of \$10,000 to small businesses. Businesses are eligible for the grant by completing two courses or virtual events through Verizon's offerings. Awards will be made to a selection of qualified businesses who apply (not all applicants). Eligibility is based on accurate and complete submission, and priority will be given to businesses located in and/or serving historically under-served communities with limited access to flexible, affordable capital.





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LOANS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Empire State Development: [Bridge to Success Loan Program](#)

Eligibility: New York State certified minority- and/or women-owned businesses

Description: The “Bridge to Success” Loan Program aims to provide qualified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) with access to short-term bridge loans necessary to execute contracting opportunities across New York State. Short-term loans are available to qualified MWBEs to boost their ability to participate in contracting opportunities with New York State. Loans typically range from \$75,000 to \$200,000 over a 24-month period.

US Small Business Administration: [7a Loans](#)

Eligibility: For profit small businesses that are not an [ineligible type of business](#)

Description: The 7(a) Loan Program provides loan guaranties to lenders that allow them to provide financial help for small businesses with special requirements. The loan can be used for acquiring, refinancing, or improving real estate and building, short- and long-term working capital, refinancing current business debt, purchasing and installation of machinery and equipment, including AI-related expenses, purchasing furniture, fixtures, and supplies, changes of ownership (complete or partial), or multiple purpose loans, including any of the above. The maximum loan amount for a 7(a) loan is \$5 million. Key eligibility factors are based on what the business does to receive its income, its credit history, and where the business operates.

US Small Business Administration: [504 Loans](#)

Eligibility: Businesses of any size and most private not-for-profit organizations

Description: Physical Damage loans are designed to help businesses that have been in a [declared disaster area](#) that has experienced damage. Loans can be used to repair or replace property, machinery, equipment, fixtures, inventory, or leasehold improvements. Loans cannot be used to upgrade or expand a business unless it is required by building codes. Businesses can apply for additional funds to make improvements to help reduce the risk of future property damage through the [Mitigation Assistance Program](#). Projects can help mitigate future damage from wind, flood, wildfire, earthquakes, and hail. Those that qualify can increase their loan by up to 20%.

US Small Business Administration: [Microloans](#)

Eligibility: Lending and credit requirements are dependent on the intermediary lender.

Description: The microloan program provides loans to help small businesses and certain not-for-profit childcare centers start up and expand. Eligible uses of funds include working capital, inventory, supplies, furniture, fixtures, machinery, and equipment. Ineligible uses are to pay existing debts or to purchase real estate. SBA provides funds to specially designated intermediary lenders, which are nonprofit community-based organizations with experience in lending as well as management and technical assistance. These intermediaries administer the Microloan program for eligible borrowers. The average loan is \$13,000 but can go as high as \$50,000.

US Small Business Administration: [Physical Damage Loans](#)

Eligibility: Businesses of any size and most private not-for-profit organizations

Description: Physical Damage loans are designed to help businesses that have been in a [declared disaster area](#) that has experienced damage. Loans can be used to repair or replace property, machinery, equipment, fixtures, inventory, or leasehold improvements. Loans cannot be used to upgrade or expand a business unless it is required by building codes. Businesses can apply for additional funds to make improvements to help reduce the risk of future property damage through the [Mitigation Assistance Program](#). Projects can help mitigate future damage from wind, flood, wildfire, earthquakes, and hail. Those that qualify can increase their loan by up to 20%.





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GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration: [Economic Adjustment Assistance Program](#)

Deadline: Rolling

Eligibility: States, counties, cities, or other political subdivision of a state

Description: The Economic Adjustment Assistance program provides a wide range of technical, planning, and public works and infrastructure assistance in regions experiencing adverse economic changes that may occur suddenly or over time. These adverse economic impacts may result from a steep decline in manufacturing employment following a plant closure, changing trade patterns, catastrophic natural disaster, a military base closure, or environmental changes and regulations. The EAA program can help municipalities in responding to economic challenges through implementation grants to support the execution of activities identified in a [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (or equivalent), such as infrastructure improvements, including site acquisition, site preparation, construction, rehabilitation and equipping of facilities. Specific activities may be funded as separate investments or as multiple elements of a single investment.

NYS Department of State: [Downtown Revitalization Initiative \(Round 8\)](#)

Deadline: October 18, 2024, 4PM

Eligibility: Towns, cities, and villages

Description: The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) was launched in 2016 to accelerate revitalization of downtowns in all ten regions of the State so that they serve as centers of activity and catalysts for increased local investment. As a cornerstone of the State’s economic development program, the DRI transforms downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers that offer a high quality of life and become magnets for redevelopment, business growth, job creation, and economic and housing diversity. Each economic development region will receive one award of \$10M. Round 9 expected to be announced in summer 2025.

NYS Department of State: [New York Forward \(Round 3\)](#)

Deadline: October 18, 2024, 4PM

Eligibility: Towns, cities, and villages

Description: New York Forward (NYF) supports a more equitable downtown recovery for New York’s smaller and rural communities, with a focus on hamlets, villages, and neighborhood-scale municipal centers. Through the NYF program, these smaller downtowns will attract more businesses, residents, and visitors, while also providing a higher quality of life for residents. Each economic development region will receive two awards of \$4.5M each. Round 4 expected to be announced in summer 2025.

US Environmental Protection Agency: [Brownfield Grants](#)

Deadline: November 14, 2024

Eligibility: Towns, cities, and villages

Description: The EPA is offering three different grants: assessment, cleanup, and revolving loan funds (RLF). Assessment Grants provide funding for brownfield inventories, planning, environmental assessments and community outreach. Cleanup Grants provide funding to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites owned by the applicant, reuse planning, and community involvement. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grants provide funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund and to provide loans and subgrants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. Grants vary in awards from \$500,000 to \$5M depending on which grant and the size of the project.





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NYS Department of Environmental Conservation: [ZEV Infrastructure Grants](#)

Deadline: 2024 round ends February 28, 2025, 4PM

Eligibility: Towns, cities, and villages

Description: The Municipal ZEV Infrastructure Grant program provides grants to install hydrogen fuel filling station components and Level 2 (L2) and direct current fast charge (DCFC) electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) primarily for public use. Eligible expenses include equipment, supplies, materials, installation costs, electricity, and site preparation costs. Electric utility installations or upgrades before the location’s electrical panel are eligible if the upgrade is intended solely to support the installation of the EVSE or upgrade to additional or higher capacity EVSE.

NYS Department of State: [New York Main Street](#)

Deadline: Previous rounds have had deadlines at the end of July

Eligibility: Counties, local governments that have been designated as “pro-housing,” or not-for-profits that have been providing a relevant service for over a year

Description: New York Main Street provides financial resources and technical assistance to communities to strengthen the economic vitality of the State's traditional Main Streets and neighborhoods. The New York Main Street grant program provides funds to units of local government, and not-for-profit organizations that are committed to revitalizing historic downtowns, mixed-use neighborhood commercial districts, and village centers. Grants come in three forms: building renovations, downtown anchor, and technical assistance.

PROGRAMS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT THAT SUPPORT DOWNTOWNS

NYS: [Climate Smart Communities Program](#)

Eligibility: Local governments

Description: NYS leadership program offering multifaceted approach to creating vibrant and resilience communities. The actions listed below support vibrant downtowns.

- **[Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements:](#)** Local governments are responsible for planning in a number of areas, including housing, transportation, water, open space, waste management, energy, and disaster preparedness. In New York State, these planning efforts can be combined into a comprehensive plan that steers investments by local governments and guides future development through zoning regulations.
- **[Smart Growth Policies:](#)** The CSC program encourages local governments to incorporate smart growth principles into their land-use policies. This can be done by comprehensively updating the local zoning or through amendments or policies that promote smart growth. It is possible to incorporate smart growth principles into local land-use policies through a complementary planning process, such as a local waterfront revitalization plan. By updating zoning and policies, local governments can encourage smart growth by promoting transit-oriented development, compact walkable communities, infill development, and other resource-efficient land-use practices.
- **[Complete Streets Policy:](#)** A Complete Streets approach to designing our roads incorporates safety, livability, and a place for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit riders. Complete streets design features recognize that the needs of users vary according to rural, suburban, and urban contexts and they may include, but are not limited to, sidewalks, paved shoulders suitable for cycling, lane striping, bike lanes, share-the-road signage, crosswalks, road diets, pedestrian control signalization, bulb-outs (curb extensions), curb cuts, raised crosswalks and ramps, and traffic calming measures.





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- **[Green Infrastructure](#)**: Green infrastructure (GI), sometimes referred to as Low Impact Development or Better Site Design, uses natural processes to capture stormwater or rain through retention, infiltration, or evapotranspiration. While some GI measures support the reuse of water, (landscaping, for example), the main objective for GI is to decrease flooding and combined sewer overflows (CSO).
- **[National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System](#)**: The Community Rating System (CRS) is a program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Participating in the CRS reduces flood risk, enhances public safety, reduces damage to property and public infrastructure, and reduces insurance rates for a community's property owners. Under the CRS, flood insurance premiums are discounted to reward community actions to minimize exposure to floods. The program also enables communities to evaluate the effectiveness of their flood programs against a nationally recognized benchmark.
- **[Buy Local/Buy Green Campaign](#)**: This action focuses on developing a campaign to support local and green purchasing throughout the community. When local governments take the lead in creating a brand for local products and in developing an education campaign, it raises awareness of local, green purchasing in the community. Local governments should consider partnering with businesses that participate in the New York Sustainable Business Council or the Green Business Bureau, depending on the level of participation at the local level.
- **[Brownfield Clean-up & Redevelopment](#)**: Cleaning up and redeveloping brownfield sites avoids the environmental impacts associated with developing on greenfield sites and puts an environmentally damaged site back into productive use. Some local governments have focused such efforts on green redevelopment, supporting such uses as renewable energy installations, urban farming, green buildings, smart growth development, or green business siting.
- **[Green Economic Development Plans](#)**: Local governments can incorporate specific plans for development of green industries into their short-term and long-term economic development plans. Identifying needs for particular green industries or markets, and assessing existing assets should be part of this planning process. It would be useful for local governments to identify the green economy sectors within their jurisdictions and high-growth employment opportunities. This can be done through a focused effort to contact green industries to help identify job shortages and needed skills. Green industry development can be tracked through workforce response teams.
- **[Incentives for Green Businesses](#)**: A common local government strategy to promote economic development is to develop incentives to attract businesses to locate within a community. Local governments have several methods they can employ to support the development of their green economy, such as establishing green enterprise zones, providing local government property to be used as a business incubator, providing tax incentives for green business to locate in the community or designated zone, microloans for startups, or expedited permitting processes.





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NYSERDA: Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Program

Eligibility: Local governments

Description: NYSERDA program supporting municipal engagement with energy- and cost-saving clean energy actions; match-free grant awards available. Actions in support of downtown business revitalization include:

- **Clean Fleets Infrastructure:** Local governments throughout the State are investing in electric vehicle infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants. Electric vehicles are more energy efficient and cost significantly less to operate than gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles.
- **Community Choice Aggregation:** Local governments can choose the source of their community’s energy supply while negotiating lower rates and ensuring a greater percentage of electricity comes from renewable sources.
- **Green Financing:** Municipalities can establish an [Open C-PACE Financing program](#) and/or help promote [NY Green Bank](#) financing to enable eligible commercially-owned buildings to secure funds for renewable energy upgrades, such as roof-top solar.
- **Thermal Energy Networks:** A thermal energy network uses a network of pipes to connect multiple buildings together, often including a large anchor off-taker (e.g., college/university, hospital), and to thermal sources and sinks, such as geothermal, surface water, waste heat, and the air, to provide space heating & cooling and domestic hot water. This technology is an effective way for municipalities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FEMA: Community Rating System

Eligibility: Local governments

Description: The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#). CRS communities receive discounts on their flood insurance premium rates that reflect the community’s efforts to reduce flood risk by addressing the goals of this program. These goals are to reduce and avoid flood damage to insurable property, to strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program, and to foster comprehensive floodplain management. Flood insurance discounts can range from 5-45% inside the Special Flood Hazard Area and from 5-10% outside the Special Flood Hazard Area. All of a community’s residents and businesses are eligible for this discount. Many of the activities outlined in the CRS program can be implemented as part of a downtown revitalization program. Activities include, but are not limited to, open space preservation, stormwater management, floodplain management planning, flood protection, drainage system maintenance, and flood warning and response. Additional information can be found in the [Community Rating System Coordinator’s Manual](#).

US Small Business Administration: Resource Partners

Eligibility: Small businesses.

- **Small Business Development Centers:** Small Business Development Centers provide counseling and training to small businesses including working with SBA to develop and provide informational tools to support business start-ups and existing business expansion. SBDC Programs deliver professional, high quality, individualized business advising and technical assistance to existing small businesses and pre-venture entrepreneurs. SBDCs provide problem-solving assistance to help small businesses access capital, develop and exchange new technologies, and improve business planning, strategy, operations, financial management, personnel administration, marketing, export assistance, sales and other areas required for small business growth and expansion, management improvement, increased productivity and innovation.





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- **[SCORE Business Mentoring](#)**: SCORE, the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors, is dedicated to helping small businesses plan, launch, manage and grow. SCORE is a nonprofit organization that is driven to foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and educational workshops. SCORE mentors offer area-specific advice at no cost (financing, human resources, business planning) via email, telephone and video. SCORE mentors, all experts in entrepreneurship and related fields, meet with their small business clients on an ongoing basis to provide continued advice and support. SCORE provides a wide range of services including training, webinars, online workshops, courses on demand, and a library of online resources.
- **[Veterans Business Outreach Center](#)**: The VBOC program is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling, and resource partner referrals to service members, veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, military spouses, and family members interested in starting or growing a small business. SBA has 28 organizations participating in this cooperative agreement and serving as VBOCs.
- **[Women's Business Center](#)**: Women's Business Centers (WBCs) are a part a national network of entrepreneurship centers throughout the United States and its territories, which are designed to assist women in starting and growing small businesses. SBA helps women entrepreneurs launch new businesses and compete in the marketplace. There are a number of [resources for women-owned businesses](#) including business training, counseling, federal contracts, and access to credit and capital.

