

ENERGIZE LAKE FLOWER BUSINESS DISTRICT



PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

The Energize Lake Flower Business District Fund (Energize Lake Flower) provides matching grant funds to commercial and mixed-use properties in the River Street and Lake Flower Avenue target area. Property owners, business owners, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funds for interior and exterior building improvements and site upgrades and enhancements. Projects should meet the goals outlined below. Energize Lake Flower is administered by the Village of Saranac Lake Community Development Department and Saranac Lake Local Development Corporation (SLLDC).

The goals for the Energize Lake Flower Business District Program are:

- Thriving businesses and entrepreneurs
- Enhanced physical environment through high-quality design
- Assistance to businesses that have been excluded from other grant programs, including New York Main Street and Downtown Revitalization Initiative

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

1. Building & Site Improvements
2. Details Matter

2. ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include owners of properties and businesses within the Essex County portion of River Street and the Lake Flower Avenue business corridor. Eligible properties include 137-203 River Street and 209-644 Lake Flower Avenue.

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.

3. AVAILABLE FUNDING

There are two (2) project categories. Applicants may only apply for funding within one category.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM AWARD	MINIMUM MATCH
BUILDING & SITE IMPROVEMENTS	Exterior building improvements such as painting, brick repair, window & door repair/replacement, awnings, decks, & storefront renovations. Site improvements including construction of walkways, outdoor seating areas, decks, patios, and landscaping.	\$25,000	50%
DETAILS MATTER	High quality building or site enhancements including signage, lighting, awnings, outdoor furniture, publicly accessible art installations, etc. that improve the streetscape.	\$10,000	50%

4. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

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

- Exterior building renovations including facades
- Site improvements including outdoor seating, permanent landscaping, signage, and private walkways and patios
- 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, appliances, vehicles, electronics, tools, disposable supplies, business equipment and non-permanent fixtures, hardware, 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

6. BUDGET & FINANCING

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Matching funds must be applied to the same building/property as the grant funds.

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 covered by grant funds.

FINANCING

The property owner must contribute cash to cover at least 50% of all project costs. The property owner is required to cover the total cost of the project after the maximum grant amount has been applied, which may be greater than 50% of the project costs. The property owner will also be required to contribute cash to cover any excess cost, including:

- The cost of ineligible improvements;
- The extra cost incurred when the property owner does not select the contractor who submitted the lowest bid or quote;

All payments for work completed under the Energize Lake Flower Fund will be made by checks payable to the contractor who has been approved for the work.

The owner contribution must be deposited in an escrow account established by the Village before any work may begin on the project. Those funds will be used before any grant funds are advanced for the project.

Final payments will be made only after all work has been completed and approved by the property owner and Village Code Officer.

7. PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

A. ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM GOALS

- Encourage high quality urban design of privately-owned buildings and places.
- Invest in streetscape improvements that will promote walkability and increase safety for all ages and abilities.
- Nurture a business environment that offers opportunities for locally owned businesses and residents from all walks of life.
- Achieve and maintain a balanced mix of businesses that attract visitors and provide necessary goods and services to regional residents.

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. PROJECT SCORING & SELECTION

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

Criteria	Max Points
Alignment with Program Goals	50
Project Readiness	40
Improved Accessibility	10
Total	100

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

8. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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

1. Work with village staff to develop project scope of work*
2. Complete architectural/engineering/site plans as necessary
3. Finalize budget
4. Execute contract with Village of Saranac Lake and SLLDC
5. Secure development board approval
6. Obtain bids or quotes for each phase of work and select contractors*
7. Execute agreements with contractors
8. Obtain building permit

*Village and SLLDC staff will assist in development of the project scope of work and administer the bidding process.

9. PROGRAM CONDITIONS

- Grant awards will be merit based. Applicants that can communicate a compelling need that directly fulfills program goals with quantifiable results will be given higher consideration.
- Awarded funds may be subject to conditions. The award letter and agreement will clearly outline all conditions.
- Village of Saranac Lake reserves the right to award a project less funding than requested.

10. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The application must be submitted to the Community Development Department via email to **comdev@saranacounty.gov** and in typed form. No handwritten applications will be accepted. All attachments must be sent as digital files. Village staff reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant. Community Development staff are available to provide technical assistance for completing the application form. Contact Jamie Konkoski (comdev@saranacounty.gov) for assistance.