

**REQUEST FOR RESPONSE (RFR)**  
**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

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**Vacant or Abandoned Property Rehabilitation**

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**RFR #22130143**



**Responses Due: September 30, 2022**

Jonathan F. Mitchell  
Mayor

Chief Financial Officer  
133 William Street  
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## CITY OF NEW BEDFORD MASSACHUSETTS

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE #22130143

### **Vacant or Abandoned Property Rehabilitation**

#### About this Grant Program

The City of New Bedford (City) is offering American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for vacant or abandoned property rehabilitation in Qualified Census Tracts in New Bedford. The goal of this grant program is to revitalize distressed neighborhoods and combat the negative health impacts of residential, commercial, or industrial property blight by providing financial assistance to offset the high costs of returning vacant or abandoned properties to productive use.

This funding is being supported, in whole or in part, by the American Rescue Plan Act, federal award number SLFRP1067, awarded to the City of New Bedford (City) by the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury). As such, the City is bound by the rules and limitations of the American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. These funds “provide eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments with a substantial infusion of resources to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild a stronger, and more equitable economy as the country recovers.”

#### **Eligible Properties**

In its Final Rule on the use of ARPA funds, the Treasury emphasizes that only properties located within disproportionately impacted communities are eligible for use of this funding. Therefore, only properties located in a HUD-designated Qualified Census Tract (QCT) are eligible.

You can determine whether a property is located in a QCT by searching for the property on [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda\\_qct.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html) and selecting “Color QCT Qualified Tracts” or by emailing the address to [ARPA@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:ARPA@newbedford-ma.gov).

Furthermore, the property must be either vacant or abandoned, as defined below:

“Vacant.” Any real property not currently legally occupied and that has been unoccupied for at least six months.

“Abandoned.” Any real property that is vacant and in a blighted condition, including without limitation by the presence of one or more of the following: ; unsecured; open to the weather; secured to the weather by boarding of windows and doors; disconnected or non-operating utilities; uncovered swimming pool whether full, partially full or empty; or the presence of substantial perishable food items, dangerous substances or chemicals, animal litter, debris, trash, indoor items, such as furniture, appliances, plumbing fixtures and bedding, whether in or outside a building or both.”

## Eligible Activities

- Rehabilitation, renovation, or costs to secure vacant or abandoned properties to reduce their negative impact.
- Costs associated with acquiring and securing legal title of vacant or abandoned properties and other costs to position the property for current or future productive use.
- Removal and remediation of environmental contaminants or hazards from vacant or abandoned properties, when conducted in compliance with applicable environmental laws or regulations.
- Demolition or deconstruction of vacant or abandoned buildings (including residential, commercial, or industrial buildings) paired with greening or other lot improvement as part of a strategy for neighborhood revitalization.
- Greening or cleanup of vacant lots, as well as other efforts to make vacant lots safer for the surrounding community.
- Inspection fees and other administrative costs incurred to ensure compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations for demolition, greening, or other remediation activities
- Past capital expenses may be considered if they present a barrier to future development but may not have occurred prior to March 3, 2021.

## Other Requirements

- Total project costs must be at least \$750,000 inclusive of predevelopment costs and matching funds, but not including routine or customary property holding costs.
- The total amount of funding requested may not exceed 50% of total project costs, meaning that there is a minimum 1:1 match requirement. The match may be met in part with predevelopment costs, such as the costs of engaging architects, engineers, landscape designers, or other related professionals, but may not include routine or customary property holding costs. Other ARPA-funded grant funds do not count towards the match requirement.
- Funded activities must commence within one year of an executed Grant Agreement (contract) with the City.
- Chain stores and franchises are ineligible to apply
- Renovations and demolitions must not result in a reduction in the total number of occupiable housing units.
- The owner/applicant must have no outstanding city taxes, fees, or other assessments due to the City of New Bedford.
- All improvements must comply with City building and zoning standards.
- The final design of all improvements must be approved by the New Bedford Historical Commission.
- The rehabilitation of Historic properties must follow the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#).
- Construction must be undertaken by insured contractors licensed to operate in the State of Massachusetts
- Applicant must be able to demonstrate site control such as through a deed, long-term lease, or purchase and sales agreement, or option agreement.
- Project must be financially feasible but in need of ARPA funding for the project to move forward.

## **Design Review**

For the purposes of the Vacant or Abandoned Property Rehabilitation Fund, the New Bedford Historical Commission will act as the City's Design Review Board to evaluate projects for their aesthetic, architectural, or urban design quality and compatibility with nearby development.

The rehabilitation of buildings not having notable historic or architectural features shall be an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the building and the streetscape. The Board will examine design elements to include landscaping, signage, building materials and colors, lighting, and windows.

The Design Review Board will issue a Certificate of Approval and its recommendations for projects shall be incorporated into the final plans and designs for a project and be included into all plans reviewed for any required land-use permitting, such as Site Plan Review or Special Permits.

## **Demolition**

The City has a Demolition Delay Bylaw (Sec 2-157), the purpose of which is to preserve and protect historically and architecturally significant buildings and structures within New Bedford and limit the detrimental effect of demolition on the character of the city.

The Demolition Delay Ordinance regulates any building or structure that, in whole or in part, was built seventy-five (75) or more years prior to the date of the application for the demolition permit, and is at least one of the following:

- A building or structure listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or on the State Register of Historic Places (based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards), or, if applicable, on the New Bedford Historic Resources List.
- A building or structure importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history of the city, or;
- A building or structure which is historically or architecturally significant in terms of period style, method of building construction or association with a significant architect or builder either by itself or as a part of a group of buildings, or;
- A building or structure located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a federal, state, or local historic district boundary.

Demolition Review is a multi-step process which begins at the Department of Inspectional Services (DIS) when a demolition permit is requested. For a structure 75 years or older, DIS refers the demolition request to the Historical Commission for review. If the structure is not deemed significant, that determination will be filed with the City Council and DIS, and with the approval of the City Council, the demolition permit can be processed through DIS. In instances where a structure is initially classified to be significant, a Demolition Review Application must be fully completed, and a public hearing will be scheduled before the Historical Commission.

Buildings or structures within the Bedford Landing Historic District seeking demolition require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historical Commission.

## **Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations**

To receive this grant, Applicants agree to use this grant only for the categories and purposes indicated on the Award Notification. It is the Applicant's responsibility to maintain records and other documentation to support the use of grants.

The Applicants shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and city ordinances, including, where applicable, adherence to State and Federal procurement requirements and procedures designed to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure open, competitive procurement practices.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The Selected Applicants shall maintain a conflict-of-interest policy consistent with 2 CFR 200.318(c), which is applicable to all activities funded with Project funds. Decisions concerning the Project must be free of undisclosed personal or organizational conflicts of interest, both in fact and in appearance. The Selected Applicants may not use control over Project funds for their own private gain. Furthermore, no employee, officer, or agent of the Selected Applicants may participate in the selection, award, or administration of this agreement if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. These conflict-of-interest requirements are applicable to each activity funded under this agreement. The Selected Applicants must disclose in writing to the City any potential conflict of interest affecting the awarded funds, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.112.

### **Instructions for Submission of Responses**

This Request for Response (RFR) is available online at the City website on the ARPA page at <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/arpa/>.

**All responses must be submitted electronically to [arpa@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:arpa@newbedford-ma.gov) with “RFR #22130143 Vacant & Abandoned Property Rehabilitation Fund” in the subject line. Applications are due by the end of the day on September 30, 2022.**

Questions regarding to this RFR are to be directed to [arpa@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:arpa@newbedford-ma.gov). Responses to all questions will be in the written form and emailed to all Applicants having given notice of obtaining the RFR by emailing to [arpa@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:arpa@newbedford-ma.gov).

### **Application Requirements**

Please prepare an electronic file that includes the following components.

- **Cover Sheet** (included in this RFR)
- **Section 1 – Applicant Information/Background**
  - Description and qualifications of the applicant and any partners
  - Leadership biographies and information pertaining to their ability to execute the project
  - Provide the project coordinator for your organization, including the name, phone number, and email address
- **Section 2 – Project Information**
  - Project location
  - Intended use of the property and long-term goals
  - Description of the current condition of the vacant or abandoned property
  - Description of the proposed improvements
  - Project status and timeline
  - Architectural or landscape drawings unless the funding requested is for demolition or environmental remediation
  - Photographs of the property showing that the property is unoccupied or unoccupiable
  - Copy of documents establishing site control

- **Section 3 – Community Impact**
  - Description and evidence of community benefits associated with the intended end use of the property such as through direct job impacts, housing development, workforce development, or health and wellness impacts. Please include the demographics of the population that the project will serve.
  - Description of indirect and induced economic impacts, such as through supply chain relationships and spending in the local economy
  - Estimate of the local fiscal impact of the proposed project, such as through municipal property taxes
  - Description of business plan and long term financial viability
  - Historical significance of the vacant property
  - Degree to which the project ameliorates identified environmental and health risk factors present on the property
- **Section 4 – Budget**
  - Total cost and detailed cost breakdown
  - Budget narrative describing all project costs
  - List of all funding sources, amounts, and timeline for funding availability
  - Supporting evidence such as cost proposals and funding award letters, as available
- **Section 5 – Letters of Support**
  - Applicants may include support letters from people or organizations explaining why they support this project and recommend it for ARPA funding.

The City may request additional information as it deems necessary before making funding decisions, executing a grant agreement, or releasing funds. This may include cost proposals and invoices documenting project costs.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated by the City against the factors specified in the following evaluation criteria:

- Compliance with federal regulations.
- Amount of matching funds leveraged relative to amount requested, including evidence of having applied to other grant programs for which the applicant would be eligible.
- Project readiness
- Financial feasibility during construction and after completion. A construction cost estimate, where applicable, must be part of the financial feasibility assessment.
- Demonstrated need of ARPA funding for the project to move forward. ARPA funds cannot substitute for existing funding secured.
- Historical significance of the vacant property.
- Level of deterioration or blight of the vacant property.
- Economic benefits associated with the intended end use.
- Quality of the project design, including the architecture, site layout, and landscaping.
- Environmental benefits (e.g. environmental remediation, energy efficiency improvements, building electrification, use of low-carbon and durable building materials, and stormwater management).

- Health benefits (e.g. removal of harmful contaminants such as asbestos or lead paint or pipes and COVID mitigation measures such as ventilation improvements and improvements that enable greater use of outdoor spaces).
- Extent to which the project is being led by or benefits people from a disadvantaged or underrepresented population.
- Evidence that the project team will be able to execute the project in a responsible and timely manner.

### **Timeline**

1. Applications for funding are submitted
2. Applications are reviewed by the ARPA Review Committee
3. Award Notifications are emailed to approved applicants
4. Awardee must complete a subrecipient risk assessment and design is reviewed by the Historical Commission
5. Matching funds must be secured
6. Contingent on steps four and five, an official Grant Agreement is executed with the City

### **Award Decisions and Communications with City Staff**

All proposals must be carefully reviewed, which will result in a time lapse between when proposals are received and when decisions are made. All applicants will be notified at least twice: once to acknowledge that the proposal has been received and once to notify the applicant of the City's determination. Proposals that are approved for funding will receive an Award Notification outlining the grant amount and any conditions of the award. All awards are subject to the limitations of the American Rescue Plan Act and are contingent upon full execution of a contract with the City (Grant Agreement). Proposals that are not recommended for funding will also be notified in writing.