



# SELECTED SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE FOR OWNERS OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IN NEW YORK STATE

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This information sheet highlights funding mechanisms, types of professional assistance and resources with specific technical information. When looking for help for privately-owned commercial property, it is important to consider the project size and complexity. Certain programs such as tax credits may only be applicable for large-scale projects, and a property owner or developer would be served by turning to local and regional government agencies to research various types of financial or technical assistance. While many of the programs described below are aimed at government agencies and municipal departments, the information may help an owner or developer to determine which sources to approach for information. In some cases a municipal department might be encouraged to apply for certain types of funds that could then be re-granted to individual projects.

## **HISTORIC LANDMARK and HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

To designate local landmarks or historic districts, there must first be a local historic preservation ordinance in place. Ask the municipal clerk whether your community has a preservation ordinance and an active preservation commission designating local landmarks and districts, and find out about the procedure for nominating a site. This information is also important for project planning as it will establish part of any review process for a project.

### **State and National Register of Historic Places**

Many funding programs either require or give preference to properties listed individually or located in an historic district listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. Check with your local planning office to see whether you are located in a district. For more information about the program and procedures, visit the website of the Field Services Bureau of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation: [www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo) and call 518-237-8643 to speak with your regional National Register staff representative. It is useful to visit the National Park Service website for information

about listing a site on the State and National Register, the process of researching and analyzing historic structures and issues regarding landmark and historic district designations: [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/), or contact the National Register Reference Desk at 202-354-1496.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Rehabilitation Tax Credit Programs**

**Federal tax incentives** are available for rehabilitation work on National Register-listed, income-producing buildings, including rental units. The New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service are the two levels of agencies that administer this program.

*“Owners of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places may be eligible for a 20% federal income tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties. The final dollar amount is based on the cost of the rehabilitation; in effect, 20% of the rehab costs will be borne by the federal government. The work performed (both interior and exterior) must meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and be approved by the National Park Service.”*

Begin by reading about such programs at [www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/brochure1.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/brochure1.htm) and [www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/investment/income.htm](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/investment/income.htm)

For more information, call 518-237-8643 or see the SHPO website’s “Territorial Map” section to identify the Technical Program Representative for your county: [www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/state/map.htm](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/state/map.htm).

(For information on obtaining State and National Register listing or eligibility, see Technical Assistance section below.)

There is also a 10% rehabilitation tax credit available for the rehabilitation of non-historic (non-significant) and non-residential buildings placed in service before 1936. The rehabilitation must be substantial, exceeding either \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the property, whichever is greater. The property also must be depreciable.

### **New York State Commercial Rehabilitation Credit Program**

Qualified users of the federal rehabilitation tax credit are eligible for this New York State rehabilitation tax credit. Eligible buildings must be income-producing properties listed – or eligible for listing – on the National Register of Historic Places. The property must also be located in a census tract at or below 100% State Median Family Income, or in census tracts defined as “targeted areas” under Section 143(J) of the Internal Revenue Code. If a property meets the census tract requirements and is approved for the federal rehabilitation tax credit, it also qualifies for the state credit.

This program provides a New York State tax credit of up to \$5 million per project and 20% of the qualified rehabilitation expenses as defined by the National Park Service, making it equal to the federal rehabilitation tax credit. The program expires on December 31, 2014.

### **New Market Tax Credits**

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMT) Program permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities. Programs are administered by banks or other organizations selected as CDEs. Contact your local bank or visit [www.cdfifund.gov/](http://www.cdfifund.gov/).

### **Grants and Loans - General**

Most preservation grant programs are directed at not-for-profit organizations or municipalities rather than private property owners, and few offer capital funding. However, in some cases a municipal office or agency may administer special funding projects, tax abatement programs or revolving funds to assist property owners with repairs or restoration work. Check with your local:

- County, Town or City Planning Department or Department of Economic Development or Community Development
- Neighborhood Improvement Corporation
- Neighborhood or Rural Preservation Corporation
- Landmark or Historic Preservation Commission

### **Government agencies sponsoring programs**

*Empire State Development Corporation*

Restore NY is a new program to encourage economic development and neighborhood growth by providing municipalities with financial assistance for revitalization of commercial and residential properties. ESDC is making \$50 million available for the first round of grants and soliciting proposals from municipalities for competitive review. The maximum grant a municipality may receive is \$5 million and each award must be matched by a municipal contribution of at least 10 percent. Only municipalities may apply. For more information contact [restoreny@empire.state.ny.us](mailto:restoreny@empire.state.ny.us), call 800-STATENY or see [www.empire.state.ny.us/default.asp](http://www.empire.state.ny.us/default.asp).

### **Economic Development Zone/Empire Zone Tax Credits**

New York State has designated 72 zones as Economic Development Zones/Empire Zones (EZs), which offer a host of benefits. These include discounts on electricity, enhanced tax credits for investment and job creation, and additional sales and property tax exemptions. For more information on New York State's tax credits, exemptions and abatements, contact Empire State Development at 1 (800) STATE-NY or 1 (800) 782-8369. You may also contact George LaPointe at (518) 292-5300 or email: [glapointe@empire.state.ny.us](mailto:glapointe@empire.state.ny.us). See [www.empire.state.ny.us/Tax\\_and\\_Financial\\_Incentives/Empire\\_Zones/descriptions\\_benefits.asp](http://www.empire.state.ny.us/Tax_and_Financial_Incentives/Empire_Zones/descriptions_benefits.asp)

### **New York State Department of State**

Office of Business and Licensing Services publications, corporate filing information, and more is available online at [www.dos.state.ny.us](http://www.dos.state.ny.us).

The Office of Local Government Services offers information and assistance about programs and policies including the state's building code, waterfront redevelopment plans, etc.:

[www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/index.htm](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/index.htm).

The Quality Communities Clearinghouse website has information on technical issues, funding and case studies: [www.qualitycommunities.org](http://www.qualitycommunities.org); 518-473-3355; 518-474-6572-fax. New York State Department of State; 41 State Street, Albany, New York 12231. The New York State Rural Development Council is a non-partisan forum for identifying, discussing, and taking action on issues affecting rural areas in the State. For more information, call (518) 473-3355.

### **NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal: New York Main Street Program**

The NYMS Program will provide [technical resources and] grants to stimulate reinvestment in

mixed-use (commercial/civic and residential) 'main street' buildings in order to address issues of code compliance, energy conservation, accessibility, and to provide affordable housing and job opportunities. Only not-for-profit corporations may apply, including Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Eligible projects: 1) Building Renovation Grants to enhance commercial business and housing opportunities for area residents, 2) Downtown Anchor Grants, and 3) Streetscape Enhancement Grants. Approximately \$10 million will be available under this program." For more information, visit: [www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Funding/](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Funding/); or contact [DHCRInfo@nysdhcr.gov](mailto:DHCRInfo@nysdhcr.gov); 866-275-3427; Hampton Plaza, 38-40 State Street, Albany, NY 12207.

**Federal Community Development Block Grant Program – (CDBG)** is a part of the Housing and Urban Development Program (HUD) that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1,180 general units of local government and States. Funds must be applied for by a unit of government which can then redistribute support to local agencies and organizations and property owners. See [www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/)

for information about programs such as

- Entitlement Communities - larger cities & urban counties;
- State Administered CDBG (Small Cities CDBG program) for smaller units of local government;
- Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program;
- Renewal Communities/ Empowerment Zones/ Enterprise Communities.

**Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Federal Housing Administration (FHA)** has a flexible loan program that helps developers, investors, and families at all income levels to buy and restore properties in urban and rural historic districts. The program operates through FHA approved lending institutions, and the loans are insured by FHA. The 203(k) Mortgage Rehabilitation Insurance Program helps preservationists deal with problems such as appraisal barriers, the high cost of second mortgages, and prohibitive down payment and closing costs. See [www.hud.gov/](http://www.hud.gov/); [www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/203k/203kmenu.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/203k/203kmenu.cfm) or

follow a link to this site from the **National Trust for Historic Preservation's** website: [www.nthp.org/historic\\_homeowner/rehabilitating/financial.html](http://www.nthp.org/historic_homeowner/rehabilitating/financial.html).

**U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (CDC/504) Loan Program** is designed to help small businesspeople own their facilities. This loan program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings, and enables 90-percent financing. The 504 loan program encourages owner-occupied small businesses and long-term commitments. See [www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/cdc504.html](http://www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/cdc504.html).

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**To receive the most timely updates on public policy items, preservation issues, grant announcements and employment opportunities, please send an e-mail to [netnews@preservenys.org](mailto:netnews@preservenys.org).**

**Note:** The resources highlighting residential properties may be pertinent for those commercial sites which are converted houses or other small structures.

**Division of Code Enforcement and Administration,** NYS Department of State, is developing a new building code which will be, generally, more sympathetic to historic structures. Staff will provide updates and technical assistance. See relevant links at [www.dos.state.ny.us](http://www.dos.state.ny.us) or call 518-474-4073.

**New York Main Street Alliance (NYMSA) and Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI)** Established in 1990, CaRDI coordinates NYMSA and offers resources for Main Street development including training and publications. Working with Cornell faculty and staff--including Cornell Cooperative Extension's network of county offices--and other state and regional institutions, CaRDI is a center of dialogue and collaboration addressing needs at the local, state, and national levels. Contact Sylvia Moravia at [sdm9@cornell.edu](mailto:sdm9@cornell.edu); 607-255-2170; 607-255-2231-fax [www.cardi.cornell.edu/](http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/). Community & Rural Development Institute, 43 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

**National Trust for Historic Preservation** operates the National Trust Main Street Center for commercial district revitalization. Services include on-site technical assistance and consulting services; books and training materials; an annual National Main Streets Conference; professional training and certification programs through the National Main Street Institute; and information and research. See the Main Street website: [www.mainstreet.org/](http://www.mainstreet.org/) or the general National Trust website, [www.nationaltrust.org/](http://www.nationaltrust.org/); or contact [mainstreet@nthp.org](mailto:mainstreet@nthp.org); 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; 202-588-6219.

**Business Plans** Municipal Economic Development Departments, Community Loan Funds, Chambers of Commerce or local college Business Department faculty members may offer assistance in developing a business plan or may have information about “incubator” services for new businesses.

**Design Assistance** You may be able to work with design students and professionals through architecture and design programs at local colleges or local chapters of the American Institute of Architects ([www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)); for chapters in NYS, contact 518-449-3334; [aianys@aianys.org](mailto:aianys@aianys.org) or see [www.aianys.org](http://www.aianys.org).

### **Guidance for rehabilitation projects**

The Landmark Society of Western New York has extensive information including their publication **Rehab Rochester**, available at [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org).

**Opportunities Waiting to Happen** is a very useful guide to the adaptive use of vacant buildings and to rehabilitation of any building in general with information on planning, site assessment, market research and implementation. Produced by the NYS Department of State, an online version is available at [www.nyswaterfronts.com](http://www.nyswaterfronts.com); see the guidebooks section under “Improving Your Community.” Some print copies may be available from the DOS Division of Coastal Resources at 518-474-6000.

**PreservationDirectory.com** is an online resource for historic preservation, building restoration and cultural resource management in the United States & Canada. 7017 N. Alma Avenue; Portland, OR 97203; 503-223-4939

**The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation** is produced by the U S Department of the Interior and has detailed guidelines on the accepted practices for

various approaches to preservation work, see [www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_0.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm).

### **Maintenance and Repair**

The **National Park Service** website has an extensive list of resources; a section on “Caring for your historic building,” briefs on preservation issues, technical information and publications. See [www.cr.nps.gov/architecture.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/architecture.htm), [www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/index.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/index.htm) or [www.nps.gov.http://www.cr.nps.gov/buildings.htm](http://www.nps.gov/http://www.cr.nps.gov/buildings.htm)

**Caring for Your Historic House**, National Park Service/Heritage Preservation, Inc. Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1998. Maintenance and guidance on all exterior and interior issues. \$39.95 hardcover; \$24.50 softcover. Heritage Preservation, 1625 K Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20006; 202-634-1422.

**Traditional-Building.com** provides resources for commercial, civic, institutional, and religious building projects including free product literature, product database, suppliers' pages, direct links to suppliers, the Restoration Services Catalog page and a bi-monthly magazine. See [www.traditionalbuilding.com](http://www.traditionalbuilding.com).

### **Original or Older Wood Windows**

The Preservation League strongly advocates for the repair and retention of historic wood windows. Claims for energy savings and maintenance-free vinyl windows have not been validated by evidence. See the following sites:

[www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps), Brief #9  
[www.restorationworksinc.com/whyrestore.ivnu](http://www.restorationworksinc.com/whyrestore.ivnu)  
[www.windowrepair.com/](http://www.windowrepair.com/)

### **Architectural History**

**A Field Guide to American Architecture**, Carole Rifkind, New American Library, 1980; Penguin, revised 1998; ISBN: 0452252245.

**A Field Guide to American Houses**, Virginia and Lee McAlester. Knopf, 1984. Architecture from Native dwellings to the 1940s. Photographs, charts and drawings of “high style” and vernacular examples. Knopf, (hdcvr), \$40.00, ISBN 0-394-73969-8; Random House (pbk), \$24.95, ISBN 0-394-73969-8.

**American Architecture Since 1780**, Marcus Whiffen. MIT Press, 1969. Concise, standard introductions to architectural styles. \$14.95, ISBN 0-262-730979. Two other books by Whiffen include: **American Architecture from 1607 to 1860**, \$16.95, ISBN 0-262-730-693 and **American Architecture From 1860-1976**,

\$16.95, ISBN 0-262-730-707.

**Building Watcher Series** pocket guides from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D. C. (Available through John Wiley & Sons, Inc.): **America's Architectural Roots**, "Ethnic Groups That Built America," 1986, Dell Upton, ed., \$10.95, ISBN 0-471-14349-9. **Master Builders**, "A Guide to Famous American Architects," Diane Maddex, ed., \$10.95, ISBN 0-471-14402-9. **What Style Is It?**, "A Guide to American Architecture," John Poppeliers, et al., 2003, \$17.95, ISBN 0-471-25036-8.

**Discovering the History of Your House and Your Neighborhood**, Betsy J. Green. Santa Monica Press, 2002. Research resources, guidelines and stumbling blocks in the process of documenting buildings and land ownership. \$14.95; ISBN: 1891661248

**Dover Publications** has a catalogue of architecture books : [www.doverpublications.com](http://www.doverpublications.com)

**Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms**, John J. G. Blumenson. W. W. Norton & Co., 1990. \$13.95, ISBN 0-393306100.

**Local Preservation Organizations** may have staff who can assist with technical questions. A few operate an architectural salvage warehouse.

**Adirondack Architectural Heritage** Keeseville, 518-834-9328 [www.aarch.org](http://www.aarch.org)

**Essex Community Heritage Organization** Essex, 518-963-7088 [www.essexny.net](http://www.essexny.net)

**Friends of Historic Kingston** Kingston, 845-339-0720; [www.fohk.org](http://www.fohk.org)

**FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts**, New York City, 212-535-2526 [www.friends-ues.org/](http://www.friends-ues.org/)

**Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation** 212-475-9585 [www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org)

**Heritage Foundation of Oswego, Inc.** Oswego, 315-342-3354;

**Historic Albany Foundation** Albany, 518-465-0876 (office); 518-465-2987 (parts warehouse); [www.historic-albany.org/](http://www.historic-albany.org/)

**Historic Districts Council** New York City, 212-614-9107, [www.hdc.org](http://www.hdc.org)

**Historic Ithaca, Inc.** Ithaca, 607-273-6633 [www.historicithaca.org](http://www.historicithaca.org)

**Historic Saranac Lake** Saranac Lake, 518-891-0971 [www.historicsaranaclake.org](http://www.historicsaranaclake.org)

**Hudson River Heritage** Rhinebeck,

845-876-2474; [www.hudsonriverheritage.org](http://www.hudsonriverheritage.org)

**Landmark Society of Western New York** Rochester, 585-546-7029 [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org)

**Landmark West!** New York City, 212-496-8110 [www.preserve.org/lmwest/](http://www.preserve.org/lmwest/)

**Landmarks Society of Greater Utica** (315) 732-7376; [www.uticalandmarks.org](http://www.uticalandmarks.org)

**Market Street Restoration Agency** Corning, 607-937-5427 [www.corningrestoration.com/](http://www.corningrestoration.com/)

**New York Landmarks Conservancy** New York City, 212-995-5260; [www.nylandmarks.org](http://www.nylandmarks.org)

**Newburgh Preservation Association** Newburgh [www.preservenewburgh.org](http://www.preservenewburgh.org)

**Otsego 2000** Cooperstown, 607-547-8881

**Preservation Association of Central New York** Syracuse, 315-475-0119; [www.pacny.net/](http://www.pacny.net/)

**Preservation Association of the Southern Tier** Binghamton, 607-723-4620; [www.pastny.org](http://www.pastny.org)

**Preservation Buffalo Niagara** Buffalo, 716-852-3300, [www.landmark-niagara.org](http://www.landmark-niagara.org)

**Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation** Saratoga Springs, 518-587-5030 [www.saratogapreservation.org](http://www.saratogapreservation.org)

**Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities**, Cold Spring Harbor, 631-692-4664 [www.splia.org](http://www.splia.org)

**Troy Architectural Program, Inc. (TAP)** Troy, 518-274-3050; [www.tapinc.org/](http://www.tapinc.org/)