

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC)

OVERVIEW AND GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING GRANTS RFP (FY 2024)

These guidelines outline the available funding, eligibility requirements, application requirements, and evaluation criteria for NRTC Planning Grants (FY 2024). This document also serves as a guide for completing a project application in SAGE. Each item listed under the “Application Content” section of this document corresponds directly to a required form in the SAGE application.

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

The available funding is \$438,000 (as of October 2023).

MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF AWARD:

Up to \$50,000 per successful application; one (1) application may be submitted per prospective NRTC neighborhood.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Community-based non-profit organizations that have a formal determination by the Internal Revenue Service of exemption from income taxation (26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3)).

ELIGIBLE NEIGHBORHOODS:

1. Is located in an eligible municipality; the current list can be viewed on the NRTC webpage, at **NRTC Eligible Municipalities:**
<https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/nrtc.shtml>
2. Meets the definition of “eligible neighborhood” as per the revised NRTC Statute (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-490 et seq.);

“Eligible neighborhood” means a) a contiguous area located in one or more municipalities that, at the time of the application to the Department for approval of a neighborhood preservation and revitalization plan, shall be designated by the commissioner based on factors including, but not limited to, population change, non-seasonal housing vacancy rates, total household and child recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or a successor program, poverty levels, unemployment rates, high school completion rates, median household income, property tax rates, and equalized property valuation per capita; or b) an area that (1) is adjacent to a neighborhood that fulfills the requirements of subsection “a” of this definition and has received approval of a neighborhood preservation and revitalization plan pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-494; (2) increases the area of the adjacent eligible neighborhood by no more than 25 percent; and (3) shares similar characteristics as determined by the commissioner or commissioner’s designee.

3. Meets the following neighborhood income targets:
 - At least 50% of the households must be of low and moderate income.
 - At least 25% of the households must be of low income.

“Low income household” means a household whose gross household income is not more than 50 percent of the median gross household income for the region in which the neighborhood is located for households of similar size as determined by the NJ Department of Community Affairs (“Department”).

“Moderate income household” means a household whose gross household income is greater than 50 percent but less than 80 percent of the median gross household income of the region in which the neighborhood is located for households of similar size as determined by the Department.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

NRTC funds may be used solely for costs related to the preparation of a neighborhood plan. These are further defined as follows:

1. Salaries/wages of agency staff involved with plan preparation, for the portion of work time that is applicable.
2. Consultant, approved by DCA, who may be retained to assist with plan preparation.
3. Other costs, whether borne by agency or consultant, that are directly related to plan preparation.

APPLICATION REVIEW:

1. Threshold Review:
 - “Pass”: The applicant **and** neighborhood meet eligibility criteria.
 - “Fail”: The applicant **and/or** the neighborhood fail to meet eligibility criteria.
2. Evaluative Review:
 - Applications that fail Threshold Review will **not** be evaluated.
 - Applications that pass Threshold Review will be evaluated using the criteria found under “Application Rating Criteria” (page 4).

APPLICATION CONTENT:

The project application will contain the following application forms. An applicant must complete and submit this application electronically via SAGE (the Department’s on-line applications and grants system).

1. Statement of Board President/Agency Description: Form to be completed by the President of the Board of Directors/Trustees of your organization. Briefly describe your agency and its ability to implement the proposed project and include your agency’s mission statement. The form must be printed out (click on the “View PDF” button), signed by the Board President and uploaded to the application.

2. Assessment of Need(s):
 - a. Describe the neighborhood for which an NRTC plan would be created (or updated), including: delineation of boundaries; listing of census tracts and census blocks; statistical information.
 - b. Describe why this is an appropriate neighborhood for an NRTC Plan, in terms of its potential for revitalization.
 - c. If this was previously an approved NRTC neighborhood, describe why a new NRTC plan is needed.
3. Neighborhood Population Information: Enter the requested data about the number of households in the neighborhood: low-income; moderate-income; above moderate-income (*previously defined at "Eligible Neighborhoods", #3*).
4. Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience: Provide information about your organization's capacity to carry out the activities of the prospective NRTC plan, and also its community development experience. This should include: staffing, finances, accomplishments and examples of current activities (with and without NRTC funding), and community involvement.
5. Partner Information: Information about EACH organization that will participate in developing the NRTC plan.
6. Attachments to be uploaded to the "Attachments" section of the SAGE application:
 - a. *Neighborhood Map* – clearly identifying boundaries, street names and key features.
 - b. *Letters of support from community* – a minimum of four (4) letters from residents and established civic/community organizations within the target neighborhood.
 - c. *Letter of support from mayor* - a letter from the mayor of the municipality where the target neighborhood is located, which expresses support for this application.
 - d. *Digital Photos* – these should illustrate the existing conditions in the neighborhood. Photos must be labeled for identification, e.g., name of building or street, address, name of park.
 - e. *Resumes* - of key organization staff, professionals and consultants who will be involved in creating the neighborhood plan.
 - f. *Consultant Qualifications – (if applicable)*
 - i. **Part One**: years of experience; professional licenses held; types of clients; success in fulfilling clients' needs. Upload this explanation at "Consultant Qualifications" of the Attachments page.

- ii. **Part Two:** briefly explain why this consultant was chosen and what the consultant’s role will be in the preparation of the Neighborhood Plan. Upload this explanation at “Additional Items should be uploaded here” on the Attachments page.
- g. *Organizational Annual Audit Report* – prepared by a Certified Public Accountant, for the applicant’s most recently completed fiscal year. If this report is not available, contact the NRTC staff (via NRTC@dca.nj.gov for guidance).
- 7. **Other Sources of Funding:** All sources and amounts of funding committed to, or anticipated for, plan preparation (not including NRTC funds).
- 8. **Budget:** All proposed activities will be entered under a single program component (“NRTC Planning Grant”), resulting in one application budget.
- 9. **Documents to be uploaded to the “Certification Sheets” form in SAGE:**
 - a. *Resolution*
 - b. *IRS Determination Letter*
 - c. *Organizational Chart*
 - d. *Insurance certificate regarding “fidelity bond” coverage*

APPLICATION RATING CRITERIA:

- 1. **Neighborhood (15 (or 10) points):**
 - a. *Description* (5 points) – completeness of submitted information (narrative, statistics, map and photos)
 - b. *Appropriateness* (5 points) – sufficiency of presentation regarding its potential for revitalization
 - c. *If there was a previously approved NRTC Plan for this neighborhood* (5 points, if applicable) – sufficiency of presentation for why a new NRTC Plan is needed
- 2. **Organization (12 points):**
 - a. *Staffing* (4 points) – assess narrative information, resumes, partner info (if applicable) and consultant qualifications (if applicable)
 - b. *Finances* (4 points) – assess narrative information and audit report
 - c. *Relevant Community Development Experience* (4 points) – demonstration of sufficient experience, in terms of: accomplishments and current activities (with and without NRTC funds); and community involvement
- 3. **Letters of Support (3 points):**
 - a. *Mayor’s Letter* (1 point).
 - b. *Letters from Residents and Established Community Organizations* (1 point) – minimum of 4 must be submitted.

c. *Statement of Board President/Agency Description* (1 point).

The overall scores from the reviewers will be combined to obtain an average score for each application. Applications will be recommended for approval as follows:

- Neighborhood with a previously-approved NRTC Plan: average score of 18.0 points or better (out of 30 points)
- Neighborhood new to NRTC: average score of 15.0 points or better (out of 25 points)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

- Available by email, phone, and videoconference.
- Email requests for technical assistance to NRTC@dca.nj.gov

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:

The application cycle will be open until the indicated deadline in SAGE (“View available grant opportunities” link).