

Auburn Neighborhood Corner Store - Notice of Funding Opportunity

Purpose

The purpose of the Neighborhood Corner Store program is to support the establishment or expansion of essential corner stores which derive most of their revenues from the sale of food and groceries. This initiative aligns with goals established within the city Comprehensive Plan which aim to “ensure that fresh, local food is equitably accessible to everyone regardless of income or geography” (Objective K.1.1) by “supporting practices that facilitate access to healthy food in residential settings” (Objective K.1.3).

Funding

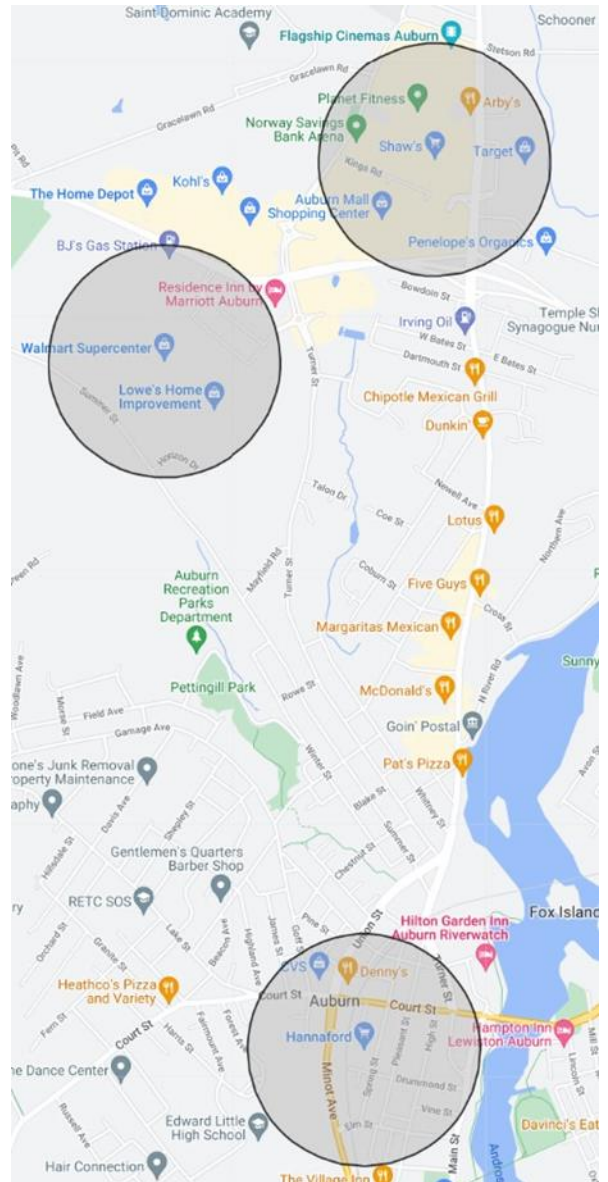
Maximum assistance is \$35,000 per location for approved expenses. All proposals will provide a detailed budget and explain how this expansion or construction will provide a net increase in healthy food options to their neighborhood. Financial assistance will only be available to those projects meeting eligibility requirements and preference will be given to projects that can be completed in a timely manner and make the most quantifiable impact on the local market.

Eligibility

Maine based food retailers (e.g. grocery stores, large convenience stores, cooperatives, etc.) which derive 50+% of their sales from food and groceries are eligible for financial assistance. The funds can be used to upgrade store infrastructure necessary to improve the selection of healthy food offerings or facilitate access to grocery retailers. Only projects located over ¼ mile of a regional or national chain, are eligible. Refer to the exclusion zones mapped to the right.

Eligible requests may include:

- **Funding for equipment and stock improvements which substantially increase fresh produce or for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and/or WIC (Women, Infant, Children) eligible inventories**
 - For both new and existing retailers, improvements should enhance the ability of retailers to offer high quality produce and other healthy foods and serve a broader clientele. This could include the purchase of a refrigeration unit for produce at the front of the store. Marketing and merchandizing assistance should focus on the provision of healthy products or de-emphasis on unhealthy products.



- For new retailers, funding can be requested for capital start-up costs, which include equipment and other retail infrastructure. Funding for marketing/merchandizing assistance can also be requested.

In order to be eligible to receive funds, all property taxes, real and personal, owed on the property that is the subject of the application must be current at the time the application is made. Any property on which there is past due balance for such taxes will be removed from consideration.

Application

Applicants will create an account and apply through the city Community Development Application portal and will provide all necessary documentation. <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/auburnme/participant> Select “Community Development Grant”. Select “Service Provider Grant” under section A4 and Name the Project “Neighborhood Corner Store” under section B1. Applications will be collected until March 1st, at which time only completed application packages will be reviewed. Failure to provide all needed information will result in applications being denied. The city of Auburn reserves the right to reject any application.

The City of Auburn is committed to accessibility for all applicants. For questions or accommodations completing applications contact the Community Development Office at (207) 333-6601 ex.1332 or emailing CDBG@auburnmaine.gov. Arrangements will be made for non-English-speaking persons and persons with special needs for mobility, hearing and visual impairments, homebound or those needing assistance with technology and/or access.

Qualified applications will be accepted on a first-come first-serve basis based on the date of completed application. .

Applications must include the following:

- Detailed description of the market population and current mix of offerings
- Baseline traffic counts or grocery sale data
- Detailed plan to expand or create healthy food offerings
- Approach to improve quality of service & education/marketing of new offerings
- Detailed anticipated increases after expansion
- Job descriptions of any new staff to be hired with grant funds
- Existing infrastructure and matching funds leveraged to meet stated goals
- Summary of data tracking and financial systems used to manage funds
- A detailed budget including all requested and matching funds with supporting documentation
- Narrative describing how the expansion meets the objectives within the city comprehensive plan.

Management and Oversight

- Written Agreement: The city will enter into a written agreement with the selected businesses describing the amounts and uses of funds.
- A grant agreement will be executed in the amount awarded. In the event the business does not meet the conditions detailed within the agreement the funds will be repaid to the city.
- This program will be funded no less than monthly on a reimbursement basis, pending all necessary documentation and reporting.