



## DOWNTOWN HOUSTON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

*The following programs have been utilized in the past for downtown Houston developments. This list is meant to provide information that might potentially be applicable for projects; the reader is cautioned to not assume that these programs will be available for a given project, because assistance will depend on the type of project, location, current funding capability of the entity and program, and support from the board, committee or administrator leading the respective programs.*

### **Houston Downtown Management District**

#### Retail Incentive Grant Program

HDMD has established a retail incentive grant program to stimulate development and diversification of retail through providing tenant improvement subsidies as an economic incentive for retailers to locate downtown. The grant is payable as a reimbursement to property owners and retail tenants for physical improvements that are not removable from the property. Eligible businesses are limited to soft-goods retailers (no bars or restaurants) and must be for-profit, sales-tax-paying businesses. Other requirements include a minimum lease term of five years and street-front orientation and access. For HDMD boundaries, see the current Service Plan at [www.downtowndistrict.org](http://www.downtowndistrict.org).

#### CONTACT:

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Retail Development Coordinator  
Houston Downtown Management District  
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Houston, Texas 77010  
713.650.3022  
[heather@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:heather@downtowndistrict.org)

#### Vertical Gardens Grant Program

Grants may be available for Vertical Gardens and exceptional landscaping concepts. The possibilities for the "exceptional landscape" are broad and could include items such as overhangs that contain planting, such as a trellis, or a structure that protrudes from the façade that contains some kind of ivy, or trained plant material (Wisteria for instance).

#### CONTACT:

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### **Main Street Redevelopment Authority/Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #3**

MSRA and Market Square TIRZ were created to support the revitalization of downtown through joint partnerships and investments in public infrastructure. Potential assisted project costs include assistance with restoration of historic facades, public improvements such as landscaping, lighting, some infrastructure and possible assistance with affordable housing developments. Assistance may be granted for other projects as considerations are made on a case-by-case basis. Please see [www.mainstreettirz.com](http://www.mainstreettirz.com) for area boundaries.

#### **CONTACT:**

Vicki L. Rivers  
Executive Director  
MSRA/Market Square TIRZ  
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### **The City of Houston**

The City of Houston's tax abatement program is currently inactive and is not accepting applications for tax abatements. For questions regarding previous and/or existing tax abatement agreements the following contact is available. For companies inquiring about relocating to Houston, contact the Greater Houston Partnership at [www.houston.org](http://www.houston.org).

The city's tax abatement program is typically used with large office and industrial investments that are new to Houston and include large investments in real property that result in higher property values (investments in tenant improvements therefore would not qualify).

Additional programs being updated include economic development and new market tax credits. Depending on the project, development grants or revenue bond financing may also be available.

#### **CONTACT:**

Tom Mesa  
Finance and Administration  
City of Houston  
611 Walker, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor

Houston, TX 77002  
713.837.9857  
[tom.mesa@cityofhouston.net](mailto:tom.mesa@cityofhouston.net)

For information on Community Development Block Grants, Home Investment Partnership Act and Economic Development Initiative Grants, along with Section 108 loans please contact the City of Houston – Housing and Community Development.

CONTACT:  
Donald Sampley  
Assistant Director  
City of Houston – Housing and Community Development  
P.O. Box 1562  
Houston, TX 77251  
713.868.8300  
[donald.sampley@cityofhouston.net](mailto:donald.sampley@cityofhouston.net)

### Historic Buildings

Incentives are offered through the Planning & Development Department of the City of Houston. A historic building that has been designated as a City of Houston Landmark or Protected Landmark, or has been classified as a “contributing” or “potentially contributing” building (over 50 years of age) that is located within a designated City of Houston Historic District, may qualify for a certain city property tax exemption (of up to 100%) for appropriate renovation or restoration work to the exterior for 15 years but only for work that is approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.

CONTACT:  
G. Randle Pace  
Historical Preservation Officer, Planning & Development Department  
City of Houston  
611 Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, TX 77002  
713.837.7796  
[randy.pace@cityofhouston.net](mailto:randy.pace@cityofhouston.net)

### Brownfield Redevelopment Program

A brownfield is any property where redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. These properties often sit vacant or are underused due to the unknown impact of any contamination. The City of Houston Brownfields Redevelopment Program can assist a qualified developer or purchaser in determining if an environmental concern exists and what may be required to clean it before a decision is even made to buy the property. Currently, the Program focuses on projects that result in urban revitalization by restoring environmentally contaminated land.

The Brownfields Redevelopment Program, through grant funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, makes available free environmental site assessments for qualified properties. These site assessments are available to governmental, non-profit, or private parties that propose to redevelop their site in such a way as to provide a benefit to the community. The Program also provides technical consultation on brownfields environmental assessment and cleanup; coordination with local, state, and federal governmental environmental agencies; and assistance with participation in one of the state voluntary cleanup programs if needed. Information on Program services, site eligibility, and current projects can be viewed online at [www.houstontx.gov/brownfields](http://www.houstontx.gov/brownfields).

The City of Houston is applying for \$500,000 to prepare trainees in brownfield-impacted communities for future employment in the environmental field and to facilitate the inventory and clean up of brownfield sites. The program aims at bringing together community groups, job training organizations, educators, investors, developers and other affected parties to educate brownfields community impacted residents.

**CONTACT:**

Shannon Teasley  
Brownfields Redevelopment Program  
611 Walker Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, TX 77002  
713.837.7978  
Shannon.teasley@cityofhouston.net

**Greater Houston Preservation Alliance**

GHPA, a National Trust Local Partner, is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving the architectural and cultural historic resources of Houston. GHPA works in an advocacy and networking role in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Texas, Texas Historical Commission, Harris County and City of Houston.

**CONTACT:**

Ramona Davis  
Greater Houston Preservation Alliance  
712 Main Street, Suite 110  
Houston, Texas 77002  
713.216.5000  
info@ghpa.org

**Harris County**

The Harris County tax abatement program offers up to 50% abatement for 10 years to qualifying projects. Retail and residential projects are excluded from this

program. Harris County also offers an historic site tax exemption which (depending on the project) includes hotel, office and retail. Depending on the project, development grants, tax credits and other assistance may be available for residential and commercial developments.

CONTACT:

Nancy Powell, Deputy Director  
Harris County Office of Economic Development  
8410 Lantern Point Drive  
Houston, TX 77054  
713.578.2254  
[Nancy.Powell@CSD.HCTX.NET](mailto:Nancy.Powell@CSD.HCTX.NET)

The Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) is a governmental non-profit organization that operates multiple housing programs for the purpose of building single-family affordable housing and active adult-senior housing. Such housing assistance programs are the Housing Choice Voucher Program, Home Ownership Program, Single Residency Occupancy, Infill Housing Development Program and Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

CONTACT:

Guy Rankin IV (assistant is Chantel Allerman)  
CEO and Executive Director  
Harris County Housing Authority  
8410 Lantern Point Drive  
Houston, TX 77054  
713.578.2100  
[Chantel.Allerman@itc.co.harris.tx.us](mailto:Chantel.Allerman@itc.co.harris.tx.us)

### **Texas Historical Commission**

The Texas State Historical Commission is a government entity that assists in identification of historic properties, consideration of National Register nominations, and providing assistance to federal agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector.

The commission administers the *Texas Preservation Trust Fund* (TPTF). Reimbursable grants pay up to one-half of total project costs to help preserve Texas' cultural resources. Project types eligible for grant assistance include archeological sites; commercial buildings; public buildings such as schools, city halls, libraries and museums; unique historic structures such as bridges, water towers, lighthouses and ships; monies for training individuals and organizations about historic resources and preservation techniques. Grant funds typically range from \$2,500 to \$30,000, and are awarded for acquisition, development, planning and education.

CONTACT:  
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Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711-2276  
512.463.6094  
[lisa.harvell@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:lisa.harvell@thc.state.tx.us)

Through *The National Trust for Historic Preservation*, financial assistance is available to nonprofit organizations, public agencies, for-profit companies, and individuals involved in preservation-related projects. For those restoring or preserving income-producing properties, potential financial assistance may include: National Trust Loan Funds (NTLF), National Trust Community Investment Corporation Funds (NTCIC), Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit (provides a federal income tax credit equal to 20% of the cost of rehabilitating a historic building for commercial use/non-historic buildings built before 1936 qualify for a 10% tax credit) and Transportation Enhancements Funding.

- **National Trust Loan Funds (NTLF)**  
The NTLF specializes in predevelopment, acquisition, mini-permanent, bridge and rehabilitation loans for residential, commercial and public use projects. Eligible borrowers include nonprofit organizations, revitalization organizations and real estate developers working in certified Main Street communities, local, state or regional governments, and for profit developers of older and/or historic buildings.
- **National Trust Community Investment Corporation (NTCIC)**  
The NTCIC is the for-profit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The corporation invests in certified rehabilitation projects that qualify for federal and state historic tax credits and the New Markets Tax credit. NTCIC helps revitalizing downtowns and business districts nationwide by providing equity to the rehabilitation of landmark commercial properties.
- **Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit** (via National Park Service)  
This initiative provides a federal income tax credit equal to 20% of the cost of rehabilitating a historic building for commercial use/non-historic buildings built before 1936 qualify for a 10% tax credit. The tax credit is available only for income-producing properties. For example, office, retail, hotel and apartments are eligible. The eligible project costs generally must exceed the value of the building itself at the beginning of the project.
- **Transportation Enhancements Funding**

Historic resources have benefited from transportation enhancement money for landscaping, land acquisition, historic bridge and road activities, and streetscapes in historic commercial district.

CONTACT:

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Project Reviewer  
Texas Historical Commission  
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Austin, Texas 78711-2276  
512.463.8952  
[Brandee.loughlin@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:Brandee.loughlin@thc.state.tx.us)

- **Community Development Financial Institutions Funds (CDFI)** (U.S. Department of Treasury)

The CDFI Fund was created for the purpose of promoting economic revitalization and community development through investment in and assistance to community development financial institutions (CDFIs). The CDFI Fund achieves its purpose by promoting access to capital and local economic growth in the following ways:

- through its CDFI Program by directly investing in, supporting and training CDFIs that provide loans, investments, financial services and technical assistance to underserved populations and communities;
- through its New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program by providing an allocation of tax credits to community development entities (CDEs) which enable them to attract investment from the private-sector and reinvest these amounts in low-income communities;
- through its Bank Enterprise Award (BEA) Program by providing an incentive to banks to invest in their communities and in other CDFIs; and
- through its Native Initiatives, by taking action to provide financial assistance, technical assistance, and training to Native CDFIs and other Native entities proposing to become or create Native CDFIs.

Ineligible projects include residential rental property and stores where the principal business is the sale of alcoholic beverages.

With the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), the CDFI has been provided with \$3 billion of New Market Tax Credit allocation authority divided equally between fiscal year 2008 and 2009. In addition to the annual appropriation, legislation has designated an additional \$90 million to the fund. These allocations will attract private-sector investments to be used for the recovery and redevelopment of the Gulf Opportunity Zone.

**CONTACT:**

Matt Josephs  
Deputy Director for Policy and Programs  
Community Development Financial Institutions Fund  
United States Department of the Treasury  
601 Thirteenth Street, NW, Suite 200, South,  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.622.9254

**Other Sources**

- **The City of Houston's One Stop Business Center**  
CONTACT:  
900 Bagby Street, Public Level (Between McKinney and Walker)  
Houston, Texas 77002  
832.939.0954  
[www.houstontx.gov/onestop](http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop)
- **Houston Minority Business Council**  
CONTACT:  
Three Riverway  
Suite 555  
Houston, TX 77056  
713.271.7805  
[www.hmbc.org](http://www.hmbc.org)
- **The Houston Small Business Development Corporation**  
CONTACT:  
Houston Small Business Development Corporation  
5330 Griggs Road  
Houston, Texas 77021  
713.845.2400  
[www.hdbinc.org](http://www.hdbinc.org)
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**  
CONTACT:  
1301 Fannin, Suite 2200  
Houston, TX 77002  
713.718.3199  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)