

FY27 Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative Application Guide

Introduction

On October 1, 2024, Governor Moore signed an [Executive Order](#) establishing Reinvest Baltimore, a coordinated effort to align the city, state, community, private and philanthropic partners' initiatives into a unified strategy to move at least 5,000 vacant properties into homeownership or other positive outcomes over the next five years. Reinvest Baltimore includes the [Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Council](#) (BVRC) and the [Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative](#) (BVRI).

The BVRC brings together state, city, corporate, community and philanthropic partners to align funding, data, and delivery systems behind a shared goal: transform the city's vacant properties into rows of safe stable housing on thriving blocks and build strong neighborhoods that can sustainably attract private investment. To accomplish that outcome, Governor Moore and the Maryland General Assembly are deploying a historic level of \$50 million annually through the BVRI funding program to eliminate vacant and underutilized properties in Baltimore City.

"Baltimore's vacant property crisis is an issue that cannot wait – because in order to have a strong state, you must have a strong housing market, where people own more than they owe," said Gov. Moore. "I want to thank all the partners who raised their hand to be a part of this work that will open paths to work, wages, and wealth for Baltimoreans and grow our state's economy. The Baltimore Renaissance is here — and just getting started."

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative

On April 1, 2025, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department or DHCD) [announced the redesign of the FY26 BVRI round](#), prioritizing and aligning funding to abate vacant building notices (VBNs) on blocks identified by non-profit community development organizations (CDOs).

With this FY27 BVRI funding round, DHCD is again asking Baltimore City's CDOs to describe their strategy for eliminating vacant property and strengthening neighborhoods within a defined target area. While this FY27 BVRI round will continue to focus on scaling the renovation of vacant buildings on clusters of contiguous blocks, funds may also support the redevelopment of vacant lots for housing, mixed-use projects and green space to complement those efforts. The strategy should build from community strengths and assets and achieve whole block outcomes. Whole block outcomes occur when every property on a block has a productive use.

Additionally, DHCD will continue to make targeted investments in home repair programs, placemaking, streetscaping improvements, and related projects, through its other state funding programs.

Awarded organizations will need to be nimble, efficient, and fast. The Department and its partners have a strong sense of urgency to replace vacant properties with catalytic investments that propel the health of Baltimore City neighborhoods. Organizations that can scale up their production will gain more ongoing BVRI investment over time as DHCD aims to pay for performance.

BVRI investments will align with [values](#) agreed upon by the Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Council (BVRC).

DHCD Reinvestment Priorities

The Department strives for all Marylanders to live, work and prosper in communities that are affordable, lovable and just. Great places—lovable places—result from consistent targeted investment in locally-driven community reinvestment planning.

To support the core objectives of Maryland DHCD, the Division of Neighborhood Revitalization will prioritize revitalization projects that are part of a strategic community plan to:

- Increase the production of mixed-income, middle-market and affordable housing, particularly near transit. DHCD is interested in supporting innovative development approaches—such as modular and off-site construction—to accelerate housing production.
- Increase household and generational wealth building through homeownership, legacy homeowner renovations, and small business development.
- Accelerate the elimination of vacant properties, particularly in Baltimore City.
- Create safer, more appealing public spaces and community facilities that expand access to community services and strengthen neighborhood cohesion.
- Revitalize Maryland's diverse Main Streets, downtowns and commercial cores through projects that: enhance their unique physical, visual, and historic character; improve economic vitality by supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones; and helping small businesses and entrepreneurs connect to resources.

The Department will give additional consideration to projects that address the overarching priorities of the Moore-Miller Administration, including projects that:

- Invest in designated [Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households \(ENOUGH\)](#) areas, which represent rural, suburban and urban communities that have been historically impacted by barriers to economic mobility.
- Invest in designated [Just Communities](#) where all Marylanders, regardless of background, have access to fair housing and economic stability and opportunity, righting the wrongs of the past.

Whole Block Outcomes

To achieve transformational scale, the Department is pursuing a [whole-blocks whole-neighborhoods approach](#)—concentrating coordinated investment in a timely manner across housing, infrastructure, commercial corridors, and green space and other amenities to create visible, market-shifting impact.

Whole blocks strategy addresses every vacant property on contiguous prioritized blocks within a close timeframe and ensures that other homeowner preservation and comprehensive revitalization projects attract new residents and benefit existing ones.

Creating whole blocks and whole neighborhoods includes:

- Eliminating deteriorating structures that depress property values
- Preserving and enhancing legacy homeownership
- Implementing placemaking improvements
- Preserving and growing a walk-to-services and -retail environment
- Fostering collaborations that promote homeownership counseling, estate planning, and homeowner tax credit utilization
- Pursuing strategies that create mixed-income communities

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- Community-based development organizations (CDOs) with a track record of completing the rehabilitation of vacant property and/or infill new construction projects.
- CDOs may have sub-recipients: development partners that can scale up the pace of rehab to meet the opportunity and need.

Eligible Geography

[Sustainable Community Areas](#) with special consideration given to projects in the [Baltimore City Vacancy Reduction Priority Geographies](#), which includes the Impact Investment Areas.

Eligible Activities

The Department's investment priority remains the renovation of residential properties with a city-issued vacant building notice (VBN) with an emphasis on homeownership outcomes. Funds may also support the redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings and vacant lots for housing, mixed-use projects and green space to complement those efforts. Eligible activities include:

- Acquisition, stabilization, and renovation of vacant buildings, prioritizing those with a city issued vacant building notice (VBN). DHCD's intent is to greatly and quickly reduce longstanding deteriorating vacant properties and VBNs; it is not the Department's intent to support acquisition of occupied properties.
- Vacant lot acquisition and aggregation for the purpose of new infill housing construction.
- Vacant lot acquisition and aggregation for community open space.
- Urgent demolition of properties that pose a community health risk. Demolition will also be considered when it furthers a near-term redevelopment project on the site.
- Eligible activities also include architectural and engineering, site infrastructure, and site development.

Financial Assistance

Forms of financial include, but may not be limited to:

- Renovation and new construction loans or lines of credit to be repaid through home sales or refinance into permanent financing for rental projects.
- Grant funds to fill the gap between total development costs and sale prices.
- Credit enhancement to leverage private capital.

Application Training

Application training will be offered via webinar. See the [BVRI website](#) to obtain more information and training documents. Once training is complete, a training recording and step-by-step application instructions will be posted on the website.

Submission of Application

Applications will be submitted exclusively through this [Survey 123 platform](#). No paper applications will be accepted. The application will not be available in DHCD's IGX Project Portal. Please be sure to use the link above to find and complete the application.

Deadline for Submission

Applications including all necessary attachments must be submitted by 11:59 pm on April 1, 2026. DHCD will be available for application support throughout this period.

Application Review

Application Scoring

- Organization Experience and Development Capacity: 30 points
- Whole-Block Redevelopment Strategy and Program Alignment: 30 points
- Vacant Property Pipeline and Production Readiness: 25 points

- Budget and Financing: 15 points

Applications that include incomplete property spreadsheets and are missing partner letters and other required information may not be considered for funding.

Additional Considerations

Projects located in [ENOUGH](#) and [Just Communities](#) areas will receive up to 10 bonus points each.

Site Visits and Follow-up Discussion

During the application review process, the review teams may make visits and/or hold meetings with applicants. In addition, applicants may be contacted by the Department for follow-up discussions prior to awards.

Historic Preservation Consultation

All capital projects receiving State financial assistance are subject to the Maryland Historical Trust Act, which requires State agencies to consider the effect their funding will have on historic resources. The Department has a Programmatic Agreement in effect with the Maryland Historical Trust and initiates historic preservation compliance reviews after awards are made.

Required Organization Documents

All CDO applicants are required to submit their By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, Board Roster, Annual Report, IRS Letter of Determination, Financial Audit, Operating Budget, Profit & Loss Statement, and Balance Sheet. Applicants will also be required to sign and submit a [Public Disclosure Authorization](#).

Post-Award Requirements

DHCD Reporting

DHCD will measure people- and place-based metrics for each location selected for an award, which may include the following: neighborhood population, households, racial and ethnic composition, childhood poverty rate, vacancy rate, household median income, homeownership rate, median home sales price, unemployment rate, permit activity, tax assessments and revenue, resident employment, cost burden for renters and homeowners.

Awardees may also be asked to report demographic data for beneficiaries of BVRI funding, including homeowners and renters who benefit from completed development projects.

CDO Cohort Meetings

Awardees may also be asked to participate in regular convenings of CDOs receiving BVRI funding. These convenings will elevate shared issues and solutions to implementing BVRI and other funding to redevelop vacant property and achieve whole blocks outcomes; ensure CDO experiences shape BVRI policy and program design; and allow MD DHCD to provide timely updates on program design and implementation. These convenings will also engage CDOs around relevant topics including the implementation of whole blocks strategy; local hiring; attracting homebuyers; and connecting legacy residents with support programs.

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