Zombie and Vacant Property Remediation/ Prevention Initiative for New York Municipalities

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is making $13 million in grants to municipalities across New York to help them address housing vacancy and blight, with an emphasis on "zombie" property prevention and enforcement. Zombies are homes abandoned by owners under the threat of foreclosure but for which the process has yet to be completed. It can take years for them to move through to resolution, and in the mean time, properties deteriorate and drag down the surrounding area.

The LISC grant funds are being made available as a result of a bank settlement agreement negotiated by New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman.

What municipalities are eligible for the new LISC grants?

Cities, towns and villages that have at least 5,000 residents and more than 100 vacant properties will be invited to apply. Grants are expected to range in size from $75,000 to $350,000, based on the size of the community, the scale of the problem and an evaluation of the proposed use of funds.

Check the list of eligible cities below.

Why is this funding needed now?

The New York State Abandoned Property Neighborhood Relief Act of 2016, signed by the governor in June, provides much-needed direction for how to deal with zombie properties—requiring banks and other mortgagees to maintain vacant and abandoned properties during the foreclosure process. But, municipalities need funding to implement the various parts of the new law and effectively partner with the state on these issues, as well as to help prevent zombies in the future. These grants will help them do all of that, and enable municipalities to better help struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure...

What kinds of programs will these grants support?

LISC is not prescribing program specifics and is encouraging innovative plans that can also serve as models for other communities around the country. Because prevention is so critical, all applicants must include strategies for connecting at-risk homeowners to services like the New York Attorney General's Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) and Mortgage Assistance Program (MAP) as well as to other foreclosure assistance programs.

Examples of how municipalities might use funds include:

- Assist homeowners who have abandoned their properties with mortgage modifications and, if that is not feasible, facilitate deeds-in-lieu of foreclosure or short sales.
- Create sustainable programs, like a vacant property task force, to coordinate input from local stakeholders and develop action plans to remediate blight.
- Develop mapping projects to build a database of vacant and zombie properties as a basis for coordinated enforcement with state agencies.
- Build the capacity of municipal offices to better enforce local housing codes related to vacant properties.
- Research and develop innovative local policies that address housing vacancy and blight.

What is the process to apply?

LISC is issuing an invitation-only RFP to approximately 100 municipalities including specifics about how to submit an application. It is possible there will be a subsequent round of invitations, depending on the success of this initial program. The application deadline for the current round is August 16, 2016 at 5 p.m.

Why LISC?

LISC has been working on the country's most challenging community issues for more than three decades, with a particular expertise in building and preserving housing and creating economic opportunity in low-income neighborhoods—including work in both urban and rural communities across New York. Our headquarters is here as are two significant local program offices, in New York City and Buffalo. Our Rural LISC partnerships support communities in Western and Central New York.

On the foreclosure front, LISC has been deeply involved in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and has been working closely with attorneys general in several states regarding effective use of foreclosure settlement funds. We collaborate with neighborhood nonprofits on both foreclosure mitigation and prevention, and are funding home repair programs that help homeowners upgrade at-risk properties and improve their communities. Learn more about our housing priorities.

Need more background on zombie properties?

- NY statewide hotline for zombie homes is established
- Mayors urge action on zombie properties

For more information, contact Helene Caloir, director of LISC's New York State Housing Stabilization Fund, at hcaloir@lisc.org

List of eligible areas

These are the 100 municipalities that have been invited to apply for the Zombie and Vacant Properties Remediation and Prevention Initiative. For this first round they are the municipalities, with populations over 5,000, most affected by the vacant property problem.

Town Of Adams	Village Of Hamburg	Town Of Oyster Bay
Village Of Adams	Town Of Hempstead	Village Of Patchogue
City Of Albany	Village Of Hempstead	City Of Peekskill
Village Of Albion	Town Of Herkimer	City Of Plattsburgh
Town Of Amherst	City Of Hornell	Village Of Potsdam
Village Of Amityville	Town Of Huntington	City Of Poughkeepsie
City Of Amsterdam	Village Of Ilion	Town Of Queensbury
Village Of Aplachin	Town Of Islip	City Of Rensselear
City Of Auburn	City Of Ithaca	Town Of Riverhead
Town Of Babylon	City Of Jamestown	City Of Rochester
Town Of Bethlehem	Village Of Johnson City	City Of Rome
City Of Binghamton	City Of Johnstown	City Of Salamanca
Town Of Brookhaven	City Of Kingston	Village Of Saranac Lake
City Of Buffalo	Town Of Liberty	City Of Saratoga Springs
Town Of Carmel	Village Of Liberty	Town Of Saugerties
Village Of Carthage	Village Of Lindenhurst	City Of Schenectady
Town Of Cheektowaga	City Of Lockport	Town Of Seneca Falls
Town Of Chester	City Of Long Beach	Town Of Sidney
Town Of Clarkstown	Village Of Malone	Village Of Sidney
Town Of Cobleskill	Village Of Massena	Town Of Smithtown
Village Of Cobleskill	Village Of Mastic Beach	Town Of Southampton
City Of Cohoes	Village Of Medina	City Of Syracuse
Town Of Colonie	City Of Middletown	Town Of Ticonderoga
Town Of Corinth	Village Of Monticello	City Of Tonawanda
Village Of Corinth	City Of Mount Vernon	City Of Troy
City Of Cortland	Town Of New Windsor	City Of Utica
City Of Dunkirk	New York City	Village Of Valley Stream
City Of Elmira	City Of Newburgh	Town Of Vestal
Village Of Endicott	City Of Niagara Falls	Village Of Wappingers Falls
Village Of Farmingdale	Town Of North Hempstead	City Of Watertown
Village Of Freeport	City Of North Tonawanda	Town Of West Seneca
City Of Fulton	City Of Norwich	Village Of Westbury
City Of Geneva	City Of Ogdensburg	City Of White Plains
City Of Glen Cove	City Of Olean	Village Of Williamsville
City Of Gloversville	City Of Oneonta	Town Of Wilna
Town Of Gouverneur	City Of Oswego	City Of Yonkers
Town Of Greece	Village Of Oswego	
Town Of Hamburg	Town Of Oswego (Villages Of)	