



Loudonville Downtown Dining Expansion Grant Program

Presented by the Mohican Area Growth Foundation (MAGF)
Program Guidelines (2025–2026)

1) Program Overview

The Loudonville Downtown Dining Expansion Grant Program, administered by the Mohican Area Growth Foundation (MAGF), supports the **creation or expansion of full-service restaurants** in **Downtown Loudonville, Ohio**. The goals are to increase foodservice options for residents and visitors, extend **evening activation**, and strengthen the hospitality ecosystem and vibrancy of the downtown district.

Downtown-Only Scope. This program is restricted to projects located **within the defined Downtown Loudonville boundaries** (see **§3 Eligible Area**).

Board Discretion. To ensure the program meets its revitalization goals, the **MAGF Board** may exercise reasonable discretion to interpret terms, prioritize catalytic projects, and make final award decisions.

2) Program Structure

- **Total Program Budget: \$80,000**
- **Grant Match: 80% MAGF match** (20% applicant contribution)
- **Minimum Total Project Size: \$10,000**
- **Maximum Reimbursement: Up to \$80,000 per location**

Reimbursement Model: Awards are **reimbursement-based**. Funds are released after documentation and verification of installed, eligible improvements at the downtown address (see **§10 Disbursement & Verification**).

3) Eligible Area

Projects must be located **within Downtown Loudonville** bounded by:

- **North:** Butler Street
- **South:** Bustle Street
- **East:** Pleasant Drive
- **West:** Mount Vernon Avenue

A simple boundary map will be published with the application materials. MAGF may use reasonable discretion on edge-case addresses that functionally participate in downtown.

4) Working Definition: Full-Service Dining

For purposes of this program, a “**full-service**” restaurant is a public-facing dining establishment that generally includes the elements below (**with flexibility at the MAGF Board’s discretion**):

Core Elements

1. **Dinner-appropriate menu prepared on-site.** A varied menu of cook-prepared hot foods suitable for dinner (beyond pre-packaged snacks or reheats).
2. **On-premises dine-in seating.** Tables/chairs and guest amenities (e.g., restrooms) for regular sit-down service.
3. **Recurring evening meal service.** Open to the public for dinner on a regular, predictable schedule (seasonality and small storefront realities may be considered by the Board).

Service Models (Eligible)

- **Table service** (server-led)
- **Counter service** with bussing and **reusable dinnerware** (or equivalent)
- **Hybrid** approaches that deliver a comparable sit-down dinner experience

Kitchen Capacity

- Code-compliant kitchen and equipment sufficient to produce the approved menu (e.g., hood/ventilation or equivalent per health/building code).

Qualifying Examples

- Sit-down/bistro/family-style restaurants; regional/ethnic concepts; steakhouses; gastropubs **with substantive dinner menus**; market/food-hall **anchor tenants** that independently meet the dinner hours, seating, and menu criteria.

Not Considered Full-Service (illustrative)

- Beverage-only concepts (e.g., coffee/taproom/wine bar) **without** a substantive dinner menu and dine-in service
- Carry-out/ghost kitchens **without** dine-in seating
- Limited-service lunch-only delis/snack bars
- Short-term pop-ups (< 6 months committed operation), unless part of a Board-approved accelerator with a defined path to full-service

Verification for Program Purposes

- Final menu, an operating plan describing evening meal service, floor plan/layout, permits/inspections, equipment list (as applicable), and photographs of the completed fit-out. For food/market halls, at least **one** tenant must satisfy this definition with operating agreements ensuring the evening meal service and seating.

Interpretation: The **MAGF Board** retains discretion to interpret edge cases. These criteria provide practical guidance to ensure vibrant, evening-active dining downtown.

5) Eligibility & Access

5.1 Applicants Must

- Propose a project that **establishes or expands a full-service, public-facing dining operation** at an address **inside the Eligible Area**.
- Be a permitted use and comply with all zoning, building, health, and licensing requirements.
- Demonstrate **site control** (ownership or an executed lease/LOI) sufficient to complete the project and operate.

5.2 Who May Apply (Access & Partnerships)

- **Restaurant operators** (new or existing) opening or expanding a full-service concept downtown.
- **Property owners/landlords** improving a downtown space to accommodate a **committed** full-service tenant (requires executed lease or LOI naming the operator).
- **Developers/master tenants** sponsoring a multi-tenant **food/market hall** that includes **at least one** full-service restaurant with evening meal service and dine-in seating.
- **Bars/taverns** upgrading to **full-service** by installing a commercial kitchen and substantive dinner menu.
- **Cafés/bakeries/coffeehouses** expanding to **full-service** by adding dinner service and seating capacity.
- **Nonprofit or public-private entities** that will own the improvements and **contract with** a qualified full-service operator for public service at the site.

Ineligible Business Types (illustrative): Snack shops, fast-food chains, mobile food trucks, or concepts outside the Eligible Area.

6) Eligible Uses of Funds

All reimbursed costs must be **fixed, non-removable** improvements or equipment **installed at the downtown project address**. Examples include:

- Commercial kitchen hood equipment with fire suppression
- Commercial ovens, cooking ranges, sinks, and grease traps
- Commercial refrigeration, food-holding, and warming units
- Improvements related to outdoor dining
- **Interior leasehold improvements** to expand full-service dining (infrastructure, code-driven upgrades)
- **Non-removable building improvements** (infrastructure, flooring, partitions, lighting, millwork, etc.)

6.1 Ineligible Uses

- Real estate purchases or rent
 - Soft costs (permits, design, consulting)
 - Removable fixtures or furnishings
 - Work started **before** grant award (with exceptions granted by the MAGF Board)
 - Routine repairs not tied to expanded full-service capacity
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7) Application Timeline

- **Program Launch (applications accepted): November 1, 2025** at 9:00 a.m. ET
- **Priority Review Window: Nov 1, 2025 – Jan 31, 2026** (rolling approvals; earlier submissions encouraged)
- **Final Application Deadline: May 1, 2026** at 5:00 p.m. ET (or until funds are depleted)
- **Award Notifications:** Within ~60 days of a **complete** application during the rolling window; by **May 31, 2026** for final-deadline submissions
- **Project Completion Target: December 31, 2026**
- **Reimbursement Package Due:** Within **45 days** of project completion and no later than **January 31, 2027**

The **MAGF Board** may modify these dates or re-open the window depending on funding and downtown priorities.

8) Application & Review Process

1. **Pre-Application Consultation (optional).** Meet with MAGF staff to review concept and fit.
 2. **Submit Application** via growmohican.org with required attachments: project narrative, contractor estimates, business plan, timeline, site control documentation (deed/lease/LOI), drawings or schematics (if available).
 3. **Review.** The **MAGF Board** serves as the **review committee** and evaluates applications using the published scoring rubric and these guidelines.
 4. **Award Determination.** The **MAGF Board** is the **final decision-maker** for all awards and conditions.
 5. **Grant Agreement.** Agreement will detail the approved scope, eligible cost categories, documentation, and any conditions tied to disbursement.
 6. **Construction & Inspections.** Complete work, obtain required permits/inspections, and document eligible costs.
 7. **Reimbursement.** Submit proof of completion and paid invoices; MAGF processes reimbursement consistent with the approved budget and any adjustments noted below.
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9) Scoring System (100 Points)

Projects are evaluated on a **100-point** rubric designed to **reward both new restaurants and existing downtown operators who meaningfully expand capacity and evening activity.**

1. **Downtown Catalytic Impact & Activation** — up to **25 pts**
Streetscape activation, foot traffic, adaptive reuse of historic storefronts, and fit with the district's mix.
2. **Evening Activation & Operating Plan** — up to **15 pts**

A clear plan to provide regular evening meal service and promote downtown activity (e.g., programming, partnerships, marketing).

3. **Scale of Fixed, Non-Removable Investment** — up to **20** pts
 - **> \$100,000** eligible investment: **20** pts
 - **\$50,000 – \$99,999**: **15** pts
 - **< \$50,000**: **10** pts
4. **Operator Track Record & Capacity** — up to **10** pts
Experience operating full-service concepts; strength of plan, staffing, and financial readiness.
5. **Expansion Type (choose the single highest-scoring path)** — up to **20** pts
 - **New to Downtown**: Establishes a full-service restaurant in a space that did not previously host one (or has been long-vacant/underutilized). **Up to 20** pts
 - **Existing Downtown Operator Expansion**: Materially upgrades to full-service **or** significantly expands evening meal service/capacity at an existing downtown site. **Up to 20** pts
6. **Readiness & Timeline** — up to **10** pts
Site control, permitting path, matching funds identified, realistic construction and opening schedule.

Discretion in Scoring & Awards: The **MAGF Board** (serving as the review committee) may apply reasonable discretion and **deviate from point totals** to reflect catalytic impact, project readiness, geographic balance within downtown, historic building reuse, or other public benefits.

10) Disbursement & Verification (Reimbursement-Based)

- **Documentation Required:** paid invoices/receipts, proof of payment, permits/inspections, final menu and posted hours, floor plan/layout, equipment list (as applicable), and **photographs** of installed, fixed improvements at the downtown address.
 - **Verification:** MAGF verifies completion and eligibility of costs prior to releasing funds.
 - **Adjustments:** If the approved scope changes materially or is partially completed, the **award amount may be adjusted at disbursement** to reflect eligible, verified costs.
 - **Timing:** Reimbursements are typically processed after submission of a complete, verified reimbursement package.
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11) Program Administration & Board Discretion

The **MAGF Board** (serving as the review committee) reserves discretion to:

1. **Interpret program terms** (e.g., “full-service,” “expansion,” “public-facing,” “site control”) and determine eligibility case-by-case.
 2. **Prioritize or adjust awards** to maximize downtown impact, avoid over-concentration, or address strategic needs (while staying within the published maximum per location).
 3. **Condition awards** on reasonable requirements (e.g., minimum dinner hours, storefront activation, maintenance/finish standards).
 4. **Modify timelines** or consider late/rolling applications if funds remain.
 5. **Deny applications** due to risk, feasibility, or reputational concerns, even if minimum criteria are met.
 6. **Amend these guidelines** prospectively, publish updates, and apply them to future decisions.
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12) Contact

Mohican Area Growth Foundation

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Appendix: Quick Eligibility Snapshot

- **Where?** Inside the defined **Downtown Loudonville** boundaries (§3).
- **What?** Fixed, non-removable improvements that expand or enable **full-service** dinner operations (§4, §6).
- **Who?** Operators, property owners with a committed tenant, developers/master tenants, and qualifying nonprofits (§5.2).
- **How much?** Up to **\$80,000** reimbursement per location with an **80/20** match (§2).
- **How decided?** 100-point rubric plus Board discretion (§9, §11).