

## Downtown Revitalization Initiative

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### Application Template

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Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will be received by the Regional Councils. Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications must be received by the New York City Regional Economic Development Council by **4:00 PM on June 14, 2017**. Submit your application as a Word Document to [NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov).

#### **BASIC INFORMATION**

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: New York City

Municipality Name: City of New York

Downtown Name: Kingsborough Community College : Sheepshead Bay/ Manhattan Beach

County: Kings County

Vision for Downtown. Provide a brief statement of the municipality's vision for downtown revitalization.

Higher education and workforce development are key to the revitalization of many Brooklyn communities, and Kingsborough Community College not only plays a formative role in job training and placement, but also in the development of individuals towards civic engagement. The college is situated on Sheepshead Bay and the campus infrastructure supports a well-rounded curriculum including a library, a museum, a beach, and an urban farm. In order to raise the academic profile of the college, we propose the development of an Honors College on campus that would attract students and provide them a competitive edge for the job market or for transfer towards more advanced degrees. In so doing, the college fulfills its mission to provide many underserved New Yorkers the means towards a high quality education and consequently, upward mobility.

Justification. Provide an overview of the downtown, highlighting the area's defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

Kingsborough is the only community college serving Brooklyn, with 80% of students residing within the borough. The college provides 52 academic curricula with programs such as Nursing, Culinary Arts, Engineering, and Tourism and Hospitality, to name a few. The college also provides programs that support student development such as the Fatherhood Academy and the Honors Program. As such, Kingsborough was named one of the top four community colleges in America by the Aspen Institute in 2013.

The opportunity for success is the motivating factor of the American Dream, and the Honors Program at Kingsborough Community College provides a platform for students to pursue higher levels of academic development and engagement through enrichment activities and collaborative research endeavors. The program motivates students to excel by catalyzing mentoring relationships with faculty, and supports other college-wide initiatives where student leaders play crucial roles in developing a sense of community. We seek investment from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative to enhance the Honors Program's capacity to serve students and the community through the construction of an Honors College within Kingsborough.

## **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

This section should be filled out with reference to the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI as set forth in the DRI program description.

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be concentrated and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Attach a map that clearly delineates the downtown neighborhood.

The downtown neighborhood is the 70-acre Kingsborough Community College campus, which is bordered by Sheepshead Bay and Manhattan Beach Park on the southern tip of Brooklyn.

- 2) Catchment area.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.

The college enrolls 16,000 students and offers fall, winter, spring, and summer programs. The college attracts high-school graduates and non-traditional students such as veterans, retirees, and provides services for students with disabilities. The college primarily serves the Brooklyn borough's 1.6 million residents and enrolls students from Bay Ridge to Canarsie, neighborhoods that make up a diverse and sizeable catchment area. The college is poised to serve a number of students receiving the new Excelsior Scholarship that benefits low-income New Yorkers.

- 3) Past Investment, future investment potential.** Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior or catalyze future private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

As part of CUNY, Kingsborough receives state and city funds that are used to develop and maintain the infrastructure of the college and provide for the excellence in academic and non-academic programs offered to students. Kingsborough faculty and staff continuously attract grants and donations to improve academic offerings and student programs, and the Honors College may be leveraged to attract federal grants.

Development of an Honors College will expand services that support highly motivated students. An Honors College will facilitate the recruitment of a cohort of students from synergistic programs such as the Excelsior Scholarship, the CUNY Accelerated Studies in Associates Program (ASAP), the Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP), to name a few. In order to maintain these scholarships, a student must complete 30 credits per year and maintain good academic standing. The Honors College will provide student support and intervention leading to successful completion of these state-sponsored degree programs.

The Honors College will increase student enrollment, which in turn enhances the private investment opportunities in the area. In the past two years, new businesses have sprung up outside the college on Oriental Boulevard, including restaurants such as Subway, Tozt, and Chillax Café. Businesses near the Sheepshead Bay, Brighton Beach, and Coney Island train stations will also benefit from an increased student enrollment as students use these as transportation hubs.

- 4) Recent or impending job growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Brooklyn is one of the largest job hubs in the country for high-tech and middle-class employment. The number of jobs in Brooklyn jumped 11.6% in 2015, with middle-wage jobs such as teachers and office workers outpacing that of the high and low end of the pay scale. Investment in an Honors College will attract and increase graduation rates of students, and their accomplishments will help breed success in the college and the community.

The Honors College will provide students a competitive edge in the job market and avail students opportunities to gain added credentials to apply for scholarships. A dedicated space for academic excellence will also serve Honors students from high schools in the area interested in pursuing higher education. Additionally, the Honors College would serve as a resource for local businesses to hire college interns and recruit fresh talent.

- 5) Attractiveness of physical environment.** Identify the properties or characteristics that the downtown possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The campus is an attractive learning environment, which is bordered by water including the Kingsborough Beach. The campus houses various art and sculptural pieces and sponsors events for the local community including a free summer music festival and a performing arts festival. The college serves both traditional and non-traditional students, and minority enrollment is 69% of the student body. A large number of students (83%) receive financial aid, with 75% low-income qualifying for Pell Grants.

The Honors College is envisioned as a learning-centered space that is synergistic with Achieving the Dream, a nationwide reform movement towards student success, with the goal of promoting equity and excellence for underrepresented students. The Honors College will not merely recruit Honors students, but will condition highly motivated students to an Honors mindset. The Honors College will be a space for students to take pride in their excellence that is not usually associated with community colleges.

- 6) Quality of Life policies.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plans, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Kingsborough mission statement reflects our goal of promoting student learning and development as well as strengthening and serving our diverse community. The mission statement delineates our commitment to promoting civic engagement, global awareness, civility, respect for diversity while serving the educational, social, cultural, and economic needs of the Brooklyn community.

- 7) Support for the local vision.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to support the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The local lead for the program is Prof Homar Barcena, director of the Honors Program at Kingsborough Community College. The Honors Program works with an advisory committee that steers its evolution towards an Honors College. The committee includes the college Provost, Dr Joanne Russell, and the VP for Workforce Development, Dr Reza Fakhari. The committee reports to Farley Herzek, President of Kingsborough Community College and member of the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. A local DRI Planning Committee will be assembled to reach out to stakeholders of the local community as well as the City University of New York.

- 8) Readiness:** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above, including a range of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how the majority of projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

There are 382 public and private high schools in Brooklyn, and only one community college. The current Honors curriculum may be implemented on a larger scale upon infusion of DRI funds, which would serve a student body that includes recipients of Federal Student Aid, Excelsior Scholarship, Alliance for Minority Scholarships, ASAP, and so on. The Honors College provides academic and co-curricular programs such as Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, Model United Nations, Resources for Educational and Employment Opportunities (REEO), and so on. Provision of DRI funds will allow the expansion of these programs and provide the local community with a stronger workforce.

- 9) Administrative Capacity.** Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts.

Kingsborough Community College has a well-defined organization structure that manages the attainment of college goals, including construction of the proposed Honors College. Campus facilities and planning is

headed by Assistant VP Anthony Corazza, and Environmental Health and Safety is headed by Celeste Creegan.

**10) Other.** Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

\*Don't forget to attach a map that clearly delineates the downtown neighborhood. (See item 1.)

