



Office of the Mayor
City of Niagara Falls

For Immediate Release

Mayor Restaino launches multiple programs aimed at improving Niagara Falls neighborhoods, communication with residents

(Niagara Falls, New York – April 20, 2022) Today, Mayor Robert Restaino announced several projects to help make improvements in Niagara Falls neighborhoods, as well as improve communication between residents, City Hall, and its various departments.

Home Improvement Program

Mayor Restaino is dedicating more than \$390,000 to a home improvement program. The funding comes from the NYS Attorney General's Cities Rise Grant. Through this, all homeowners in Niagara Falls are eligible for a loan worth up to \$15,000 to help pay for home improvement projects – including roof replacement and repairs, siding replacement and repair, gutters, porch repairs, garages, sidewalk replacement and other exterior work.

These \$15,000 loans will be repaid over ten years at a 3% annual interest rate. The money will help residents significantly improve their homes – which in turn will improve the aesthetics of our neighborhoods.

“In a time when everyone is struggling to make ends meet, it can be nearly impossible to save enough money to make major home improvements,” said Mayor Robert Restaino. “That’s why my administration is launching several new programs, aimed at helping residents rehab their homes and properties. These programs will allow residents to apply for special funding that will off-set the cost of home improvements, thus allowing our properties, neighborhoods, and communities to experience a sense of revitalization.”

Niagara Falls is one of ten cities across New York State to be awarded funding through the Cities Rise Grant.

Residents who are interested in participating in the Home Improvement Program should call 716-286-8800 and select Option 1.



Sewer Lateral Repair

Mayor Restaino is launching a program through the use of federal community development funding to help many residents repair sewer laterals on and near their properties. Sewer laterals are the pipes connecting a home's plumbing to the city's sewer system. Homeowners are responsible for the repair of sewer laterals, even after the pipe extends past a property line and into a street. When a sewer lateral breaks, it can often cause large craters or sink holes in a street. To fix the lateral can be extremely expensive because often, the issue lies under a city street.

Mayor Restaino is prepared to help residents fix these issues – which will in turn have an impact on city roads. While there is no limit on the amount of funding a resident can receive, there are several stipulations a property-owner must meet in order to qualify for the assistance.

When applying for the funding, a resident must show proof that he or she is the property owner and that the property is the owner's primary residence. It also must be maintained as such for at least five years after the completion of work – at which point the loan will be forgiven. If not, the loan must be repaid. All taxes and liens on the property must be paid and up-to-date.

Residents applying for funding must also meet HUD income requirements. For example, a family of four would qualify for HUD assistance if its annual income was \$63,100 or less. In addition, in order to qualify for funding to repair sewer laterals, residents must live in areas that are approved for the Community Development Block Grant.

Residents who are interested in participating in the Sewer Lateral Repair Program should call 716-286-8800 and select Option 2.

Congressman Brian Higgins helped secure the federal funding being used for this project. "Federal Community Development Block Grant funding is intended to give municipalities the flexibility to meet the unique needs of their community," said Congressman Higgins. "Older cities like Niagara Falls have aging water and sewer infrastructure and when these pipes fail it is a costly headache for residents and the City. This program is an investment in Niagara Falls families and homes that not only builds stronger sewer infrastructure, but it also builds stronger neighborhoods."

Property Purchase Program

Mayor Restaino is offering some residents the opportunity to purchase vacant lots that are adjacent to their properties. Currently, there are 52 city-owned vacant lots throughout Niagara Falls.

The Mayor and his team are developing a process that will make it affordable for residents who own property next to these vacant lots to purchase them. The City will notify residents who are eligible to participate in the program. Once purchased, the additional property would be added to the resident's existing property.



311 Program

The City of Niagara Falls is looking to make the 311 Program easier for residents to report issues involving the Department of Public Works and Code Enforcement.

Residents may now call 716-286-4311 to report problems – whether it's code violations (handled by Code Enforcement) or potholes, tree problems, sidewalks, snow removal, trash & debris, etc. (DPW).

In addition, a new portal to the new 311 system will be located on the City's homepage. By clicking on the "311 button," residents will be given a ticket number and have the ability to see the time and date of their report, what action is being taken to address the issue, and when it will be completed.

Text Alerts

The City is launching a new program that utilizes text messages to deliver pertinent information to Niagara Falls residents and people in surrounding communities. Similar to push alerts sent through apps on smart phones, these text alerts will deliver instantaneous information and updates directly to citizens. However, these notifications will not be limited to people with smart phones. Anyone who has access to a cell phone can receive Niagara Falls text alerts – as no apps are required.

The program operates as an opt-in model – residents must sign-up for the service. In doing so, they will have the choice of what information they'd like to receive – whether it's road closures, construction updates, youth and senior programs, sporting events, etc. When City departments need to quickly relay information to residents, a text message will be sent with an update.

By texting RESIDENT to 716-FALLS-23 (716-325-5723), people can easily opt-in to the program.

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