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# From HEDG to IMPACT: New MASC Grant Possibilities



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# What We'll Cover



Quick history of the Hometown Economic Development Grant program (HEDG)



Learn reasons why HEDG is changing to IMPACT



Meet the new IMPACT Fund grant programs



Discuss the new program scoring criteria



Learn how to apply for the new programs



# HEDG History 2015 - 2024

**2015** – MASC board set aside \$2.5 million from reserves to fund new economic development grant program

**2016** – Board sold stock in VC3, valued at approximately \$1 million, to add to the grant fund

**2017** – Board added a final \$500,000, bringing total “seed funds” to \$4 million



# HEDG History 2015 - 2024

## Grant winners have big plans

Eight cities and towns across the state received \$25,000 Hometown Economic Development Grants from the Municipal Association. The grants will allow the cities to implement projects that will make a positive impact on the quality of life in their communities.

An awards committee comprised of former local government and state agency professionals evaluated the 76 grant applications. Cities and towns receiving a grant are required to provide matching funds, submit reports about the progress and successes of each project, and provide financial details of how the grant funds were used.

- The City of Beaufort's award will support a new public-private partnership to establish and manage the Beaufort Digital Corridor, described as "a community-sourced initiative to attract, nurture and promote the region's tech economy." In conjunction with the Charleston Digital Corridor, Beaufort's corridor will serve as a recruiter for high-tech companies, facilitate education and training for professionals, and help guide students and entrepreneurs seeking a career in technology.

- The City of Clinton will hire an architectural firm to create a professional master plan and strategic vision for the Industrial Supply Company warehouse complex, which occupies an entire city block in downtown Clinton. Because the city owns a portion of the site, future development will involve public-private partnerships.

- Following the success of similar projects in other cities, the City of Gaffney will fund the Gaffney Main Street Challenge Competition to recruit new businesses. The Gaffney Business Generator project, Gaffney Main Street and the Gaffney Downtown Merchants Association program will all assist with the city's program.

- The City of Manning will take the next step in the city's Retail Recruiting Initiative by hiring a professional services firm to help the city develop a retail recruitment strategy, marketing data and trade brochures for use at retail recruiting conferences.

- The Town of Ridgeway intends to "Paint the Town Red with Revitalization" and restore and repair iconic structures in the town, including the World's Smallest Police Station, its famous telephone booth and Ridgeway Arch, which anchors the proposed Ridgeway Park.

- Known as the gateway to the ACE Basin, the Walterboro Wildlife Sanctuary is the second-largest municipal park in the United States. The City of Walterboro will use its grant funds to develop a city-owned building to use as an Interpretive Wildlife Sanctuary Discovery Center.



- The adjoining towns of West Pelzer and Pelzer will use their grant funds in partnership to develop a Main Street Corridor Master Plan and Economic Impact Analysis for both towns. The towns will use the plan as a tool to recruit business to their downtowns.

- The "Best Look, Best Talent Project" in the City of Williamston will support a façade-improvement grant program and the Mustang Alley feasibility study in support of the creation of an event-oriented alleyway. Envision Williamston, the Palmetto Business Association and the SC National Heritage Corridor will also provide resources or in-kind assistance to support the city's grant.

*The details of the 2017 grant program will be announced in May.*

**Present** – HEDG fund has grown to over \$5 million, allowing MASC to grant \$400,000 annually without depleting initial investment



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# HEDG History 2015 - 2024

HEDG required match ranges from 5% - 15% depending on population

## HEDG judging criteria:

- Return on Investment
- Impact
- Need
- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Replicability
- Budget Development
- Experience / Grant History



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# HEDG Problem #1 – Limited Impact

Bigger cities rarely apply and rarely win

Since 2016, **105 grants awarded to 89 different cities/towns**  
(only **33%** of members)

**Spartanburg** (11<sup>th</sup> largest) is largest to ever win a grant (2017)





# HEDG Problem #1 – Limited Impact



# HEDG Problem #1 – Limited Impact

Trivia – only one city/town has won 3 HEDG grants in the 9 years the program has existed...



**2017 – Exercise area / trailhead**  
**2020 – Façade grant program**  
**2024 – Restroom in a park**



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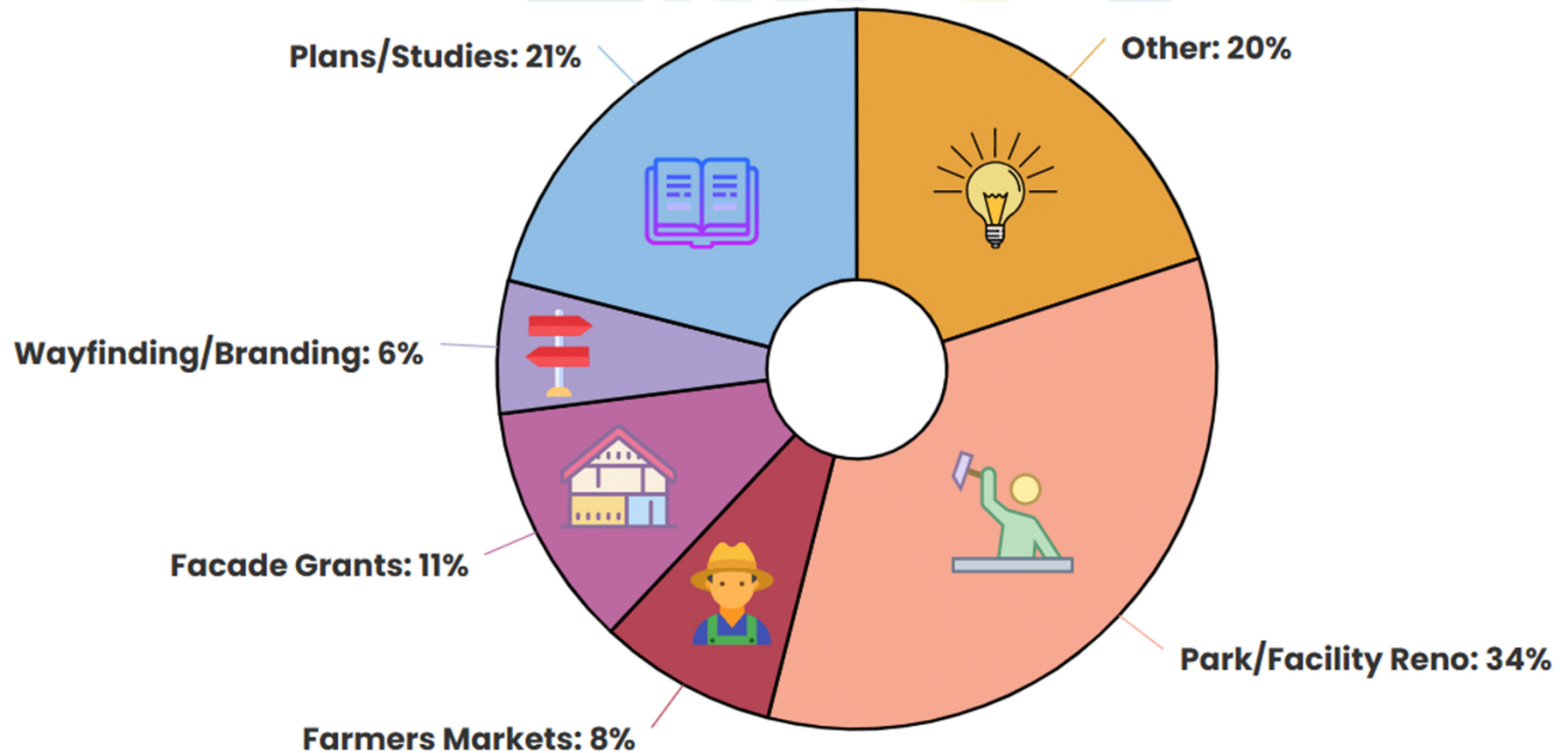
# HEDG Problem #2 – Money Not Spent



- Lack of preparation
- Staff/elected official turnover
- 2016 – 2022:
  - \$1,965,000 awarded
  - \$1,667,398 spent
  - \$297,602 expired – 15%



# HEDG Problem #3 – Lack of New Ideas



# One Fund, Two Programs

Innovative  
**M**unicipal  
**P**rojects for  
**A**dvancing  
**C**hange and  
**T**ransformation



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# One Fund, Two Programs

<b>Problem Solver Grants</b>	<b>Big Idea Grants</b>
<b>Up to \$25,000</b>	<b>Up to \$100,000</b>
<b>Emphasis on NEED</b>	<b>Emphasis on CREATIVITY</b>
<b>Designed for Routine Projects</b>	<b>Designed for New Ideas</b>
<b>Up to 8 Funded / Year</b>	<b>Up to 2 Funded / Year</b>



# Problem Solver Grants



**Small park improvements**

**Town Hall repairs**

**Abandoned building demolition**

**Anything that your city/town  
needs but perhaps can't afford**

**Avoid recurring costs**



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# Problem Solver Grants

	Category	Weight
	Project Readiness	30%
	Need	30%
	Community Impact	30%
	MASC Grant History	10%





# Problem Solver Grants

Category	Weight
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**Project Readiness**

**30%**

*How prepared are you to get started?*

*24-month deadline*

*Goal: spend the money, do the projects*



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# Problem Solver Grants

Category		Weight
	Need	30%

*Is the funding truly make-or-break?*

*How urgent is the need for the project?*



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# Problem Solver Grants

Category		Weight
	Community Impact	30%

***Recognizes projects that will create meaningful, positive change for residents, especially those that benefit a broad segment of the community or address critical local needs.***



# Problem Solver Grants

Category		Weight
	MASC Grant History	10%

*We're seeking to reward applicants that haven't received funding recently.*

*Successful previous grant experience is a PLUS, previous grant money left on the table is a MINUS*

*No MASC grant experience is a PLUS*



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# Big Idea Grants



**Unique building renovation / repurpose**

**Pilot programs**

**Creative marketing / event concepts**

**Think big and think innovative**

**We're taking a risk...**



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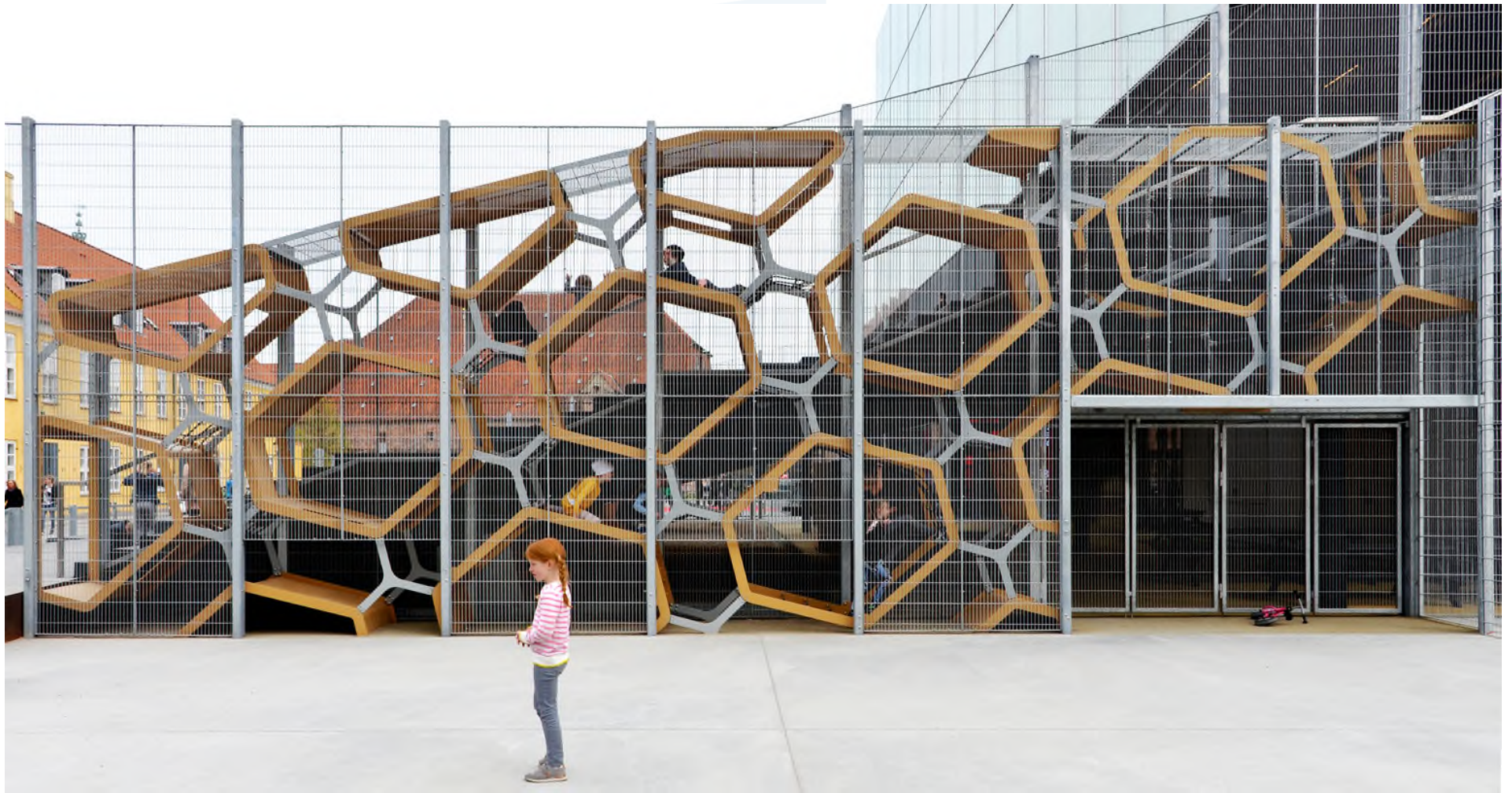
























# Big Idea Grants





# Big Idea Grants

	Category	Weight
	Creativity / Innovation	30%
	Community Impact	20%
	Strategic Value	20%
	Project Readiness	20%
	Replicability	10%





# Big Idea Grants

Category		Weight
	<b>Creativity / Innovation</b>	<b>30%</b>

*This category rewards projects that bring **fresh, original thinking** to local challenges. We're looking for ideas that are **imaginative, forward-thinking, and thoughtfully designed**.*

*Projects don't have to be flashy, they just need to show **clear, thoughtful innovation** that fits your community's needs.*



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# Big Idea Grants

Category		Weight
	Strategic Value	20%

*This category recognizes projects that create **lasting, ripple-effect benefits** for the community.*

*We're looking for efforts that go beyond a one-time impact – projects that **strengthen partnerships, spark economic growth, or lay the groundwork for future success.***



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# Big Idea Grants

Category		Weight
	Replicability	10%

*This category highlights projects that are **creative yet practical** – ideas that other towns and cities across South Carolina could easily adapt and implement.*

*We're looking for models that are **scalable, shareable, and rooted in common challenges.***



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# What's Eligible?



# Things to Remember

- Each city may only apply for ONE of the two programs each year
- Each city may only submit one application each year
- A city may be awarded a grant once every third year



# Things to Remember

- Grant funds **MUST** be spent within 24 months of award
- Grant funds are reimbursable – must spend city/town funds
- Deadline to spend funds awarded this cycle is December 31, 2027





# How to Apply

Voices. Knowledge. Solutions.



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Impact Fund



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## Welcome!


The Municipal Association of South Carolina, representing the state's 271 incorporated cities and towns, remains dedicated to the principles of its founding in 1930 — to pursue initiatives that cities and towns can carry out more efficiently and effectively together through the Association than they can individually.

[Learn More](#)



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# How to Apply

 Member Login



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### Top Results

#### IMPACT Fund

The Municipal Association of South Carolina launched the IMPACT Fund, an acronym for "Innovative Municipal Projects for Advancing Change and Transformation," in 2025. The program is supported by the Association's strategic partner for technology services, VC3. The Fund finances two distinct grant...



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# How to Apply

The Municipal Association of South Carolina launched the IMPACT Fund, an acronym for “Innovative Municipal Projects for Advancing Change and Transformation,” in 2025. The program is supported by the Association’s strategic partner for technology services, VC3.

The Fund finances two distinct grant programs for South Carolina cities and towns:

**Problem Solver Grants - \$25,000** – Designed to fund smaller, more routine municipal projects and practical fixes for common problems facing South Carolina municipalities. These grants may fund repairs or upgrades to municipal facilities, comprehensive or strategic plans, hazard mitigation projects or anything that addresses a challenge and enhances daily life for municipal residents or employees. Grant judging criteria includes need and is generally focused on small-to-medium size cities and towns with financial challenges.

**Big Idea Grants - \$100,000** – Designed to fund bold, creative and forward-thinking ideas. Projects might include technology-driven service improvements, innovative uses of public space, community-wide initiatives or any other big idea that results in long-term impact. Grant judging criteria is heavily weighted toward creativity, community impact and project readiness.

The Association may award up to eight Problem Solver Grants and up to two Big Idea Grants in 2025.

**The 2025 application deadline is September 26, 2025.**

[Access the Grant Application](#)

**How to Apply**

**[www.masc.sc/impact-fund](http://www.masc.sc/impact-fund)**

**[jbroom@masc.sc](mailto:jbroom@masc.sc)**

**(803) 933-1270**



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