



HAND 2021 Neighborhood Improvement Grant Application Guidelines

The City of Bloomington, Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) invites neighborhood groups to apply for the 2021 Neighborhood Improvement Grant, which is intended for projects with a total cost of at least \$1,100. This grant is designed to give residents an opportunity to have direct input and influence on the improvement of their neighborhoods. The funds provide for non-traditional capital projects with community-wide benefit: the type that are not typically covered by traditional City programs. Projects may include physical improvements and public art. Funds may also be used to develop designs for a proposed project. Please remember this is a neighborhood-driven process, the application must demonstrate neighborhood support.

****BEFORE YOU BEGIN** to fill out the electronic application form, please read through the entirety of the application.

Questions? Contact Angela Van Rooy, Neighborhood Services Program Manager, at 812-349-3505 or angela.vanrooy@bloomington.in.gov.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Informational Meeting:

As a first step in the application process, a neighborhood representative will be required to attend a virtual informational meeting. For your convenience, there are two meeting alternatives: Tuesday, January 26th at 6:00 p.m. or Monday, February 1st at 7:00 p.m. These meetings will explain the Neighborhood Improvement Grant application process. Neighborhood representatives need only attend one meeting.

Letter of Intent:

The Letter of Intent is a part of the application process, ensuring that neighborhood project ideas are both eligible and feasible. HAND staff will meet with the project coordinator(s) for a Technical Assistance appointment to ensure they understand how to complete the grant application. During this meeting staff will determine whether the proposed project will require review, authorization, or approval by another City Department. If so, your application must include a letter of approval from the relevant department(s).

Grant Council:

The Neighborhood Improvement Grant Council, is a group made up of two City staff members (outside of HAND), one member of the Redevelopment Commission, and two representatives from Bloomington neighborhoods. The Council will review qualified applications and preside over Neighborhood Presentations, during which applicant neighborhoods will present their projects and answer Councilor's questions. Using the following criteria, the Council will make recommendations to the Redevelopment Commission, who will determine which projects will be funded and for what amount:

Rating Criteria:

- *Neighborhood Involvement:* up to 15 points. Assess the efforts of the Neighborhood Association to involve neighborhood residents in the planning and implementation of the project, e.g., meetings regarding the project and promotion in newsletters, flyers, petitions, etc.
- *Provides Community Wide Benefit:* up to 15 points. Assess whether the project provides community wide benefit by: improving the health, safety, or quality of life of residents; benefiting a significant number of residents; reducing potential property damage; or providing a facility commonly found in other neighborhoods.
- *Feasibility:* up to 10 points. Assess the applicant's involvement of HAND or other City departments with experience in completing similar projects. Consider any design and environmental concerns. Determine whether the project can be completed within one calendar year.
- *Longevity:* up to 10 points. Does the project entail a one-time large expenditure? Consider any long-term maintenance responsibilities. Assess, if completed, whether the project benefits will be retained over time. Consider the project's consistency with the City's Growth Policies Plan.
- *Partnerships and Collaborations:* up to 10 points. Assess the efforts of the group to develop partnerships with other organizations to complete projects.
- *Neighborhood Match:* up to 10 points. Assess the efforts of the group to raise their own funding. Consider any in-kind participation offered by the association.

Point system:

- 2 points - 10% match
- 4 points - 20% match
- 6 points - 30% match
- 8 points - 40% match
- 10 points - 50% match

- *Equity*: Priority will be given to applications from neighborhoods that have not received a Neighborhood Improvement Grant within the past two years.

II. TIMELINE

- Virtual Informational Meetings (must attend one): Tuesday, January 26 2021, 6:00 p.m. or Monday, February 1, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
- Letter of Intent Due: Monday, February 15, 2021 by 4:00 p.m.
- Technical Assistance: Scheduled with each participating neighborhood.
- Applications Due: Monday, March 22, 2021 by 4:00 p.m.
- Neighborhood applicants present their projects to the Grant Council: Monday, April 19, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

The Complete 2021 Neighborhood Services calendar is available here: <https://bloomington.in.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/2021%20Neighborhood%20Services%20Calendar.pdf>

III. ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to apply?

Applications are accepted from neighborhood-based organizations located within the corporate boundaries of the City of Bloomington. A neighborhood-based organization is a group with a majority of its members residing or doing business in a commonly recognized neighborhood, whose purpose is, at least in part, to improve the quality of life in that area. The group may include representatives from churches, schools, businesses, and other institutions operating in that neighborhood, but projects must be administered by neighborhood residents. Groups may be formed for the sole purpose of completing a grant-funded project, and need not be formally recognized neighborhood associations.

Who is NOT eligible to apply?

Single businesses, single institutions, single government agencies, single religious organizations, political groups, individuals.

Eligible Projects

The total project budget must be a minimum of \$1,100. Projects should improve or enhance public spaces in a neighborhood through capital expenditure, and may take the form of physical improvement projects with a public benefit or public art projects with a public benefit. Design development for the proposed project is also an eligible expense (see below for design development guidelines).

Non-eligible Projects include those that:

- Duplicate an existing public or private program,
- Enhance or improve private property.
- Conflict with existing City policy, or
- Constitute routine maintenance of existing infrastructure, including prior grant-funded projects.

IV. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Grant funds may be used to pay for design of the proposed project, However, no more than 10% of the total amount of the grant shall be allocated for design work. The design shall be developed in conformance with all City codes. In addition, the design must meet any and all regulations set forth by governing departments or agencies, including but not limited to, Public Works, Planning, Parks & Recreation, historic district commissions, the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), and HAND.

The objective of design development is to produce a schematic design. Such design must result in a product that can be developed according to the Neighborhood Improvement Grant guidelines.

V. NOTIFICATION OF ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS

For projects funded by a Neighborhood Improvement Grant, the applicant must notify all adjacent property owners to ensure surrounding neighbors are aware of the proposed neighborhood project. This procedure has been implemented to ensure proper notification of those whose property may be affected.

1. The applicant must notify adjacent property owners of the purposed project by using the Notice of Presentation. Intervening public rights-of-way shall not be considered in determining what property is adjacent. If the neighborhood would like to contact property owners beyond the adjacent property owners to ensure the neighborhood is informed, please feel free to do so.

2. Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) staff will provide a map and a list of property owners to be notified
3. The manner in which notice must be sent to adjacent property owners shall be as follows:
 - a. The required Notice of Presentation shall be sent by regular first class mail, and must be mailed at least ten (10) days prior to the Neighborhood Presentation to the Neighborhood Improvement Grant Council. Postage can be reimbursed with grant funds if the project is approved.
 - b. Proof that notice has been mailed shall be sufficient proof of notice under these rules regardless of actual receipt.
 - c. Proof of notice shall consist of submittal of the following items to the HAND Department under Attachment B of the grant application:
 - i. A copy of the [Notice of Presentation](#) that was mailed to adjacent property owners.
 - ii. A completed [Affidavit of Notice to Adjacent Property Owners](#).

These rules and procedures are not meant to substitute for neighborhood involvement in the creation and implementation of neighborhood projects, but are in addition to and specifically for interested parties that may be most directly affected.

VI. BUDGET

As part of your application, you will complete the [Excel Budget Spreadsheet](#). On the spreadsheet you should include:

1. An itemized breakdown of the total project costs, including materials and installation.
2. An itemized breakdown of the neighborhood match, including donated materials, in-kind labor, and cash.
3. The total amount requested from HAND.

In a separate document, please provide a *Budget Summary in narrative form*, to include:

1. An explanation of how you arrived at your figures for materials and services to be purchased.
2. An explanation of how you arrived at your figures for in-kind labor (e.g., 10 volunteers working 10 hours each at an in-kind value of \$20 per hour = \$2,000).

You will upload your completed Excel Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative in the application below, under Attachment A. Please also upload these additional documents, as applicable:

1. Itemized bids from businesses who will provide necessary products or services.
2. Letters from individuals or organizations (on letterhead) pledging specific donations. If donations are in-kind, please include the donation's retail value.
3. Bank statements demonstrating cash on-hand.

VII. NEIGHBORHOOD MATCH

Neighborhood organizations must be able to match requested City funds at a rate of 10%. For example, if your group requests \$10,000 in City funds, you must match that request with \$1,000, or 10 %, for a total project cost of \$11,000. A key to making your application competitive it is to demonstrate that your neighborhood match is ready to go. There are a number of options you can use to prove that your match is secured. Verification must be submitted with your application.

The neighborhood match, whether in-kind or monetary, must be directly related to the proposed project, and may not include maintenance. Your match package may include components from any combination of the following:

In-Kind Match:

1. Volunteer labor valued at \$20 per hour; with a maximum of 15 hours per volunteer. **VERIFY:** Each individual volunteer must complete a Volunteer Commitment Form, which will be tallied on the Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet (only the computation sheet should be included as part of this application). If organizations are pledging to provide a specific number of volunteer hours, include a pledge letter from the responsible party on organization letterhead.
2. Donated materials or supplies, or use of equipment, made available through partnerships with local businesses, churches, and other organizations in the community. **VERIFY:** Submit an invoice or pledge letter on company letterhead from an individual, organization, or business pledging a specific donation, including its retail value (e.g., "\$400 in lumber from Acme Hardware to build a tool shed for the Rolling Hills Community Garden").

Cash:

1. Cash on-hand, such as dues paid to the organization and approved for use on the proposed project, monetary donations collected in the neighborhood for the project, or other, non-City, grants that your organization has received. **VERIFY:**

Provide copies of a recent bank statement or check showing that you have the cash on hand.

2. Donated cash, collected through partnerships with local businesses, churches, and other organizations in the community. VERIFY: Provide a copy of a commitment letter from the donor on their letterhead.

****PLEASE NOTE:** Time spent preparing and planning this grant application may not be counted towards your match. However, fees incurred for notification of adjacent property owners, legal notices, or applications for variance permits from City boards and commissions are allowable.

VIII. PROJECT PROPOSAL

In no more than 500 words, write a project narrative to include the following:

1. Applicant organization.

Please describe your organization, including: number of members, geographic boundaries, mission, membership policy, accomplishments. Has your group received HAND grant funding in the past? If so, describe the project (s), the dollar amount received, and the status of the project (s). If any conflict of interest exists for a person(s) associated with your proposed project, please describe the situation with names of the parties involved. Upload a letter of support for the proposed project from your neighborhood organization under Attachment B in the application below.

2. Project description.

What do you propose to do? Why do you want to undertake this project?

3. Project location.

Please describe, in detail, the physical location(s) of the proposed project. Why was this location chosen? Identify the property owner(s). Provide proof of the property owner's permission to construct your proposed improvement. Upload pertinent documentation under Attachment B in the application below.

4. Neighborhood involvement.

Describe how members of the neighborhood were/will be involved in the planning and implementation of the project. Demonstrate participation by providing how neighborhood

members were contacted, how many became involved, and what sectors of your community they represent. Collect volunteer commitments from each individual volunteer. Tally the number of volunteer hours you have secured on the Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet, and upload it under Attachment C in the application below.

5. Community-wide benefit.

Explain how the project fulfills a neighborhood need and how it will benefit your residents, as well as other members of the public and/or area organizations, if applicable.

6. Feasibility.

Demonstrate how you can successfully complete the proposed project in compliance with all City codes, and by the November 15, 2021 deadline. If you were to receive partial funding, please describe what portion(s) of the project, if any, could be completed. If permits or approvals from City departments, board, or commissions are necessary, please upload proof that these have been secured under Attachment B in the application below.

7. Longevity & maintenance.

Describe the projected longevity of the project. Please provide an ongoing maintenance plan for the life of your project. Remember that maintenance may NOT be included as part of your in-kind match.

8. Partnerships & Collaborations.

Describe any partnerships or collaborations your neighborhood has forged with area businesses, schools, churches, or other organizations for the purpose of completing this project. What resources have partner organizations committed to the project? Upload supporting documentation under Attachment A in the application below.

8. Timeline.

Describe the timeline by which you will complete your proposed project. Work may not commence until a funding agreement is fully executed, which typically happens in late May. Final reports and all invoices/receipts must be submitted to HAND by November 15, 2021.

IX. REQUIREMENTS

1. The total project cost must be not less than \$1,100 (minimum \$1,000 grant plus 10% (or \$100) neighborhood match).
2. The neighborhood will enter into a Funding Agreement stating the amount of the award, along with specification of activities to be performed. No expenditures will be allowed before finalization of the Funding Agreement.
3. Vendors paid directly by the City (e.g. through an invoice) must be vetted through the Controller's Office. Alternatively, neighborhoods may purchase items or services and submit receipts for reimbursement. HAND staff will provide purchasing guidance to each neighborhood.
4. Certain projects may require HAND staff to be responsible for administering the project including the bidding process, contracting, and project management with neighborhood input.
5. The neighborhood project coordinator must record volunteer hours on the Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet. There must be a Release, Hold-Harmless and Indemnification Agreement signed and dated for each volunteer listed. If the volunteer is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian must sign the Agreement.
6. The neighborhood is responsible for a final report that includes the following: a list of all expenses, a one page summary of the project (including final numbers for the neighborhood match), photos of the project, a completed Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet, and copies all Release, Hold-Harmless and Indemnification Agreements signed and dated by each volunteer. Final reports may be submitted electronically, and must be received by HAND no later than November 15, 2021.
7. If the neighborhood encounters a problem, and is unable to with complete the project by the date stated in the Funding Agreement, the neighborhood project coordinator must contact the HAND office for an extension of time.
8. All promotional pieces which receive any funding through this grant program must include the following mandatory grant identification statement: "Funding provided in part through the City of Bloomington's Housing and Neighborhood Development Department Neighborhood Improvement Grant Program."

X. APPLICATION--due by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 22, 2021

Please complete all portions of the application. In order to submit the application you will need a Google account. This will allow you to upload files, receive a copy of your application, and edit your application after submission. Upon submission of the electronic

form, you will receive an email containing a copy of your application. At the top of this email there will be an "edit submission" button. If you need to make changes, you may do so by following that link.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN to fill out the application form, please read the application in its entirety and have the following documents available to upload:

1. Attachment A: Budget

- a. A completed Excel Budget Spreadsheet found here: <https://bloomington.in.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/Budget%20sheet.xls>.
- b. A Budget Summary in narrative form.
- c. Bids from businesses who will provide necessary products or services.
- d. Documentation to demonstrate your match requirement, such as:
 - i. letters from individuals or organizations (on letterhead) pledging specific donations, and/or
 - ii. bank statements demonstrating cash on-hand.

2. Attachment B: Proposal

- a. A Proposal Narrative in 500 words or less;
- b. A letter of support from your neighborhood organization;
- c. Permit or letter of approval from appropriate City department, board, or commission, if applicable;
- d. Maps, site plans, and/or construction drawings, as appropriate;
- e. A copy of the [Notice of Presentation](#) that was mailed to adjacent property owners; and
- f. A completed [Affidavit of Notice to Adjacent Property Owners](#).

3. Attachment C: Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet

- a. For purposes of the application, you need only fill out the "Name" and "Hours" fields on the [Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet](#). If your organization is awarded a grant, you may add additional volunteers at that time.

For application assistance, please contact Angela Van Rooy at angela.vanrooy@bloomington.in.gov or 812-349-3505.