

The HAND Update

A newsletter for Bloomington residents



Phone: 812-349-3420

Website: bloomington.in.gov/neighborhoods

 [City of Bloomington, IN-Neighborhood Services](#)

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Please direct questions or concerns to:

Angela Van Rooy

Neighborhood Services Program Manager

Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND)

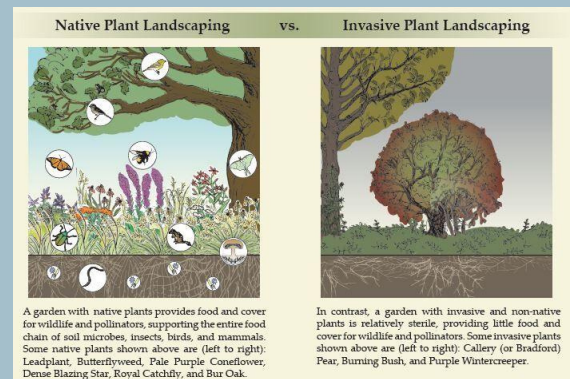
City of Bloomington, Indiana

angela.vanrooy@bloomington.in.gov

Tackle invasive plants with a HAND SSCIPS grant

The Small & Simple Grant to Control Invasive Plant Species (SSCIPS) was a pilot program in 2021, and will be back by popular demand in 2022. This grant provides a unique community building opportunity whereby neighbors work together one yard at a time to remove invasive plants from the landscape. Everyone can participate, whether you get your hands dirty or you allow volunteers to work on your property, the goal is to involve as many households as possible. The grant requires that at least 15% of the households in a neighborhood participate, and 2021 grant recipients had no trouble reaching this threshold.

Reducing invasive plants on the landscape is critically important. Invasive plant species compete directly with native species for moisture, sunlight, nutrients, and space. Their presence contributes to a decrease in overall plant diversity, leading to degraded wildlife habitat and water quality, and increased soil erosion.



Graphic by Ellen Jacquot. MC-IRIS

Each grant recipient neighborhood is required to hold an educational workshop with a [Monroe County Identify and Reduce Invasive Species](#) (MC-IRIS) volunteer to learn how to identify, remove and safely dispose of invasive plants. Now is a great time to schedule a workshop, so you're ready for early spring--one of the best times to remove invasives.

The SSCIPS grant has a \$500 limit and no match component. Applications will be accepted from January 3 to September 1, 2022. Submit your SSCIPS application early in the new year, and show those invasive plants who's boss!

Neighborhood groups of all kinds are eligible to apply for HAND grants. Groups need not be registered neighborhood associations. Please read the detailed [Small & Simple Grant guidelines](#), and contact Angela Van Rooy, Neighborhood Services Program Manager with questions, angela.vanrooy@bloomington.in.gov or 812-349-3505.

Prospect Hill neighbors help Clear Creek live up to its name

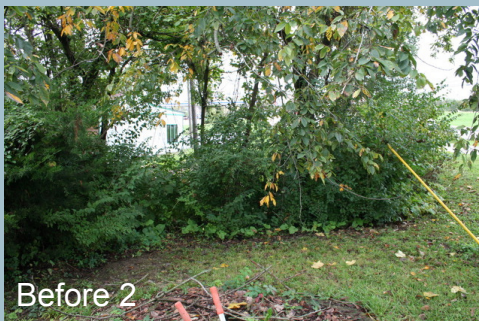
Prospect Hill neighbors, in collaboration with the City of Bloomington Parks & Recreation department, MC-IRIS, and other volunteers, spent an afternoon removing invasive plants and trash from the section of Clear Creek that runs between South Adams Street and West 3rd Street. The transformation is amazing! Look at what they accomplished in just two hours!



Before 1



After 1



Before 2



After 2



Volunteers are organizing another work day for Thursday, November 4th, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. If you would like to help out, please meet on site at the specified date and time. Please check out the [event flyer](#) for additional information on what to bring, where to park, etc.

Volunteers, many thanks for your efforts! We are all beneficiaries of your work.

Indiana Emergency Rental Assistance workshop

Are you a landlord, property manager, realtor, or township trustee? Do you work with property managers and tenants in any way? Do you have tenants who are behind on their rent?

You are invited to a workshop to learn more about the Indiana Emergency Rental Assistance (IERA) program administered by the [Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority](#). The IERA provides up to 12 months of assistance in past due and forward facing rent and utilities (electric, gas, water/wastewater, and bulk fuel) to eligible households.

This event, hosted by the [Bloomington Board of Realtors \(BBOR\)](#), the [Monroe County Apartment Association \(MCAA\)](#), and the Bloomington Department of [Housing and Neighborhood Development \(HAND\)](#), will be held on Wednesday, November 17, 11:30am - 1:00pm at the BBOR offices at 320 W 8th St, Bloomington, IN 47404.



The panel will include:

- Rayanna A. Binder, IERA Director
- Mindi Goodpaster, IERA Community Outreach Manager
- Chase Techentin, The Roof Director, New Hope Family Shelter



The on-site location can accommodate up to 50 people--[register to participate on-site](#). A virtual option will also be available--[register to participate virtually](#).

City of Bloomington Residents Academy wraps up another year

This Thursday, October 28, marks the final session in the 23rd annual Residents Academy. For the past nine weeks participants have gotten a behind-the-scenes look at City government. Here's a sample of what they've learned:



- The City is innovating to solve problems and improve services.
- The Parks & Recreation department converted a former railroad switchyard into Bloomington's newest & biggest park.
- The HAND department inspects all residential rental properties in the city.
- The Community and Family Resources department oversees eight commissions with just eight dedicated staff.
- Bloomington Transit owns and operates two fully electric buses.
- The Public Works department oversees six divisions within the City, including the animal shelter.
- Bloomington is divided into two main watersheds, running east to west, roughly along 11th Street.
- Construction on the Bloomington Hospital Re-Use (BHRU) Project – Phase 1 East is scheduled to begin in 2022.



Parks & Recreation tour of Switchyard Park.



Near West Side resident, Natalia Galvan, speaks about a neighborhood improvement project funded by HAND.



Officer Kiley Jarrett and her partner K9 Officer Ike



Participants go for a ride in the basket of the BFD 100-foot aerial ladder truck.

The Residents Academy is held once per year, over the course of ten weeks from August to October. This free program is open to Bloomington residents, 18 years and older. If you are looking for ways to become more civically engaged, the Residents Academy is a great place to learn about opportunities for resident involvement. The electronic application is open year-round. If you prefer a paper application please call Angela at HAND at 812-349-3505 or email angela.vanrooy@bloomington.in.gov.

Registration is now open for Home Buyers Club



The City of Bloomington's department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) offers a home buyers program in which participants can explore the possibility of affordable home ownership.

Home Buyers Club is comprised of two sessions which are held on two consecutive Saturdays. Registration is now open for the next Home Buyers Club session, to be held on Saturdays, November 6th and 13th. Meetings will be virtual. Visit <https://bloomington.in.gov/housing/home-buyers-club> for more information and to register. Questions? Contact Cody Toothman at 812-349-3401 or cody.toothman@bloomington.in.gov.