

HAND Neighborhood Improvement Grant Application Guidelines 2022

The City of Bloomington, Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) invites neighborhood groups to apply for the 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 these Guidelines in their entirety. We recommend that you have a copy of the Guidelines handy as you complete the application, as they provide step-by-step instructions.*

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

I. PREPARING TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

Timeline:

- Virtual Informational Meetings (must attend one):
 - Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 6:00 p.m. OR
 - Monday, January 31st, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
- Letter of Intent Due: Monday, February 14, 2022 by 4:00 p.m.
- Technical Assistance: Scheduled with each participating neighborhood.
- Applications Due: Monday, March 21, 2022 by 4:00 p.m.
- Neighborhood applicants present their projects to the Grant Council: Monday, April 11, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

See the [Neighborhood Services 2022 calendar](#) for all programming dates/times and details.

Required Informational Meeting:

As a first step in the application process, a neighborhood representative is required to attend a virtual informational meeting. For your convenience, there are two meeting alternatives: Tuesday, January 25th at 6:00 p.m. or Monday, January 31st at 7:00 p.m. These meetings will explain the Neighborhood Improvement Grant application process. Neighborhood representatives need only attend one meeting.

Required Letter of Intent:

A Letter of Intent is part of the application process, ensuring that neighborhood project ideas are both eligible and feasible. Please include the following details in your letter:

- Neighborhood/organization name(s),
- Estimated amount of funds you'll be requesting,
- Brief description of the project,
- Proposed location of the project (address),
- Why you wish to undertake the proposed project (What neighborhood need will be met?).

Technical Assistance:

Upon receipt of a Letter of Intent, HAND staff will arrange to meet with each Neighborhood Project Coordinator 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, HAND staff will direct applicants to the appropriate individuals within relevant City departments. Applicants will be required to make contact with these individuals and secure letters of approval, which must be submitted as part of the Neighborhood Improvement Grant application.

II. 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, and 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 the 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.*

The City of Bloomington is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As such, we require that any group applying for grant funding demonstrate that their organization upholds these values by submitting a completed and signed [Attestation of Neighborhood Inclusivity](#).

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.

III. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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 applications and preside over Neighborhood Presentations, during which applicant neighborhoods will present their projects and answer Councilors' 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: 65 points possible

- *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 15 points. Assess the applicant's involvement of HAND or other City departments with experience in completing similar projects. Verify that necessary permissions/permits have been secured from applicable City

departments/boards/commissions. 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 [2018 Comprehensive Plan](#).
- *Neighborhood Match*: up to 10 points. Assess the efforts of the group to raise their own funding. Consider any in-kind donations offered by the neighborhood or partnering organization(s).

2 points - 10% match	6 points - 30% match
4 points - 20% 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.

IV. GRANT REQUIREMENTS

1. Only one application per neighborhood will be accepted during a given grant cycle. Projects should be determined by consensus within the group.
2. The total project cost must be not less than \$1,100 (minimum \$1,000 grant plus 10% (or \$100) neighborhood match).
3. The neighborhood will identify a Neighborhood Project Coordinator. This individual will act as the primary contact person with HAND for purposes of facilitating every step of the grant process.
4. 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.
5. 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. In the latter case, the neighborhood organization or a designated individual must be vetted through the Controller's Office. HAND staff will provide purchasing guidance to each neighborhood.

6. Projects should prioritize the use of recycled or sustainably-sourced materials. Landscaping should prioritize native plants. See [A Guide to the Regulated Terrestrial Plant Species of Indiana](#) for a list of plants to avoid.
7. Certain projects may require HAND staff to be responsible for administering the project including a bidding process, contracting, and project management with neighborhood input. This will be determined at the Technical Assistance meeting.
8. The Neighborhood Project Coordinator must record volunteer hours on the Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet. There must be a [Waiver, Release, and Hold-Harmless Agreement](#) signed and dated for each volunteer listed. If the volunteer is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian must sign the Agreement.
9. The neighborhood is responsible for a final report that will include the following:
 - a. a list of all expenses,
 - b. final amount of the neighborhood match,
 - c. a one page summary of the project,
 - d. photos of the project,
 - e. a completed Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet, and
 - f. 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.

10. If the neighborhood encounters a problem, and is unable to with complete the project by November 15, 2021, the date stated in the Funding Agreement, the Neighborhood Project Coordinator must contact the HAND office for an extension of time.
11. 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."

V. 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 and Transportation, Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Economic and Sustainable Development, 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.

VI. NOTIFICATION OF ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS

For projects funded by a Neighborhood Improvement Grant, the applicant organization 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. Upon request, 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 on or before March 21, 2022 (application submission deadline) Grant funds may be used to cover the costs of copying, envelopes, and postage if the project is approved. Be sure to include this as a line item in your budget.
 - 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 E 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.

VII. BUDGET

As part of your application, you will complete the [Neighborhood Improvement Grant Budget Template](#). This is an Excel file and includes formulas to calculate column totals and your neighborhood match percentage.

On the spreadsheet you should include:

1. An itemized breakdown of the total project costs, including materials, installation, equipment rental, professional services, etc. Do NOT include sales tax in these figures. The City of Bloomington is a tax-exempt organization and is not subject to sales tax (see section IX. below for additional information).
2. An itemized breakdown of your sources of funding. If your neighborhood match includes in-kind labor, please include it as a source of funding for installation costs. Volunteer hour may be charged at \$20.00 per hour.
3. Remember that your neighborhood match must equal at least 10% of the total funds being 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. Please include the name, address, phone, and email address/website (if applicable) for each vendor with whom you plan to do business.
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 [Neighborhood Improvement Grant Budget Template](#) and Budget Narrative in the application under Attachment A. Please also upload these additional documents, as applicable:

1. Itemized estimates 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 (e.g. donated materials), please include the donation's retail value.
3. Bank statements demonstrating cash on-hand. This is only needed if your group plans to use cash as a portion of your neighborhood match. If the match is entirely in-kind, there is no need for a back statement.

VIII. 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: The Neighborhood Project Coordinator will secure pledged hours from volunteers and tally them on the [Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet](#). If organizations (rather than individuals) are pledging to provide a specific number of volunteer hours, include a pledge letter from the responsible organization representative on organization letterhead. The Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet and any pledge letters should be uploaded to the grant application under Attachment C.
2. Donated materials, supplies, or professional services, or use of equipment. These may be donated by individual neighbors or 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" or "\$500 for two hours of professional landscape design services from ABC Landscape Design, LLC.).

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, costs incurred for notification of adjacent property owners, legal notices, or applications for variance permits from City boards and commissions are allowable.

IX. CITY REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

1. The Neighborhood Improvement Grant works on a reimbursement basis, due to City policy requiring that goods and services to be delivered prior to payment.
2. Vendors may be paid directly by the City (e.g. through an invoice). Alternatively, neighborhoods may purchase items or services and submit receipts for reimbursement.
3. If a neighborhood chooses to make purchases and seek reimbursement, one individual should be designated to handle expenditures (e.g., the Neighborhood Project Coordinator, the neighborhood association treasurer, etc.). This individual will make purchases (ensuring that no sales tax is charged) and submit receipts to

HAND for reimbursement. If your neighborhood group has funds available, the organization may pay for goods and services rather than an individual doing so. In this case, HAND will reimburse the organization.

4. Any entity that will request reimbursement (individual, organization, or third party vendor) must complete and submit [vendor documents](#), as required by the City Controller's Office. This step must be completed prior to the execution of the funding agreement between HAND and your neighborhood group. Upon approval of your grant application, HAND staff will provide guidance.
5. If an individual or organization representative will be making grant-related purchases, they will be provided a grantee letter along with a copy of the City's tax exemption certificate. These should be used when making purchases, so as to avoid paying sales tax. As a tax exempt organization, the City will not reimburse you for any sales tax you may pay, so be sure to produce the certificate at checkout.
6. If you have receipts in need of reimbursement, please send them to Angela at HAND. These may be submitted electronically or in hardcopy form.
7. Once received, there is an approximately three week timeframe for reimbursements. All payments from the City are made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the bank account specified on the vendor documents.

X. PROJECT PROPOSAL

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

1. Applicant organization.

Please describe your organization, including:

- approximate number of members,
- geographic boundaries,
- mission,
- membership policy, and
- accomplishments.

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.

2. Project description.

What do you propose to do? Why do you want to undertake this project? What materials will be used? Please remember that materials must be chosen with sustainability in mind—choose recycled or sustainably-sourced materials when available; landscape with native plants.

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.

4. Neighborhood involvement.

Describe how members of the neighborhood were/will be involved in the planning and implementation of the project. Demonstrate participation by describing 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. For purposes of this application, you need only complete the "Name" and "Hours" fields on the form. Upload the completed form under Attachment C in the application.

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, 2022 deadline. 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.

If you were to receive partial funding, please describe what portion(s) of the project, if any, could be completed.

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.

9. 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, 2022.

10. Previous Funding

Has your group received HAND grant funding in the past? If so, please upload a table or spreadsheet under Attachment B in the application, Include the following information:

- year received,
- grant program,
- project description,
- dollar amount received, and
- status of the project.

For example:

Year Received	Grant Program	Project Description	Grant Award	Project Status
2014	Neighborhood Improvement	Neighborhood entrance sign	\$4,800.00	Complete
2018	Cleanup	Neighborhood cleanup	n/a	Complete
2021	SSCIPS	Invasive Plants Removal	\$500.00	Complete

XI. 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 [Neighborhood Improvement Grant Budget Template](#)
 - b. A Budget Summary in narrative form.
 - c. Estimates from businesses who will provide necessary products or services.
 - d. Documentation to demonstrate your match requirement, such as:
 - i. letters from individuals or partnering 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 applicable City department, board, or commission;
 - d. Maps, site plans, and/or construction drawings, as appropriate.

- e. Letter from property owner granting permission to construct the proposed improvement.
 - f. A list of previous HAND grants received.
3. Attachment C: Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet
 - a. A [Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet](#), on which you have tallied pledged volunteer hours. For purposes of the application, you need only fill out the "Name" and "Hours" fields. If your organization is awarded a grant, you may add additional volunteers at that time.
 4. Attachment D: Project Work Plan
 - a. Complete the [Project Work Plan](#), laying out in chronological order:
 - i. the specific steps you will take to complete the project,
 - ii. who will be responsible for each step, and
 - iii. the estimated date of completion (month & year).
 5. Attachment E: Notice of Presentation
 - a. Complete and upload the following:
 - i. A copy of the [Notice of Presentation](#) that was mailed to adjacent property owners; and
 - ii. A completed [Affidavit of Notice to Adjacent Property Owners](#).
 6. Attachment F: Attestation of Neighborhood Inclusivity
 - a. Complete, sign, and upload the [Attestation of Neighborhood Inclusivity](#)

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

LINKS to FORMS, DOCUMENTS, and ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[2022 Neighborhood Improvement Grant Application Form](#)

[Neighborhood Improvement Grant Budget Template](#)

[Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet](#)

[Project Work Plan](#)

[Notice of Presentation](#)

[Affidavit of Notice to Adjacent Property Owners](#)

[Neighborhood Services 2022 calendar](#)

[Vendor documents](#)

[Waiver, Release, and Hold-Harmless Agreement](#)

[Attestation of Neighborhood Inclusivity](#)

[A Guide to the Regulated Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species of Indiana](#)