



2024 Neighborhood Improvement Grant Guidelines



Park Ridge East butterfly garden



Village of Ridgefield accessible community benches



Bloomington Housing Authority information kiosks



EverGreen Village neighborhood entrance sign

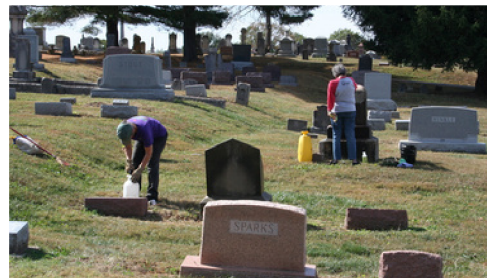
What is the program?

The City of Bloomington, Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) offers Neighborhood Improvement Grants annually. In 2024 the City expects to award approximately \$25,000 in grants.

The program is designed to give residents an opportunity for direct input in the improvement of their neighborhoods. *This is a neighborhood-driven process, therefore the application must demonstrate significant neighborhood support.*



St. James Woods landscape improvements along East Moores Pike



Prospect Hill headstone cleaning in Rose Hill Cemetery



Bryan Park historic brick sidewalks restoration

Who do we fund?

Neighborhood-based groups located within the city of Bloomington.

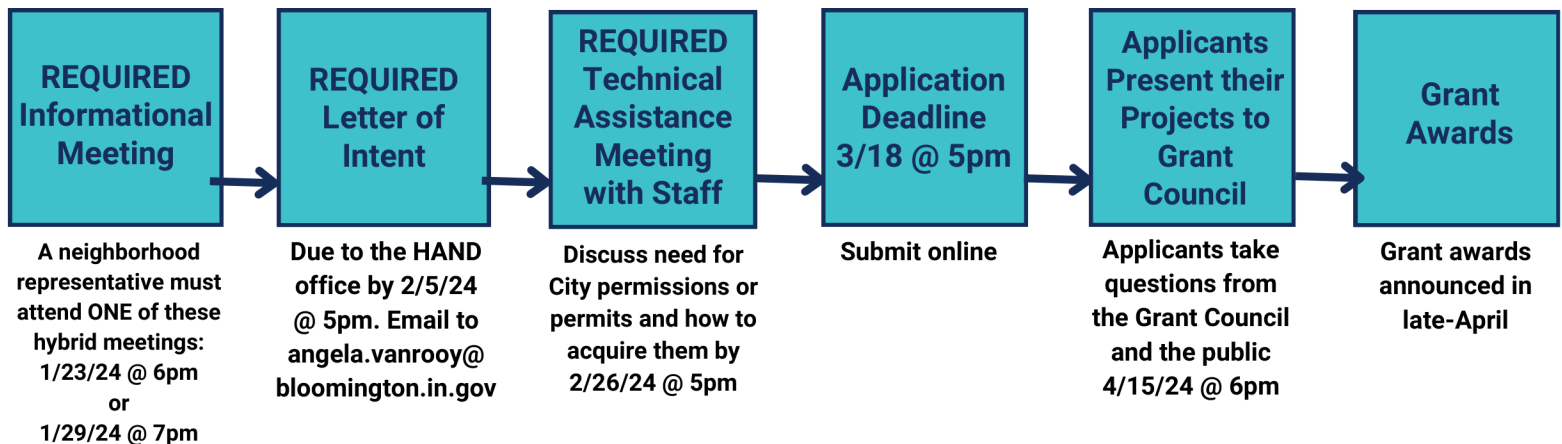
- A majority of group members must reside or do business in a commonly recognized neighborhood.
- Groups may include representatives from churches, schools, businesses, and other institutions operating in the neighborhood, but projects must be administered by neighborhood residents.
- Groups need not be formally recognized neighborhood associations.

What do we fund?

Physical improvement, public art, leadership training, or organizational capacity building projects and events. Up to 10% of funds may be used for design development of a proposed project.

- \$1,100 minimum project budget.
- Applicant groups must provide a 10% match in cash or in-kind labor or materials.
- Physical projects should improve or enhance spaces that are available to neighborhood residents.
- All projects must have an explicit neighborhood benefit.

Application Process and Timeline



Contact HAND! The City of Bloomington is committed to helping interested groups work through program requirements. If you have questions, please contact Angela Van Rooy at 812-349-3505 or angela.vanrooy@bloomington.in.gov.





What are the grant terms and contract requirements?

- 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**.
- 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** and the **City of Bloomington Prohibited Plant Species** for lists of plants to avoid.
- Only one application per neighborhood will be accepted during a given grant cycle. Projects should be determined by consensus within the group.
- The total project cost must be a minimum of \$1,100 (minimum \$1,000 grant plus 10% (or \$100) neighborhood match).
- 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 City permits are allowable.
- 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. The Neighborhood Project Coordinator must record volunteer hours, and will be responsible for collecting all volunteer waivers.
- 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, which must take place on or before June 17, 2024. Failure to meet this deadline may result in forfeiture of awarded funds.
- Projects must be completed and all invoices submitted to HAND by November 15, 2024. If the grantee encounters a problem, and is unable to complete the project by November 15, 2024, the Neighborhood Project Coordinator must contact the HAND office for an extension of time.
- 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 Housing and Neighborhood Development Department's Neighborhood Improvement Grant Program."*
- 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.
- Projects shall be in conformance with all City codes, and 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, Housing and Neighborhood Development, historic district commissions, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.).
- The City retains sole discretion in determining whether or not applications are eligible, and how proposed projects, programs and activities meet the program's guidelines and criteria.

How do grantees receive the award and pay for expenses?

- The Neighborhood Improvement Grant works on a reimbursement basis, due to City policy requiring that goods and services to be delivered prior to payment.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.*
- All invoices and receipts for reimbursement must be sent to Angela Van Rooy at HAND, no later than November 15, 2024. These may be submitted electronically or in hardcopy form.
- 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.





What are the reporting requirements?

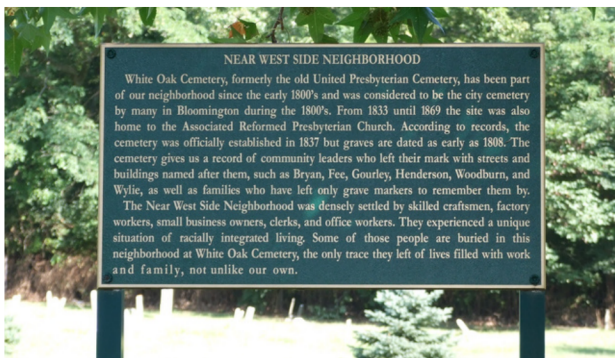
- Final Report - After completion of the project, each grantee must prepare a project evaluation and submit it to HAND within one month of project completion, but not later than December 16, 2024. Electronic submissions are preferred. The final report must include:
 - Project summary: Explain why you undertook this project. What worked, what didn't? What did you learn? How did the neighborhood benefit?
 - Expense report: List all expenses. Provide final total of the neighborhood match.
- Photographs - Grantees must provide at least three digital photographs of project activities with the final report. Please try to include photos from various phases of the project--we particularly love to see people working together. The City reserves the right to use grant pictures for future promotion or publications.
- Volunteer Hours and Waivers
 - Completed **Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet**.
 - Digital copies of all **Release, Hold-Harmless and Indemnification Agreements** signed and dated by each volunteer. If the volunteer is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian must sign the Agreement.

What types of expenses are not covered by grant funds?

- Routine maintenance, on-going operating expenses, replacement of existing items (unless it is a great enhancement over existing the item).
- Duplication of an existing public or private program.
- Enhancement or improvement of individual private property. Common spaces owned by HOAs are allowable.
- Projects in conflict with existing City policy.
- Direct grants, scholarships loans, or stipends.
- Costs associated with preparing grant applications.
- *At city staff discretion, proposals that include capacity building initiatives may qualify to use up to 50% of grant award for facility rental, entertainment, and supplies, including but not limited to music, comedy, and other types of performances; games, prizes, etc. Capacity building could include things such as organizational skills building workshops, leadership training, and efforts to increase membership.*

Requirement to notify adjacent property owners.

- Proposals for physical improvements or art installations carry a requirement that the applicant organization notify all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the proposed project location.
- This procedure has been implemented to ensure proper notification of those whose property may be affected.
- This must be done as part of the *application* process
- Upon request, HAND staff will provide a map and a list of property owners to be notified.
- The required **Notice of Presentation** shall be sent by regular first class mail, and must be mailed on or before March 18, 2024 (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 keep your receipts and include this as a line item in your budget.
- Proof that notice has been mailed shall be sufficient proof of notice under these rules, regardless of actual receipt.
- Proof of notice shall consist of submittal of the following items to the HAND Department:
 - A copy of the Notice of Presentation that was mailed to adjacent property owners.
 - 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.



Near West Side historical marker



Eastside strolling park along Hunter Ave





Application Scoring Criteria

Using the following scoring criteria, the Neighborhood Improvement Grant Council will make recommendations to the Redevelopment Commission, who will determine which projects will be funded and for what amount. 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 non-applicant Bloomington neighborhoods. The Council will review applications and preside over Neighborhood Presentations, during which applicant neighborhoods will present their projects and answer councilors' questions.

Applicants should use these scoring criteria as a guide for preparing their applications. There are a total of 100 points possible.

1. Feasibility/Longevity/Project Readiness 0-35 points

High Score

- The project has a well-defined scope, timeline, goals, detailed steps and measurable outcomes and it will be completed by November 15, 2024.
- The applicant has secured all necessary permits/permissions from relevant City departments/boards/commissions.
- Physical projects are highly visible and accessible to neighborhood residents. There is a realistic plan and budget for on-going maintenance.
- Public art is thoughtfully integrated into the project.
- The request is from a first time applicant.
- The neighborhood association or other relevant group approves of the project and supporting documentation is provided.
- The budget is well thought out and realistic and there is evidence of contributions from a broad representation of the neighborhood residents, businesses, and others.
- The project or activity involves a one-time expenditure.
- There are property-owner letters of support which permit the project to occur on their land/premise.
- The applicant has no previous grants currently in progress through this program.

Mid-Range Score

- The project has a well-defined scope, but the products may not be known at this point. Each step of the process is described.
- The applicant is in communication with relevant City departments/boards/commissions and understands the process, but has not yet secured the necessary permits/permissions.
- The proposal demonstrates a willingness to seek creative and workable solutions.
- Organizations from outside of the neighborhood provide a substantial portion of the contributions.
- The applicant has not yet contacted the property owner to explore support for the project to occur on their land/ premise.

Low Score

- The scope of the project and the final products are not clear. There is no clearly defined process, or schedule for completion.
- The applicant has not contacted the City to determine whether permits/permissions are necessary.
- It is likely that additional funding will be required in the future to complete the project.
- The applicant has an incomplete project which was previously funded by this program.
- The property owner has not provided support for the project to occur on their land/premise.

2. Neighborhood Participation 0-25 points

High Score

- There is a well thought out plan for significant neighborhood involvement in all project phases.
- Participants will actively include people of varying ages, ethnicities, races, incomes, and abilities, as well as a mix of homeowners and renters.
- Residents will have the opportunity to take on leadership roles, develop new skills, and new leaders will emerge.
- The project will strengthen and/or build new partnerships with public/private entities or other community groups.
- There are letters of support, pledges of money and/or services, or other evidence of broad community support.

Mid-Range Score

- There is a general plan for neighborhood involvement for the duration of the project.
- The project attempts to address neighborhood issues, but there is no clear, ongoing commitment to implementation.
- There is evidence of support from some within the community.
- There are plans for an inclusionary process, but the specifics may not be known at this time.

Low Score

- There is no clear plan for neighborhood involvement.
- There is little demonstration of neighborhood commitment or evidence of community support.





3. Community Benefit 0-25 points

High Score

- The application is clear and specific on the issue(s) to be addressed and provides documentation of the problem(s).
- The proposal demonstrates a commitment to seek creative and workable solutions.
- The project will benefit a significant number of residents in the neighborhood as well as the larger community.
- The project will improve the health, safety, or quality of life of residents; reduce potential property damage; provide a facility commonly found in other neighborhoods; develop leadership skills of neighborhood residents; or build neighborhood organizational capacity.

Mid-Range Score

- The application states the issue(s) to be addressed, but there is limited documentation as to the extent of the problem.
- The possible outcome will have benefit in localized portions of the neighborhood.

Low Score

- The application is not clear on the issue(s).
- There will be very limited benefit to the neighborhood.

4. Neighborhood Match 0-15 points

High Score

- There are pledges of money, materials, and/or services from the neighborhood association/HOA, neighborhood residents, community partners, and/or local businesses.
- The total neighborhood match (cash, in-kind material donations, in-kind labor @ \$20/hour) exceeds the 10% minimum requirement.
- Neighborhood residents have pledged volunteer hours to fulfill specific roles/jobs directly related to the proposed project.
- Documentation of all pledges is provided (e.g., volunteer hours, commitment letters, bank statements, etc.).

Mid-Range Score

- Contributions from the neighborhood are proposed, but pledges are not secured at the time of application.
- Opportunities for in-kind volunteer labor are not directly related to the proposed project.

Low Score

- There is no documentation of neighborhood resources.



Arden Place neighborhood entrance sign



Maple Heights neighborhood sign





2024 Neighborhood Improvement Grant Guidelines



Online grant application form can be found at bton.in/Imp24 or scan the QR code.



While electronic submission is preferred, please contact HAND if you require a paper application.

Detailed application instructions

Please use the Application Scoring Criteria to guide your responses as you prepare your application. Items in **BOLD** refer to specific required documents that can be downloaded from the Neighborhood Improvement Grant webpage: bton.in/r8aZO.

A) Project Proposal

- Describe the project and the rationale for undertaking it, include timeline, tasks, outcomes or products, responsible parties, project completion date, and plans for ongoing maintenance. 500 words or less.
- Attachments A -- Upload supporting documents:
 - Letter of support from your neighborhood organization.
 - Letter(s) of support from any partnering organizations (e.g., schools, churches, businesses).
 - **Project Work Plan**
 - Permit or letter of approval from applicable City department, board, or commission OR evidence that these are being sought.
 - Maps, site plans, design drawings, photo examples, as appropriate.
 - Letter from property owner granting permission for project to occur on their land/premises.
 - List of previous funding from HAND, including year, grant program, project description, dollar amount awarded, and project status.

B) Neighborhood Participation

- Describe neighborhood involvement in all phases of the proposed project. Who is involved? What sectors of the community do they represent? How did you conduct outreach? How did your group come to a consensus on the proposed project?
- Attachments B -- Upload supporting documents:
 - **Volunteer Hours Computation Sheet**
 - **Notice of Presentation**
 - **Affidavit of Notice to Adjacent Property Owners**
 - **Attestation of Neighborhood Inclusivity**

C) Community Benefit

- Explain how the project solves a specific problem/issue or fulfills a neighborhood need and why your proposed project is the best solution. Describe how the project will benefit your residents, as well as other members of the community and/or area organizations.

D) Budget and Neighborhood Match

- Provide a summary and explanation of the figures provided in your Grant Budget Template, including how you arrived at your figures for materials and services to be purchased. Please provide the name, address, phone, and email address/website for each vendor with whom you plan to do business. Explain 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. Maximum of 15 in-kind hours per individual volunteer).
- Attachments D -- Upload supporting documents:
 - **Neighborhood Improvement Grant Budget Template**
 - Itemized quotes from businesses who will provide necessary products or services.
 - Letters from individuals or organizations (on letterhead) pledging specific donations. If donations are in-kind (e.g. donated materials or professional services), please include the donation's retail value.
 - Bank statements from your neighborhood group demonstrating cash on-hand (only needed if your group plans to use cash as a portion of your neighborhood match).
 - Signed **Volunteer Commitment Form** from each volunteer, indicating the number of hours pledged to the project (maximum of 15 hours/individual). Application preparation may NOT be counted towards the neighborhood match portion of your budget.

Additional resources

Links to these additional resources can be found on the Neighborhood Improvement Grant webpage: bton.in/r8aZO.

- Vendor documents for Office of the Controller
- Waiver, Release, and Hold-Harmless Agreement
- Neighborhood Services 2024 calendar
- A Guide to the Regulated Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species of Indiana
- City of Bloomington Prohibited Plant Species

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HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT