



Neighborhood Grants Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

I have some repairs I need to do on the inside of my home. Can I use a grant for this?

The projects funded through Neighborhood Grants are meant to affect the physical or social aspects of your neighborhood. While improving the inside of your home would benefit you, we want these projects to have a visual or social impact the whole community can enjoy. In order to maximize the impact of these grants, we ask that any home repair projects incorporate at least three separate homes that are close to each other, and that all repairs take place on the exterior, street facing side of the homes.

Our group has identified significant home repairs as a need (e.g. roof replacements). Can I use a grant for this?

Due to the small nature of these grants, we are unable to fund costly projects such as significant home repairs. Because there is a limited pool of funds available each year, and the goal is to fund multiple projects, large projects that only impact a few households are unlikely to be approved. However, your group may still want to get quotes before deciding to submit or not.

I don't really know many of my neighbors and I'm not sure they are interested in doing neighborhood projects. What do I do?

All of your neighbors inherently have a stake in the community and its development by living where they do. Emphasize the endless possibilities of this grant and the ways you can work together to add value to your neighborhood. By engaging your neighbors in this discussion, you can come up with a project idea together that would best meet the needs of the community. Remember, you don't have to be a part of a large group to make an impact. Start by trying to recruit 1-2 neighbors to the discussion. You can expand from there.

I don't have many neighbors on my block. What do I do?

These grants are not limited to blocks. Any group of residents may apply. So, if there are only a few houses on your block, try reaching out to people on the next block over. Or approach your church or social groups to get involved. If you want to know more of your neighbors, consider doing a social project that will engage neighbors from areas that are outside of your immediate block.

Will Habitat help me with planning & executing my project? (Ordering supplies, lending tables and chairs, providing volunteers, etc.)

Your projects should be driven by the people on your project team rather than by Habitat Chicago. We will provide the funding for your project, as well as information about additional resources, but we will not be able to supply volunteers, materials, or services such as ordering materials.

Do I need to live in West Pullman or Greater Grand Crossing to apply for a grant?

We understand that community stakeholders can be involved in a neighborhood in a variety of ways beyond living there, including working or attending church in the area. As such, anyone can apply for a grant, as long as their project takes place in West Pullman or Greater Grand Crossing. However, we do strongly prefer project groups who have a direct tie to the neighborhood and incorporate residents, because the people that live in an area tend to have a strong understanding of the community priorities as well as the assets and resources that are present there.

How much funding can I expect from a grant?

The average grant is generally \$500-\$1,200, but depending on the nature and scope of each project, some grants may fall under or above these amounts. Ultimately, grant funding will depend on the actual costs associated with your project. That's why it is important to create an accurate materials list and budget when you apply for your project, because this will influence the amount of your grant award. The goal here should be to request enough funds to be able to successfully execute your project (materials, food, tools, fees, etc.) while also being aware of how to be efficient with your request so the most amount of neighborhood groups as possible can participate in the program.

I don't know how much my project will cost. What do I do?

Start by creating a list of all of the materials and/or services you think you will need to complete the project, then get someone else to look at the list. Different knowledge sets will help fill out a more complete list. Once you've got your list, look online or in-stores for the prices of those items. Record all of your findings on a spreadsheet or table for easy tracking and counting. Comparing online or in-store information to find the lowest prices on items will maximize your project's funding. Don't forget to include taxes and any delivery fees.

I have a rough idea of when I want to do my project. When should I apply?

Project groups are encouraged to submit their applications 1-2 months in advance of when they will require funding. This is because our application review process can take up to 10 business days, and if your application is approved for funding, the grant set up process can take up to an additional 21 days. Applying early is the best way to ensure that you will be able to access your funds when you need them. However, please keep in mind that we will not review applications that are submitted more than 4 months in advance of their project start date.

I am not completely sure how long it will take to do my project. What do I do if I am unable to complete the project in time?

Creating a task list and mapping this onto a timeline will be very helpful at the beginning of your project. Things can take longer than expected, so building in buffer time to complete tasks will help you avoid running out of time. If you come up against roadblocks as you are executing your project, communicate this with Habitat Chicago and we may be able to point you in the direction of additional resources or brainstorm alternate solutions together.

We have a lot of seniors in our group who can't do physical projects. How can they participate?

Seniors may have kids or grandkids that could be recruited to help for physical projects. They could also contribute with other project tasks that do not require physical activity, such as group communication, budgeting and accounting, and research. In some cases, we have also seen

senior group members keep spirits high by baking cookies for volunteers and helping to serve food during events.

How do we address rental properties?

We recommend that you begin by reaching out to the tenants for ways to contact the landlord. Contact the landlord and tell him/her that neighbors are working to improve the block. Ask him/her to participate or at least allow neighbors to do minor work on the premises.

Is it okay to hire someone in our project?

Yes. We realize that you might not be able to do everything on your own and that some projects may require you to hire someone. Whether it's a carpenter or a DJ, you can include their service fees on your application's budget. Getting a quote from a specific organization or individual in advance will give you a better idea of how much their services will actually cost for your project.

Do we need to promote Habitat Chicago in our project?

No. These projects are about you and your project team, not Habitat Chicago. You do not need to promote Habitat Chicago at any point during your project's planning or execution. It's also okay to receive funding for your project from other sources outside of Habitat Chicago.