

BLOCK-BY-BLOCK

Neighborhood Pride Grant Program

Program Description:

The Block-by-Block Grant Program is a resource that provides opportunities for Norfolk residents to become engaged with their neighbors, to develop and enhance relationships with the City, to build mutually productive collaborations with local public and private businesses; to acquire and utilize new and sustainable skills, all while working toward accomplishing their neighborhoods' goals. Through use of available grants, participating civic leagues determine what their neighborhoods' improvement needs are – physical or social – and design, develop and implement those improvement ideas and projects. Project participant groups should reflect the demographics of your community, including youth, seniors, renters, homeowners, business organizations, etc.

Neighborhood Project or Improvement Opportunities:

- Mini-grants up to \$500
- 50/50 Matching grants of \$500 or more up to \$2,500

In an effort to foster citywide participation in the program, the following rules will apply:

- One application per neighborhood/civic league will be funded in a grant cycle
- Civic leagues may only apply for and receive grant funding every two years

Residents' Roles:

- Help promote the program and distribute information packets in their communities
- Attend application workshop(s).
- Submit proposals for projects.
- Work together as good neighbors to plan, participate and implement projects.
- Showcase projects at the Annual Norfolk Neighborhood Expo.

City Staff Roles:

- Advertise and promote grant program.
- Support and facilitate program needs.
- Provide technical assistance as necessary.
- Schedule and facilitate application information workshops.
- Maintain application database, ensure eligibility, and disburse funds.

Grant Cycle:

- One grant cycle annually – Applications are due November 17, 2014 and grants will be awarded in the Spring 2015

Program Guidelines

Who Can Apply?

Any Norfolk civic league or neighborhood association that is a legal entity with non-profit status is eligible to apply. A group qualifying as a civic league needs:

- Open membership to all residents of the neighborhood
- Officers (president, secretary, treasurer)
- Bylaws (a copy must be provided)
- Regular meetings and meeting minutes
- Proposed projects shall be implemented in the neighborhood of residency. All applications require the endorsement of the civic league representing the neighborhood.

Please note: If your neighborhood does not have a civic league but may be interested in forming one, contact the Department of Neighborhood Development at 664-6772 or by email at: communityenrichment@norfolk.gov for assistance.

Eligible Project types may include:

Beautification/Landscaping

- Community gardens
- Neighborhood gateways
- Adoption of vacant lots and repurposing as pocket parks
- Landscaping and/or equipment installation or repairs at neighborhood parks
- Neighborhood bark parks
- Community art projects

If the proposed project is on private land, the applicant must provide written proof of permission to use by property owner, and project must be located in a highly visible area and provide a permanent improvement to the area.

Skill Building Workshops and Trainings

- Career days for neighborhood youth
- Job readiness/workforce development program for young adults
- How to establish a 501c3/non-profit training
- Computer training for seniors (taught by youth)
- Programming for school-age children
- Health Awareness Fair
- Neighborhood Conference participation

Environmental Enhancement Projects

- Wetlands restoration
- Rain gardens
- Shoreline buffer restoration (coordinate approvals with appropriate City departments (Recreation, Parks and Open Space – Parks & Forestry and/or Planning – Environmental Services))

Neighborhood Pride Building Activities/Events

- “National Night Out”
- History Walk of neighborhood (by seniors/adults for children)
- Neighborhood Watch/Neighborhood Safety Fair
- “Back to School” Celebration
- Neighborhood Holiday Celebration
- Good Neighborhood Celebration
- Starting up a neighborhood newsletter or website
- Neighborhood Art Exhibit
- Neighborhood Reunion/Block Party

Supplies, Equipment and Tools

- Neighborhood tool lending program
- Neighborhood tool shed
- Neighborhood sign program

Ongoing or existing projects/events may be considered if the proposal enhances or adds value to the projects/events. (Example: Accessibility ramps/walkways are added at an existing dog park).

Ineligible projects and/or uses of grant funds include:

- Employment wages
- Purchase of alcohol and perishable goods and products (ex. food)

Project Requirements

- Support of the neighborhood civic league or association
- Involvement of residents in all phases of implementation including volunteer labor or “sweat equity.” All work should be completed by residents
- Meet all City codes and conform to all departmental policies
- Obtain all City permits required for construction and project execution
- Future project implementation shall be the responsibility of the applicant or a designee and plan must be submitted with application.
- Applicants are encouraged to use Norfolk businesses, unless products are not available locally

Application Requirements

- Clearly explain the intended project
- Outline the neighborhood issue the project will address
- Explain the anticipated benefits of the project to the neighborhood and residents
- Describe the extent of resident participation in the project's implementation
- Provide an estimate of all costs associated with completing the project. If applicable, identify sources of match.
- Provide an ongoing maintenance/sustainability plan as part of application. Explain how the activity will be continued without BBB grant funds.
- Demonstrate that the applicant has received civic league endorsement. A civic league may endorse multiple projects; however, only one per neighborhood will be funded in a grant cycle.

Selection Process

Application Review and Selection

- All applications will be reviewed for eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will be returned with a letter of denial.
- A committee, comprised of Norfolk citizens including Civic Opportunity and Outstanding Leadership (COOL) and Environmental Awards for Recycling in Norfolk's Neighborhood (EARNN) award recipients and city staff, will recommend which projects should be funded
- Successful applicants will be notified by letter of their award
- Applicants will be requested to sign an agreement explaining the responsibilities and expectations of each party
- There will be a meeting to explain each section of the agreement, deadline for completing the entire project, close-out reporting, etc.

Selection and Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be scored by a standardized set of criteria including:

- Level of resident involvement and project participation
- Tangible product/ measurable benefit and impact to the community as a whole
- Extent to which objectives are feasible and project is realistic and well-planned
- Whether projects benefits will be sustained over time
- Development of partnerships and collaborations with other businesses and organizations to complete project(s)
- Ability of applicant to raise matching funds

For unfunded projects, support will be provided on how to craft a successful proposal in the future.

Things to Remember

- Be sure to demonstrate neighborhood involvement

- Any applicable permit fees, insurance coverage and approvals that may be required (e.g. electrical and/or plumbing permits, special events permits) are the responsibility of the applicant and should be included in the total project cost
- Check with Public Works Department if your project is in a public right-of-way
- Check with the Planning Department to make sure your project is in compliance with City codes or if it needs a variance
- If your neighborhood is considering a neighborhood pride building event or celebration, contact the Special Events Office for specific information about possible fees and requirements
- Before you dig, check with Miss Utility (dial 811 or 1-800-552-7001)