

Arcata Redevelopment Agency

Neighborhood Improvement Program Guidelines

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Arcata Redevelopment Agency, herein referred to as the Agency, has established a Neighborhood Improvement Grant Program to provide financial assistance and incentives for neighborhood groups to develop and implement projects benefiting their respective neighborhoods.

1.1 PROGRAM GOALS

- A. Provide neighborhoods with resources to address their concerns and issues.
- B. Focus responses by City Departments to neighborhood requests for assistance, not to augment routine City maintenance or projects already funded by the City.
- C. Educate residents about the organizational structure of the City and its services, resources and procedures.
- D. Ensure that limited City resources are directed to the highest priorities of the neighborhoods.
- E. Empower residents to take responsibility for solving concerns in their neighborhoods.
- F. Encourage neighborhood pride.

2.0 PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

2.1 INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- A. Projects that do not take place in the Redevelopment Agency's Project Area.
- B. Projects located more than 200 feet from a residential neighborhood.
- C. Physical improvements or additions that are not on publicly owned property or dedicated public access easements.
- D. Projects that will not be beneficial and free to the general public.
- E. Projects that do not comply with adopted City plans and policies.
- F. Projects must be feasible to complete within a nine-month period from the date of the execution of the grant agreement, with a maximum one 60-day extension.
- G. Improvement projects identified as elements of an ongoing City service, replacement cycle or routine maintenance.
- H. Projects involving on going operating expenses such as paying for staff or publishing a monthly newsletter will not be funded.
- I. The primary purpose of the project cannot be the advancement of any religious purpose.
- J. Projects that benefit specific individuals, such as grants, scholarships or loans.
- K. For a list of project evaluation criteria please see Section 4.4 B and C.

2.2 PROJECT GOALS

- A. Establish partnerships between neighborhood associations and other under-represented community-based organizations.
- B. Provide opportunities for under-represented communities to become engaged in the neighborhood system.
- C. Result in re-invigorating community participation and implementation activities associated with the long-term vision for Arcata.

- D. Reduce visual and physical blight in City neighborhoods.
- E. Improve awareness and familiarity between neighborhood residents.

3.0 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- A. Applicants must reside or work within the Redevelopment Project Area. Neighborhood business owners or other stakeholders may also participate in collaboration with residents. Applicants for the Affordable Housing funds must be residents of an Affordable Housing Complex within the Redevelopment Project Area.
- B. Applicants must form a Neighborhood Improvement Team with a minimum of 4 members to serve as a working group and maintain contact with the City on this program.
- C. One primary contact person must be identified within the Neighborhood Improvement Team to be the point of contact for City staff.
- D. The neighborhood cannot reapply before completing the projects funded by this grant.

4.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 APPLICATION PERIOD

- A. Application period opens July 1st of each year and is dependent on the Agency appropriation of program funding.
- B. Submission deadline for applications will be the last business day in September or another date as approved by the Community Development Director.

4.2 APPLICATION INSTRUCTION

- A. Fill out application form: Applicants will complete an application form and attach supporting documentation as necessary. Application forms can be picked up at the Community Development Department in Arcata City Hall at 736 F Street. It is recommended that you contact the Program Coordinator to schedule a pre-application meeting to discuss the proposed project and any insurance or other concerns that should be considered prior to application submittal. While this is not required, the meeting may help provide assistance and answer questions regarding the application form, supporting documentation and type of proposed project.
- B. Attach supporting documentation:
 - 1. Documentation of neighborhood support from at least 15 separate households.
 - 2. Project budget.
 - 3. Project work plan.
 - 4. Documentation of commitment to a 10% in-kind or cash match.
 - 5. Drawings with dimensions and specifications for projects involving construction (need not be engineered drawings).
 - 6. Photos of the site.
 - 7. Map or sketch detailing project location.
 - 8. Statement of approval from the appropriate City Department.

4.3 APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

- A. Please submit all applications materials to the Community Development Department, see section 7.0 for contact information, by the announced deadline.
- B. Late applications will be kept on file until the first award process has closed. If not all funds are allotted to applicants in the initial round; applications will be accepted until all

funding is awarded. If the selected applicant(s) does not meet the Conditions of Approval (see Section 5.1 C) as outlined in the Award Announcement letter within 90 days of contract execution, the Executive Director may award the funds to the next project or open a new funding round.

4.4 APPLICATION EVALUATION

- A. Recipient selection will involve the review and evaluation of applications and supplemental materials by the City's Economic Development Committee at their next regular meeting following the application deadline. Subsequent to this review, the Agency will make an award offer and negotiate conditions of approval with the successful applicant. After these conditions are met, the grant will be awarded.
- B. The Agency has developed threshold criteria to assist in the evaluation and selection of grant recipients. The threshold evaluation criteria includes, but is not limited to the following (no particular order):
1. Project is located with the Redevelopment Project Area.
 2. Project is located within 200 feet of a residential neighborhood and on publicly owned property.
 3. Contact information for a Neighborhood Improvement Team of at least 4 members from separate households has been provided.
 4. Applicant has provided documentation of neighborhood support from at least 15 separate households within the neighborhood boundaries as defined in the application.
 5. Applicant has provided a detailed budget that reliably represents the project expenses.
 6. Applicant has provided documentation of commitment to a 10% in-kind or cash match. No City, Agency or other pass through funds are eligible to count toward the match.
 7. Applicant has provided a work plan that documents project completion within budget and within 9 months.
 8. Applicant has provided photos and a map of the site.
 9. Applicant has provided a statement of approval from the appropriate City Department.
 10. Project integrates with the City's General Plan and is consistent with City policy and ordinances.
- C. After the Committee has confirmed that all threshold criteria have been met, applications will be evaluated based on the following:
1. Project will eliminate physical or visual blight. (5 points possible)
 2. Project will have a useful life of 4 or more years. (5 points possible)
 3. Project will alleviate a documented general public health conditions in the neighborhood. (5 points possible)
 4. Project will improve general public safety conditions in the neighborhood. (5 points possible)
 5. Applicant has documented neighborhood support from at least 30 separate households. (5 points possible)

5.0 GRANT PROJECT WORK REQUIREMENTS

5.1 CONTRACT AGREEMENTS

- A. Within 45 days of recommendation from the Economic Development Committee, the Agency will issue Award letters to grant recipients, including Conditions of Approval and a Contract Agreement.
- B. A sample contract is attached (Attachment B). The laws of the State of California shall govern the contract executed between the successful Applicant and the City and any interpretations or constructions thereof. Further, the place of performance and transactions of business shall be deemed to be in the City of Arcata, State of California, and in the event of litigation, the exclusive venue and place of jurisdiction shall be in the State of California and more specifically, in Humboldt County.
- C. Conditions of Approval must be met prior to distribution of funds, except up to 20% for planning and design, and must be met within 90 days of the contract execution date. Conditions of Approval will include:
 - 1. All grant recipients must meet the City of Arcata's insurance requirements and submit proof of insurance coverage in amounts to the satisfaction of the City's Purchasing Agent on a project-by-project basis. **This requirement must be met prior to the distribution of planning and design funds;** once this requirement has been met, recipients may begin using funds for planning and design costs.
 - 2. Approval from the City Committee(s) that typically oversees projects similar to the proposed project.
 - 3. A schedule of work must be coordinated with the assigned City Department including a completion date within 9 months of the date of contract execution. A maximum of one 60-day extension will be allowed.
 - 4. Grant recipients must also work with City staff to choose one of two payment options as outlined in Section 6.3.
 - 5. Projects involving physical improvements may be subject to review by the City's Design Review Committee.
 - 6. If required, additional conditions specific to the proposed project must also be completed.
 - 7. When grant recipients have met all Conditions of Approval, the Agency will issue a Notice to Proceed and project work may begin.
- D. Include any proposed exception or changes to the sample contract (Attachment B) in your response. Any proposed exceptions or changes to these provisions will be subject to City approval. If no exceptions are included, the City will expect the applicant to be able to sign the City's contract.

5.2 REPORTS

- A. Progress reports will be mailed out to grant recipients on a quarterly basis to track the progress of the project and to identify any potential timing problems before they arise.
- B. A final report will be required on all funded projects. The following items must be included in the final report:
 - 1. Documentation of attendance at events and activities.
 - 2. A summary of the impact of the project on the neighborhood.
 - 3. Pictures of the final project.
 - 4. Documentation of the total project costs; including grant funds spent and in-kind or cash match funds that were contributed to the project.

6.0 GRANT FUNDING

6.1 FUNDING AMOUNTS

- A. \$10,000 is available to all neighborhoods within the Agency's project area.
- B. \$5,000 is exclusively available to apartment complexes on which the City has placed affordability restrictions.
- C. Applicants in each category may apply for up to the full amount of funding available, however applications for smaller amounts are preferred.
- D. No more than 20% may be used for initial planning and design.
- E. The Agency's Executive Director may award a smaller amount than requested in an effort to maximize the benefit from the available funds.

6.2 GRANT MATCH

- A. Applicants must document commitment of an in-kind or cash match grant for 10% of the grant award.
- B. Volunteer work will count at \$10 per hour and must be documented in writing.

6.3 PAYMENT OF GRANT FUNDS

Payments will only be processed after submission of proper proof of payment to the contractors or vendors. Grant recipients will choose to receive grant payment in one of two ways. *No reimbursement shall be made for work initiated or completed prior to the execution of the Contract Agreement.*

- A. Reimbursement to the Project Team: Grant recipients shall present paid receipts that shall be limited to the reimbursement of actual expenses incurred for the project or activity described in the grant application and shall be limited to the amount approved at the time of execution of the grant agreement.
- B. City Department Sponsor: Grant recipients may enter into an agreement with the appropriate City Department, in which the Department will pay all bills and invoices for project expenses. Any payment made by the City on behalf of grantee for matching costs shall be reimbursed to the City.

7.0 APPLICATION INQUIRIES AND SUBMITTAL

- A. Questions regarding these application procedures should be submitted to the Program Coordinator:

City of Arcata
Community Development Department
Neighborhood Improvement Program
736 F Street
Arcata, CA 95521
Phone: (707) 822-5955
FAX: (707) 825-2029