



**Minneapolis**  
*City of Lakes*

# Community Innovation Fund

City of Minneapolis  
Neighborhood and Community Relations Department  
Crown Roller Mill, Room 425  
105 Fifth Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
[www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr)

## Program Description:

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The Community Innovation Fund provides grants to Minneapolis neighborhood organizations to foster innovative and locally relevant approaches to City identified goals, which are listed in page two. The aim of the program is to provide funding for projects which test concepts in neighborhoods which may later be replicated throughout Minneapolis.

The program is administered by the Minneapolis Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. Applications for funding are reviewed by the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, which will make recommendations for project funding to the Minneapolis City Council.

The Community Innovation Fund was first proposed in the 2008 *Framework for the Future* Report Issued by the NRP Work Group. Below is an excerpt of the section in the Framework that describes the fund:

*The Community Innovation Fund:*

*Grant Funding to Encourage Innovations for City-Identified Priorities*

*A Community Innovation Fund will be established as a companion fund to the Neighborhood Investment Fund. The innovation fund will provide grants to officially designated neighborhood organizations to seek out innovative and locally-relevant approaches to City-identified goals or problems.*

- *The City Council and Mayor will set priorities for this fund on a biannual basis. The Neighborhood and Community Advisory Board will then work with the Council and Mayor to ensure that the design of grants is accessible and relevant to localized programming.*
- *Guidelines for these grants should place a high priority on proposals that reflect collaboration between two or more neighborhood organizations or between neighborhood organizations and other community-based organizations.*
- *The Advisory Board will review proposals and recommend grant awards to the City Council and Mayor.*

*From: Framework for the Future*

As noted, a key objective of the program is to foster collaboration between neighborhood organizations and between neighborhoods and other community-based organizations. The program is also intended to provide grants to neighborhoods throughout Minneapolis.

## **Funding Available:**

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Grants are awarded for a two-year period. For grants awarded for the years 2015-2016, \$300,000 in funding is available. Proposed grant requests must not exceed \$30,000. There is no minimum amount that must be applied for.

## **Eligible Applicants:**

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One or more recognized neighborhood organizations in the City of Minneapolis.

## **Eligible Projects:**

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To be eligible for funding, a project must:

- Be designed to serve Minneapolis residents in a specified geography or community.
- Foster an innovative and/or locally relevant solution to one or more City-identified goals.

## **Ineligible Activities:**

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Fundraising, religious based activities, electoral campaigning, and professional lobbying, food or entertainment.

## **Goals to be addressed:**

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Projects are to propose innovative and/or locally relevant approaches to address the following Goals and Strategic Directions of the City of Minneapolis:

### **Living well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life**

- All neighborhoods are safe, healthy and uniquely inviting.
- High-quality, affordable housing choices exist for all ages, incomes and circumstances.
- Neighborhoods have amenities to meet daily needs and live a healthy life.
- High-quality and convenient transportation options connect every corner of the city.
- Residents and visitors have ample arts, cultural, entertainment and recreational opportunities.
- The city grows with density done well.

## **One Minneapolis: Disparities are eliminated so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper**

- Racial inequities (including in housing, education, income and health) are addressed and eliminated.
- All people, regardless of circumstance, have opportunities for success at every stage of life.
- Equitable systems and policies lead to a high quality of life for all.
- All people have access to quality essentials, such as housing, education, food, child care and transportation.
- Residents are informed, see themselves represented in City government and have the opportunity to influence decision-making.

## **A hub of economic activity and innovation: Businesses – big and small – start, move, stay and grow here**

- Regulations, policies and programs are efficient and reliable while protecting the public's interests.
- The workforce is diverse, well-educated and equipped with in-demand skills.
- We support entrepreneurship while building on sector (such as arts, green, tourism, health, education and high-tech) strengths.
- We focus on areas of greatest need and seize promising opportunities.
- Infrastructure, public services and community assets support businesses and commerce.
- Strategies with our City and regional partners are aligned, leading to economic success.

## **Great Places: Natural and built spaces work together and our environment is protected**

- All Minneapolis residents, visitors and employees have a safe and healthy environment.
- We sustain resources for future generations by reducing consumption, minimizing waste and using less energy.
- The City restores and protects land, water, air and other natural resources.
- We manage and improve the city's infrastructure for current and future needs.
- Iconic, inviting streets, spaces and buildings create a sense of place.
- We welcome our growing and diversifying population with thoughtful planning and design.

## **A City that works: City government runs well and connects to the community it serves**

- Decisions bring City values to life and put City goals into action.
- Engaged and talented employees reflect our community, have the resources they need to succeed and are empowered to improve our efficiency and effectiveness.

- Departments work seamlessly and strategically with each other and with the community.
- City operations are efficient, effective, results driven and customer focused.
- Transparency, accountability and ethics establish public trust.
- Responsible tax policy and sound financial management provide short-term stability and long-term fiscal health.

*City of Minneapolis Goals and Strategic Directions adopted by the City Council on March 28, 2014.*

## **Project Timeline:**

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Projects receiving funding are expected to be initiated in 2015 and completed no later than two years after the execution of a funding contract between the City and grant recipient.

## **Applications:**

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### **Selection:**

Applications will be reviewed by the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC). The recommendations by the NCEC for projects to be funded will be forwarded to the City Council for final approval.

The following general criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

- The degree of collaboration between neighborhoods or between neighborhoods and community-based organizations. Individual neighborhoods may apply for funding but joint projects are strongly encouraged, and successful joint applicants will demonstrate an established partnership with the co-applicant.
- The degree to which the proposal addresses an innovative and/or locally relevant approach to one or more City-identified goals or problems.
- The degree to which the project is replicable elsewhere.
- **The ability of the applicant(s) to sustain the project after the grant period.**
- The degree to which the goals and outcomes of the project are clear and fit the proposed budget.
- The level of collaboration proposed between the applicant(s) and City departments in implementing the project or program, where applicable.
- The organizational and management capacity of the applicant to successfully complete the project.

- The level of participation by neighborhood residents working with or through recognized neighborhood organizations in developing the proposal and the degree to which the project engages with residents.
- The degree to which the board of the neighborhood organization submitting the application reflects the demographic makeup of the neighborhood.
- Applications will be assessed as a group to ensure geographic balance among projects to the greatest extent possible.

Not meeting any single criteria will not disqualify an application from consideration.

### **Reporting:**

Payment of the grant funds will be on a reimbursement basis for actual costs incurred by the organization for implementation of the funded project. An amount equal to 25 percent of the grant may be paid by the City to the grant recipient upon execution of a funding contract for project start up costs.

After execution of a funding agreement, funding recipients must submit an interim report to the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department each six months during the course of the project. These interim reports will describe progress on achieving the project goals. At the completion of the funding agreement, funding recipients will be expected to submit a final report to the NCR Department. Reports will include a final account of the use of funds, a description of the accomplishments of the project and how they relate to the project goals, and a description issues encountered in the project and recommendations for further work needed to address these issues.

Funded organizations will be expected to participate in the evaluation of the Community Innovation Fund.

### **Questions:**

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Contact Howard Blin, Community Engagement Manager with the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department, [Howard.Blin@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Howard.Blin@minneapolismn.gov) or 612-673-3163.