

Neighborhood Initiatives Fund (NIF) Pilot Grant Program Guidelines

I. Statement of Purpose

The Neighborhood Initiatives Fund (NIF) Program, administered by the URA’s Economic Development Department, will provide grants in order to:

- **Help unlock the economic and placemaking potential within neighborhoods**
- **Support vision-to-action community investment strategies that build an equitable Pittsburgh**
- **Formalize collaborative partnerships across the City**

The Program is intended to assist nonprofit and community-based organizations with neighborhood-scale projects that improve quality of life and maintain the neighborhood as a desirable place to live. These projects include efforts that encourage investment through vacant property reclamation and stewardship, historic preservation, brownfield redevelopment, public infrastructure improvements, and/or other eligible efforts. Nonprofit organizations with for-profit development partners are also eligible to apply.

It is the intention of this pilot program to increase visibility and accessibility to funding.

II. Schedule

July 12, 2019	Funding round opens
<i>Information Sessions</i>	<i>Schedule to be announced</i>
October 1, 2019	Applications are due
November 2019	Funding awards
December 2019	Enter into grant agreement
December 2020	Funds must be expended

III. Use of Funding

The Program will fund non-housing related place-based initiatives and equitable neighborhood projects and programs. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

Priority will be given to non-housing projects that identify the strategies and tactics associated with the proposed neighborhood initiative or project and how the community will benefit from those strategic efforts. Potential tactics include but are not limited to:

- A. Conceptual design and engineering;
- B. Land remediation;
- C. Vacant property activation;
- D. Historic preservation;
- E. Commercial district revitalization; and/or
- F. Public realm improvements.

IV. Eligible Grantees

- A. Nonprofit entities (includes government agencies)
- B. Nonprofit organizations with for-profit development partners

V. Eligible Activities

Non-housing neighborhood projects that benefit the community and catalyze economic development. Hard and soft costs are eligible if they fall into these categories:

- A. Vacant property reclamation and stewardship;
- B. Historic preservation;
- C. Brownfield development;
- D. Construction of public space and neighborhood infrastructure improvements, including, but not limited to:
 - Streetscape improvements;
 - Transit and transportation-related improvements;
 - Parks and open space improvements;
 - Green infrastructure; and or
 - Public art.

VI. Non-eligible Uses

- A. Projects outside of the City of Pittsburgh
- B. Residential dwellings or the residential portions of mixed-use buildings
- C. Improvements proposed in the City right-of-way that have not been approved and/or coordinated with the City
- D. Improvements proposed on properties without site control
- E. Operating, marketing and promotional expenses
- F. Travel expenses or any lodging/hotel expenses
- G. Operating, overhead, or ongoing programming and maintenance
- H. Administrative and development fees

VII. Parameters of Grant

There are two tiers of available grants:

- A. Tier 1 – Under \$20,000
No matching requirements
- B. Tier 2 - \$20,000 to \$100,000
Matching requirement: For every two dollars (\$2) of Program funds invested into a project, there must be at least one-dollar (\$1) match invested in the project. Matching funds must come from non-URA and non-city sources.

The Neighborhood Initiatives Fund Program investment in a project will not exceed \$100,000 and is subject to availability of funding.

VIII. Procedures for the Grant

- A. The project must meet all State and Federal statutory mandates (i.e., wage rates, insurance/bonding requirements, competitive bidding). See attached for sample Grant Agreement with related compliance items.
- B. The project must document the funding match if required (include grant award letter, grant agreement, or letter of commitment for funds).
- C. The URA acknowledges the City of Pittsburgh's goal of 18 percent minority and 7 percent women business enterprise participation in projects with total projects costs of \$250,000 or greater. The MWBE goals apply to professional service contracts of \$75,000 or greater. All successful applicants are required to demonstrate and document a good faith effort to obtain MWBE participation in work performed with the use of URA funding for projects or activities that meet or exceed the aforementioned thresholds.
- D. All properties rehabilitated under NIF are subject to inspections by the URA.
 - 1. The URA Site Advisor will review the scope of work and conduct an initial inspection of the property.
 - 2. The URA will review the scope of work write-up to determine if the cost estimates for the proposed scope are reasonable.
 - 3. Contracts will be subject to a competitive bidding process or subject to the URA review of the consultants' or contractors' proposed costs.
 - 4. The Grantee and the chosen consultants and/or contractors is/are bound by all relevant payment and inspection procedures imposed by the URA.
 - 5. The URA Construction Advisor will conduct on-site stage inspections for construction contracts or shall review for consultant contracts at the time the Grantee requests reimbursement for work completed. Payment requests will need to include proof of payment to consultants.
 - 6. At the time the work is completed, a final inspection is conducted by the URA Construction Advisor for construction, and staff will review for consultant scopes. A Senior Construction Supervisor or Manager may also inspect the property. If necessary, a City Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections Advisor may also perform an inspection of the completed work.
- E. The project will be assigned a grant coordinator. Additional technical assistance may be provided if requested.
- F. This is a reimbursement grant. Grantees must request payments on the proper URA form(s), duly signed and approved by the grantee, for a specified dollar amount. If a match is required, the payment request must document the matching payment. Final payments will not be released until all required permits or relevant approvals have been documented, if applicable.
- G. Final payments will not be released until a final grant report is submitted. The final grant report must document the following:
 - 1. How the project fulfilled the goals of the program (improved quality of life and equitable neighborhood investment)

2. Measurable positive impacts (job creation, placemaking, expansion of the City's tax base, etc.)
 3. Construction and permanent job creation, including number of local resident jobs and wage rates
 4. Funding leveraged as a result of NIF funding
 5. MWBE good faith effort and participation rates if applicable
- I. Recipients will be required to expend grant funds for the project within 12 months from the date of the grant agreement.

IX. Conditions and Criteria for Grants

Proposals must meet the following criteria to be eligible for grants:

- A. The project must demonstrate public support (i.e., undertaken by a community-based organization, letters of support from community organizations/council office(s), public meeting minutes, etc.).
- B. The project must be financially feasible.
- C. Project match must be committed.
- D. The project must contribute to neighborhood stability or revitalization.
- E. The project must be in compliance with a neighborhood comprehensive plan (if one is available).
- F. The project must include a maintenance plan, if applicable.

Because there may be insufficient funds to approve all eligible proposals that meet the minimum criteria, proposals will be evaluated based on additional criteria measuring public benefits, including, but not limited to:

- A. Degree of distress of the neighborhood in which the initiative/project will be located (priority will be given to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) neighborhoods);
- B. Impact of initiative/project to be undertaken (priority will be given to applications which identify workforce development opportunities);
- C. The amount of match; and the
- D. Capacity of the organization and the amount of technical assistance required. Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) are preferred but not a requirement.

X. Design Standards

Projects that propose work in the public right-of-way, (publicly-owned streets and sidewalks), must comply with standards established by the City of Pittsburgh. URA and City staff will review all designs to ensure that they are consistent with the approved City standards. The City's right-of-way procedures policy can be downloaded [here](#).

Projects that propose public art on City-owned property or in the City's right-of-way must have the project reviewed by the City's Art Commission. The Art Commission's procedures can be accessed [here](#).

XI. Allocation of Funds

Grant funds will be prioritized for CDBG eligible areas. A map of CDBG eligible areas can be viewed [here](#). Geographic diversity is a goal of this program.

XII. Additional Information

For additional information, please contact the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh's Economic Development Department at: (412) 255-6560.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh abides by all applicable laws and regulations regarding nondiscrimination and refrains from discriminating on the basis of age, race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political or union affiliation, and/or disability. No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination solely on the basis of any of the above factors under the loan and grant programs operated by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh.