Instructions and Frequently Asked Questions

Action Grants
Fueling People Power
Neighbor Up is a network of 3,000 people in Greater Cleveland and beyond committed to getting involved in our communities and finding solutions to the issues that plague our neighborhoods and country. We build bridges across lines of difference to combat racism and historical inequities by using people power and everyday democracy to create an extraordinary world right where we live.

Neighbor Up started in 2012 with a small group of 25 people. It emerged from the pain and isolation many of us were feeling. We felt it and heard it from our neighbors at community meetings, on front porches, and in the streets. There was a feeling that the “system” was rigged; that most of the decision-making about neighborhoods was made by a powerful few, and that residents weren’t being taken seriously. Often neighbors were invited to come to community meetings and respond to plans that had already been created. There was a lack of information about how to truly get involved.

More needed to be done to build power among the residents in our neighborhoods, and to connect with the institutions in our city on a level playing field so we could work together. At the same time, there was a window of opportunity to work with the philanthropic community as it undertook work to make major investments in Cleveland neighborhoods.

A small group of neighbors and Neighborhood Connections staff got together and had many conversations about what could be done differently. We saw so many assets in our neighborhoods and determined there needed to be a place where all voices were heard. We needed more positive spaces to: connect with diverse people; build trust, understanding and a sense of interdependence; and then, spark action.

This small group decided to work to create a new network where these positive, energetic and hopeful gatherings were the norm, and where we would work together to create a more just, equitable and inclusive Cleveland.

Neighbor Up was born.

Since then, Neighbor Up members have created hundreds of small-scale initiatives in their neighborhoods, pushed hard to get seats at the table and to make their voices heard where big decisions were being made, and successfully worked on issues such as health equity, infant mortality, lead poisoning, employment and racial equity.

By applying for a Neighbor Up Action Grant, you and your key leaders are committing to do the same – to create a more just, equitable, and inclusive neighborhood where power is shared, where you bring your best selves and work across lines of difference, and where you strive to create an extraordinary world right where you live.

There’s still a lot more work to be done. We’re glad you are joining us. We look forward to learning with you.

Welcome. And Neighbor Up!
The Neighbor Up VALUES

**Abundance**
We believe that most of what we need to improve our communities already exists. We believe that by identifying neighborhood assets and connecting to them, positive change will happen. A neighborhood’s largest asset is the people who live there, and assets also include groups of neighbors, organizations, public and private institutions, physical space, the local economy (exchange), and neighborhood culture.

**Aspirational Spaces**
We believe that well-designed and effectively stewarded spaces feed the aspirational energy of residents and can unleash the capacity for creative local solutions and cultivate new connections across class, ethnic, racial, geographic and generational divides.

**Authentic Relationships**
We believe in the power of authentic relationships. We believe that every person has gifts and strengths they bring to the community table and that everyone is needed to create a stronger, healthier Cleveland.

**Equity**
We believe we need to work to create a fairer, more just community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and to become the person they were meant to be. We work with residents, civic groups, public and private institutions, and congregations to bring people together across lines of difference to build understanding and empathy and to work together to break down oppressive structures and systems.

**Inclusion**
We believe everyone is needed and everyone has important contributions to make to the community. We believe that marginalized people who have been historically excluded based on race, gender, sexual orientation, poverty, or other biases need to be heard and recognized, and must be at the center of designing and implementing the solutions to create a more just and equitable community.

**Innovation**
We believe in social innovation. We take risks, believe it’s okay to fail, and believe in the possible. The forms needed to support this work must be flexible and more adaptable than traditional community-based organizations.

**Shared Power**
We believe that as stewards of these aspirational spaces, we must lead from within by fully inhabiting these spaces ourselves, exposing our own questions and vulnerabilities, and working to diminish the impact of positional power on the co-investment process. By creating a diverse network where power is shared, we can create a more just, equitable and inclusive community.
Goals of the Neighbor Up ACTION GRANTS

1. Build Resident Leadership and Ownership in their Neighborhood:

Stimulate and support projects designed and implemented by groups of neighbors that address neighborhood issues. Grants are intended to support the work of everyday people out of their mutual self-interest. We are looking for ideas that originate with a group of people from a neighborhood that are being moved into action as a project, event, or activity. The intent is to support residents as active citizens. Grants are not intended to be used as start-up funds to create more non-profits, to support established non-profits, or to develop more social service programs.

2. Build Community Within Neighborhoods, Especially Across Lines of Difference:

Encourage new and stronger relationships between diverse residents of the community, among grassroots groups, and between grassroots groups and more established organizations: Building relationships is key to transforming neighborhoods. Projects must have the potential to build and strengthen positive relationships inside the neighborhood and must be inclusive and equitable in their design and implementation. By ‘across lines of difference’, we mean building trust and understanding across things that many times separate us (racial, ethnic, religious, generational, geographic, socio-economic, homeowner-renters, resident-institutional, etc.)

3. Build Neighborhood Power:

Support opportunities to develop community leadership, organizational capacity and build community capacity: our grants are intended to help support community members develop their leadership skills and make clear the possibilities of what they can do when they come together.
WHAT GRANT APPLICANTS CAN EXPECT

GRANTSEEKER WORKSHOPS TO HELP PREPARE YOUR PROPOSAL
There are workshops each grant cycle to assist grantseekers in preparing their proposals and to answer their questions. Visit our website (www.neighborupcle.org) or call 216-361-0042 for information on the dates and times of all sessions. First time applicants are strongly encouraged to attend one of these sessions. After attending a workshop session, limited one-on-one technical assistance is available to groups as they develop their proposals.

NEIGHBORHOOD INTERVIEWS WITH THE GRANT MAKING COMMITTEE
After proposals have been submitted and read by members of the Grantmaking Committee, a number of groups will be invited to a conversation with members of the Grant Making Committee to provide additional information about their proposal. A total of four people from your group may attend that conversation.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION ON YOUR PROPOSAL
Applicants will be notified by mail approximately 12 weeks after they submit their proposal about funding decisions.

GRANTEE ORIENTATIONS
For those who receive funding, grantees and their fiscal agent will be required to attend an orientation session prior to fund release. These sessions will provide assistance with the implementation of the grant proposal. One-on-one assistance and mutual support from other grassroots groups is encouraged and will be available during the grant period on a routine basis and as needed.

NETWORK BUILDING, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT
Neighbor Up has many opportunities for you and members of your group to meet other people for mutual support, to get connected to trainings and peer support. A Neighbor Up Connector will meet with you once you get funded to learn more about your project, see what connections may be helpful, and invite you into the Neighbor Up Network.

GRANT REPORTING
Within a month after grant activities are completed, grant recipients must complete a final report telling the story of the project, including its challenges and accomplishments.
GRANT GUIDELINES

- We award grants between $500 and $5000 to groups of neighbors that address the goals listed above.
- Grants are limited to work and projects being held in Cleveland and East Cleveland.
- Projects must be neighborhood specific. Groups must be comprised of neighborhood residents and stakeholders, and the project or event must be held in the same neighborhood.
- Occasionally, we will fund groups where the community members are not located in one neighborhood (i.e. Native American groups, LGBTQ groups, advocacy groups)
- All proposed projects must be planned and led by a group of at least three unrelated community members of the neighborhood. Ideally, all three key leaders are residents in the neighborhood. However, other types of community members — groups of merchants, parents and students at a school, congregants at a local religious organization — may apply. Preference, however, is given to projects led by three neighborhood residents.
- Proposed projects need to build positive relationships across lines of difference (race, ethnicity, generations, socio-economically, homeowners with renters, various streets, etc.)
- Proposed projects need to be inclusive of all people in the targeted community —everyone has gifts to give and may participate. The goal of these grants is to bring people together to build good, strong relationships.
- Proposed projects need to be equitable in terms of who is involved and who benefits. Projects that are focused on building a more equitable neighborhood are favored.
- Proposed projects need to build the skills, wisdom and experience of the organizing group. We want groups applying to build power — individually, organizationally, and/or neighborhood power to take greater roles in their neighborhood.
- Community based organizations with paid staff (Community development corporations, Settlement Houses, etc.) must be involved only as a support to the proposed project, not leading the project. Our first priority is to fund resident-led projects.
- Projects must make use of the strengths and assets that already exist in the community. These strengths and assets are shown through the dollar-for-dollar match in the budget. Strengths may include the commitment of the residents, active networks and strategies already in place. Assets are institutions, organization and people whose resources, gifts and talents are used to make the project happen. Applicants are encouraged to think creatively about neighborhood assets and how they can be used to accomplish projects. (For example, vacant land is an “asset” that can be used to provide garden space or a park.)
- Grant recipients must secure a dollar-for-dollar match equal to or greater than the amount requested from the program. The match can be in the form of cash, volunteer labor or donated goods or services such as donated space, equipment, etc. (We value volunteer labor at $12 per hour.) The value of the community assets being utilized by a group is used as a match to the grant request.
- Grant applications should include letters of support from community partners whose cooperation or involvement is necessary to the project’s success. The letters should indicate their commitment to contribute in specific ways to the project. When appropriate, the value of the resource should be quoted in letters of support. In addition, letters of commitment from governmental agencies or schools should be included when appropriate.
- Grant duration is up to one year. A group may apply for only one grant at a time. Groups may receive only one grant within a one-year time period.
- Grants are reviewed and funds are awarded twice yearly. For more information and exact dates, check www.NeighborUpCLE.org or call 216-361-0042. All applications must be received by 5 p.m. on the due date.
- Any neighborhood-based group is eligible to apply, even if they are not an incorporated, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Groups without official nonprofit status will need to partner with a 501(c)(3) group to serve as the fiscal sponsor (see below). Grant applicants that are 501(c)(3) organizations should include a copy of their IRS determination letter with their application.
A FISCAL SPONSOR MUST

- Be a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and in good standing with the IRS.
- Provide a letter indicating a willingness to function as a fiscal sponsor along with their 501(c)(3) IRS determination letter.

WE DO NOT MAKE GRANTS TO

- Capital campaigns
- Endowment funds
- For-profit entities
- Fundraising events
- Government agencies or departments
- Individuals
- Large non-profits organizations
- Political groups
- Religious organizations for religious purposes
- Single businesses

NEED SOME INSPIRATION OR SOME IDEAS?

Come hear from other Neighbor Up members at gatherings across the city.

Visit our website or @NeighborUpCLE on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for more inspiration and to learn how you can get involved.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can an individual receive money?
No, individuals are not eligible. Groups applying must have three or more key members. Moreover, grants are to be used by groups for a neighborhood project, initiative, or event; not simply to disperse the grant money among the members of the applying group.

Will grant dollars be distributed evenly among Cleveland neighborhoods and East Cleveland?
When possible, we attempt to provide some level of funding to each neighborhood. However, all grant applications will be reviewed on their merits and some neighborhoods may receive a larger share of the money in any one funding round.

Do you fund other cities or suburbs outside of Cleveland and East Cleveland neighborhoods?
No, funding is only available for projects that take place in Cleveland and East Cleveland neighborhoods.

How large are the grants available?
Grants range from $500 to $5,000 per project. All projects require a dollar-for-dollar match in the form of cash, in-kind donated services, or the contribution of materials, supplies, and other program-related donations. Each year a total of $500,000 is distributed.

Are there any conditions on grants?
Groups will be required to match the grant dollars either with outside funding or in-kind services and to complete assessments and evaluation forms as requested.

Is funding available for renovation to a building that houses an organization?
No. Renovations to dwellings are not within the scope of our mission. This falls under the category of personal funding and, therefore, is not eligible.

What are the deadlines for submitting an application?
Grant applications will be accepted twice a year. Check our website for dates. Applications must be received by 5 p.m. on the deadline date to be considered.

Does a group need to have 501 (c) 3 status?
It is not required that applicants have a 501 (c) 3.

Does a group need to be an established organization to receive a grant?
No. In fact, we welcome proposals from groups that are recently formed – three or four neighbors getting together on a block to do something in their neighborhood. We are looking for the types of groups that everyday people form out of mutual interest or a common purpose, where “members” share decision-making responsibilities and duties, and where people can come and go at will.

What does “neighborhood specific” mean?
Groups need to implement their projects in one specific neighborhood, not in multiple neighborhoods. The reason for this criterion is we want groups to become part of the fabric of a neighborhood, not just provide a service in a neighborhood; they must be connected and engaged in the community. The best example is to be a resident in that neighborhood.
What does “citizen” mean?
A citizen is one who chooses to create the life, the neighborhood, the world from his/her own gifts and the gifts of others. A “consumer” or “client” is one who depends on others to provide what is essential for a full and satisfied life. This term does not refer to status of citizenship within the United States.

Who do we mean by “community members”?
Who are community members? “Everyday people,” not professionals or staff members of non-profit organizations and institutions who provide services to people. Community members are mainly residents. However members of faith-based organizations, merchants associations, student parent organizations, and other civic associations (volunteer groups not paid staff with organizations) can apply as long as they have residents meaningfully engaged in their groups. Community members need to be generating the ideas, planning and implementing these projects - actively investing their own time and resources in the neighborhood.

What does “community building” mean?
This means creating a strong community together. By discovering local assets, connecting these assets to work together, and then creating opportunities for these assets to be productive and powerful together. Community builders successfully discover and mobilize assets by creating relationships among people and connections among community groups.

What does “capacity building” mean?
Learning to do new things, taking on new challenges and doing things better is all a part of capacity building. When residents learn a new skill or strategy and use it, they build their capacity. Community groups that come together to address an issue using a different process than in the past or by adding people to their group, or building new partnerships builds its capacity. Sometimes a group needs tools or other resources to move toward their goals such particular training, information on a strategy, access to particular equipment or supplies. Taking the steps to find and utilize these types of resources is considered capacity building.

How does a group “match” their grant request?
By discovering and tapping the “assets” and resources in your community. There are many assets in every community. Each resource that supports a project has a value that can be used to match the grant request. The value of all donated goods and services are a match to the grant request. Don’t forget – cash can be used to match as well.

How does one “discover” the assets and resources for their match?
By listening to people and what they care about, you will get to know people, groups, and institutional leaders and you will discover many of the strengths in your community. These can be mobilized and connected to what neighbors care about. Use each building block listed below - individuals, associations, institutions, the local economy and the physical world – as a starting place for identifying assets and building relationships and connecting.

Residents/Individuals. The most fundamental resources are residents and other individuals in the community and the gifts, talents and skills they are willing to contribute. Your neighbors have many gifts to contribute if given the invitation and the opportunity.
Local associations in which groups of people act together out of care; for example: neighborhood groups, congregations, self-help groups, garden clubs, a youth group etc.

Local institutions such as businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations; for example: local merchants, parks, libraries, schools, hospitals, nonprofits, and religious institutions.

Local exchange. By sharing personal gifts, swapping, bartering, selling and/or purchasing local goods, and services through a community as people buy, sell, hire and invest.

The physical world, both natural and constructed: rivers, landscapes, buildings, vacant lots, streets, trees, transportation infrastructure, etc.

Neighborhood Culture. Local culture, or ‘the community way,’ often finds expression within stories of the people and the ‘ways’ they have learned through time to thrive and survive within their home places. Stories act as powerful connection points and also help us pass on traditions and important life lessons. Neighborhood culture includes art, storytelling, music, ways of doing things, etc.

Do you provide funding for social service programs?
Our grants are about self-help and community connectedness rather than the help that comes from professionals and experts. These grants are not intended as start up funds for new non-profit organizations or to support existing non-profit or religious organizations with paid staff.

Do you fund faith-based groups and organizations?
Yes, as long as the project is not for religious purposes and does not require participants to be involved in religious services and activities (prayer, worship services, etc.).

Do you fund non-profit organizations?
Yes, however, grants are for people who are connecting with their neighbors to do something that they feel has value in their own community. Not people working on behalf of other people, but people who are working together on behalf of their own community. If there is paid staff with the non-profit applying, we typically will not fund the proposed project.

Do you fund public institutions?
No. Public schools, governmental departments, public libraries, and other government agencies are ineligible for funding. We will, however, fund projects that are organized by community members that affect public schools, public parks, etc., such as programs organized and led by Student Parent Organizations, Friends of public parks, and other programs driven by community members.

Do you fund security cameras?
We strongly believe that the best deterrent to crime is neighbors knowing neighbors and watching out for each other. If groups are applying for security cameras, it must be a secondary approach. The main ingredient in any project must be building relationships.

Do you fund the cost for space and equipment?
Yes, so long as long as it is necessary for your group to do its project and it cannot be obtained through a donation or cannot be borrowed.
**Do you fund the cost for personnel?**
No, we will not fund requests for funds to pay salaries or workers’ wages. Grant funds can be requested to pay for some contract services, and stipends to youth, senior citizens, and other populations in order to keep them engaged, provide an incentive for participation, and recognize their diligence and commitment to a project or program. Funds should not be requested for staff wages or personnel salaries of an organization, institution or business. Requests for funds to pay for contract services must not exceed 50% of the total grant request.

**How many times can a group or organization be funded?**
Groups can only be funded once per year, but can reapply the next year once they have completed their final report. Grantees that have been funded multiple times must demonstrate that they are building on their previously funded project and are working to continue to expand their use of community resources and assets to support their work so as not to be solely dependent upon our grant funds. New groups that apply are preferred over groups that have been funded multiple times.

**Can grant funds be used to pay for a fiscal sponsor?**
No. While we appreciate the assistance fiscal sponsors provide, fiscal sponsors are not to be compensated for this service with grant funds.

**Can individual businesses apply for funding?**
No. Merchants associations (groups of merchants), however, can apply for funding of projects that are created to build connections and relationships in their neighborhood. A merchant in a neighborhood can also be a key leader in a group applying for a grant.

**What does “reducing local emissions or making neighborhoods more resilient to the impact of climate change” mean?**
It means to act in a meaningful way to respond to an already changing climate and that climate actions happens in two main ways: 1) Decreasing the amount of pollution put into the air that trap heat in the atmosphere and cause changes to climate or 2) Increasing the ability of ourselves, our families and our communities to bounce back from the changes already taking place by the heat-trapping pollutants.

**What is the “Triple Bottom Line” sustainability model of people, planet and profit (or equity, environment, and economy)?**
When people use the phrase “bottom line” they are talking about the ONE most important outcome. Think of it like writing out a simple math problem totaling up all the money you made during a garage sale: you put the total (the outcome you decided at the start of the sale as the most important) under the “bottom line.” But with a triple bottom line, you are looking for THREE equally important outcomes. Again, in the example of a garage sale, perhaps you set out to meet your neighbors, cut down on waste, and make money. All three outcomes are equally important to you and you made sure during you garage sale to talk with people who stopped by, donate whatever you didn’t sell, and get some extra cash. By focusing on the triple bottom line, we can help people, protect the planet, and make a profit all at the same time.
Is there a conflict-of-interest policy which prevents members of the Grant Making Committee from reviewing applications from groups that either they or their family members are involved with?
Yes. Each Grant Making Committee (GMC) member is required to disclose their affiliations with community groups and organizations. GMC members do not review proposals from their own neighborhoods.

How are the members of the Grant Making Committee chosen?
There are 24 members on the Grant Making Committee representing the diverse skills and knowledge of Cleveland and East Cleveland. Nominations are submitted by residents, organizations or other neighbors in the community. A team of incumbent committee members interview and select additional members from the nominees who choose to apply. If committee members resign before their term is completed, they are replaced by an alternate.

How long do Grant Making Committee members serve?
Each member is appointed to a three-year term. They can serve a maximum of 6 years.

How can I become a member of the Grant Making Committee?
If you’d like to apply or have someone you’d like to nominate, please email us at info@neighborhoodgrants.org.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

You can apply online at www.NeighborUpCLE.org or you can complete the paper application and submit it to:

Neighborhood Connections
The Agora Building
5000 Euclid Avenue, Suite 310
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

All materials must be submitted on 8.5” x 11” sheets of paper. Staple or paper clip application materials. Please do not bind. Submit six (6) copies of your proposal (including the original), and five full copies of your support documents. Copies can be two-sided. Completed application materials must be received by 5 p.m. on the date proposals are due. Applications can be submitted before the deadline. Applications cannot be submitted by fax or email. We will provide you with confirmation that we have received your grant proposal.

Materials submitted with your proposal application will not be returned. Please do not submit cds/dvds, flashdrives or any materials larger than 8.5” x 11”.

If you have questions about the application or program, or need help completing your proposal, please contact us at 216-361-0042, e-mail info@neighborhoodgrants.org or visit www.neighborupcle.org.