



AGENDA

VALLEJO BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING 6:00 P.M. December 6, 2023

Rich Weyrich, Chair
Sheila Tennyson, Vice Chair
LayVette Howard
Roxanne Reyes
Susan Slater
Tarrina Woodson
Sarah Wright

www.cityofvallejo.net

IMPORTANT NOTICE

NOTICE: Members of the Public will be able to participate in-person remotely via Zoom.

Access to City Hall and the Council Chambers will be provided to members of the public 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the Public may provide public comments during the Commission Meeting via ZOOM (<https://ZoomRegular.Cityofvallejo.net>), or via phone, by dialing (669) 900-6833.

For additional instructions on how to speak during public comment, please visit, www.cityofvallejo.net/publiccomment

VIEW THE MEETING: There are four ways you can view this public meeting by:

- In person
- Watch Vallejo local channel 28
- Stream from the City website: www.cityofvallejo.net/Streaming
- Join the Zoom webinar: <https://ZoomRegular.Cityofvallejo.net>

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<https://ZoomRegular.CityofVallejo.net> Option to join

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Enter Meeting ID: 914 0075 0676#

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For additional instructions on how to speak during public comment, please visit,

www.cityofvallejo.net/publiccomment

This AGENDA contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. The posting of the recommended actions does not indicate what action may be taken. If comments come to the Beautification Commission without prior notice and are not listed on the AGENDA, no specific answers or response should be expected at this meeting per State law.

Notice of Availability of Public Records: All public records relating to an open session item, which are not exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, that are distributed to a majority of the Beautification Commission will be available on the City of Vallejo website at www.cityofvallejo.net subject to staff's ability to post the documents prior to the meeting.



The Council Chambers in City Hall is ADA compliant. Devices for the hearing impaired are available from the City Clerk. Requests for disability related modifications or accommodations, aids or services may be made by a person with a disability to the City Clerk's office no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof.

If you have any questions regarding any of the following agenda items, please call the Beautification Commission Staff Secretary at (707) 648-8616.

AGENDA
City of Vallejo Beautification
Commission

December 6, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

4. COMMUNITY FORUM

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A. Recommendation: By motion, Approve the Dec 6, 2023 Agenda

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Recommendation: By motion, Approve the Nov 1, 2023 Minutes

7. REPORT OF THE CITY COUNCIL LIAISON

8. COMMUNITY FORUM

The Presiding Officer shall announce that members of the public have the opportunity to directly address the Commission on items of interest to the public that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission and not on the current agenda. Up to fifteen (15) minutes shall be set aside for the community forum and each speaker shall be allocated up to three (3) minutes, unless time is extended by the Presiding Officer with the Commission's consent. Items of business listed on the agenda shall not be further discussed under the community forum. Anyone desiring to address the Commission may indicate such interest in one of the two ways listed below:

1. Any interested members of the public desiring to communicate with the Planning Commission for this item may approach the podium to speak when the Presiding Officer opens the Community Forum and indicate that they would like to do so.

2. Any interested members of the public desiring to communicate with the Planning Commission for this item may do so via ZOOM:

*<https://ZoomRegular.Cityofvallejo.net> , or by phone: Dial (669) 900-6833. Enter Meeting ID: 914 0075 0676#. Press * 9 to digitally raise your hand from the phone. For additional instructions on how to speak remotely during public comment, please visit, www.cityofvallejo.net/publiccomment. Please know that in-person speakers will be recognized first.*

9. ACTION ITEMS

A. Work Plan Development

- FY 2024-25 Budget Request
- Project List
 - Business Recognition Program
 - Anti-Graffiti Mural Project
 - Anti-Litter Artwork Contest
 - Beautify Vallejo Day

10. NEW BUSINESS

11. REPORT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

12. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

A. Written Communications

- Recology Report YTD Update
- Bloomberg Foundation “Love Your Block” Grant Application ([Nov 2024](#))

13. REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Business Recognition Program Update

B. Graffiti Abatement/Street Mural Program

14. OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

15. FUTURE PRESENTATION REQUESTS

A. **January 2024 – Public Works Director**

16. ADJOURNMENT

I, Shelee Loughmiller, Beautification Commission Secretary, do hereby certify that I have caused a true copy of the above notice and agenda to be delivered to each of the members of the Vallejo Beautification Commission, at the time and in the manner prescribed by law and that this agenda was posted at City Hall, 555 Santa Clara Street, CA at 5:00 p.m. Thursday Nov 30, 2023.

Dated: November 30, 2023

Shelee Loughmiller

**VALLEJO BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
November 1, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER Meeting called to order by Chair Weyrich at 6:00p

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present:

Chair Weyrich

Vice Chair Tennyson

Commissioners Wright, Slater, Reyes (Commissioner Woodson arrived later in the meeting)

Staff Secretary Loughmiller

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA By motion of Commissioner Slater, 2nd by Vice Chair Tennyson, Motion approved unanimously to approve the November 1, 2023 agenda (Commissioners Howard, Woodson absent)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES By motion of Commissioner Slater, 2nd by Vice Chair Tennyson, Motion approved unanimously to approve the September 6, 2023 minutes (Commissioners Howard, Woodson absent)

REPORT OF THE CITY COUNCIL LIAISON – Vice Mayor Verder-Aliga was not present

COMMUNITY FORUM –

Champagne Tafoya asked about the mural at Marin and Georgia. Staff Secretary Loughmiller asked her to send an e-mail to be provided with additional information.

ACTION ITEMS

None

NEW BUSINESS –

- A. Mid-Year Budget Request Development – Will roll over money from previous year to this year, for a total of \$800 for this year
- B. Anti-Litter Art Contest – Commission members expressed a desire to move forward with the process and to have the results of the contest coincide with Earth Day 2024. Commissioner Wright was advised to prepare a recommendation with additional details for moving forward.

REPORT OF PRESIDING OFFICER – Chair Weyrich reported that he attended the Sister City Commission and that a 10-point plan was developed to refresh the Japanese garden. Repairs have been made by Public Works in the meantime.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY – Staff Secretary Loughmiller provided an update on the Graffiti Abatement/Street Mural program and that the Arts Commission Secretary stated the Commission is ok to move forward with the recommendation. She also shared information about the second round of Special Event Sponsorship Program grants that opened this week and that closes December 20, 2023; applications can be submitted online.

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES

Business Recognition Program Update – Vice Chair Tennyson chose options for plaques and the Commission members agreed on the glass option.

Graffiti Abatement/Street Mural Program – Commissioner Slater will prepare to have this presented to Council and Staff Secretary Loughmiller will inquire about when it can be added to the agenda.

FUTURE PRESENTATION REQUESTS – No new requests

ADJOURNED 6:26p

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Signature Rick Wynne

Date 11/5/2023

Attested to: Julie [signature]

Project Work Plan Template

Goal 1:					
Key Action Steps	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Evaluation Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
<i>Define each action step on its own row. Define as many action steps as necessary by adding rows to the table.</i>	<i>An expected completion date (month and year) must be defined for each action step.</i>	<i>An expected outcome must be defined for each action step.</i>	<i>An evaluative measure must be defined for each action step.</i>	<i>A responsible person must be identified for each action step.</i>	<i>Comments are optional.</i>
Goal 2:					
Key Action Steps	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Evaluation Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
Goal 3:					
Key Action Steps	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Evaluation Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
Goal 4:					
Key Action Steps	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Evaluation Methodology	Person/Area Responsible	Comments

BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Board Members:

Weyrich, Rick - Chair

Tennyson, Sheila – Vice Chair

Howard, LayVette

Slater, Susan

Reyes, Roxann

Wright, Sara

Woodson, Tarrina

INTRODUCTION:

The Vallejo Beautification Commission is proud to present the Local Business and Residential Award Program, a visionary initiative dedicated to honoring and celebrating the outstanding contributions of businesses and residents in enhancing the aesthetic appeal of our vibrant community. We embark on this endeavor to recognize the dedicated efforts of those who go above and beyond, transforming ordinary spaces into extraordinary places.

Vallejo thrives on the passion and dedication of its residents and local businesses. The Vallejo Beautification Commission, committed to fostering civic pride and environmental stewardship, has meticulously designed this award program to shine a spotlight on the unsung heroes who make our city visually captivating.

This work plan serves as our compass, guiding the way toward the successful execution of this esteemed initiative. Within these pages, you will find a comprehensive roadmap detailing our strategies and tasks. From meticulous planning to diligent execution, we are devoted to ensuring that this award program not only recognizes the efforts of our community members but also inspires others to take active roles in beautifying our shared spaces.

GOAL 1: Business and Residential Beautification Awards

OBJECTIVES:

- The primary objective of the Vallejo Beautification Commission's Local Business and Residential Award Program is to recognize, celebrate, and reward the exceptional efforts of local businesses and residents who contribute significantly to enhancing the visual appeal and overall beautification of Vallejo. Through this initiative, we aim to:
- Acknowledge Excellence: Recognize businesses and residents for their outstanding contributions to beautification, urban landscaping, and community aesthetics.
- Inspire Community Engagement: Inspire and encourage active participation from businesses and residents in enhancing the visual charm of Vallejo, fostering a sense of pride and community spirit.
- Promote Environmental Stewardship: Encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly beautification efforts, promoting the use of eco-friendly practices and materials.

- **Foster Civic Pride:** Strengthen civic pride by showcasing and celebrating Vallejo's unique character, historical significance, and cultural diversity through beautification projects.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Facilitate collaboration between local businesses, residents, community organizations, and the municipal government to collectively work towards making Vallejo a more visually appealing and inviting place to live, work, and visit.
- **Boost Economic Development:** Enhance the overall attractiveness of Vallejo, attracting visitors, tourists, and potential investors, thereby contributing to the economic development of the city.
- **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Raise awareness about the importance of beautification efforts, educate the community about best practices in urban landscaping, and promote a sense of responsibility towards the city's visual aesthetics.

By achieving these objectives, the Local Business and Residential Award Program aims to create a more beautiful, vibrant, and cohesive Vallejo, where residents and businesses take pride in their surroundings and actively contribute to the city's overall appeal and livability. By tapping into these resources and building strong partnerships, can create a well-supported and impactful.

TIMELINE:

November 2023 - January 2024: Planning and Preparation

- **November 2023:**
 - Form the organizing committee and assign roles and responsibilities.
 - Develop award categories and criteria for both Business and Residential awards.
 - Create promotional materials and announcement strategies.
 - **December 2023:**
 - Reach out to potential sponsors and partners for support.
 - Finalize the award nomination process and submission guidelines.
 - Develop a judging panel or criteria for evaluating nominations.
 - **January 2024:**
 - Launch the award nomination process for both Business and Residential categories.
 - Promote the awards program through various channels, including social media, local newspapers, and community events.
 - Continue sponsor outreach and confirm partnerships.
- February 2024: Nominations and Evaluation
- **February 2024:**
 - Receive and review award nominations from businesses and residents.
 - Engage the judging panel to evaluate nominations based on established criteria.

Conduct site visits or interviews if necessary for a more in-depth evaluation.
March 2024: Selection and Announcement (Business Awards)

- Early March 2024:
 - Finalize the selection of Business award recipients.
Prepare award certificates, trophies, or plaques for winners.
Plan the Business awards ceremony, including venue booking and guest invitations.
- Late March 2024:
 - Host the Business awards ceremony, celebrating and honoring the winning businesses.
 - Publicize the Business award winners through press releases and local media.
- April - September 2024: Residential Awards Promotion and Nominations
- April - August 2024:
 - Promote the Residential awards program, encouraging residents to participate.
 - Provide assistance and guidance to residents interested in submitting nominations.
 - Continue sponsor promotion and partnership activities.
- September 2024:
 - Close the Residential award nominations.
 - Begin the evaluation process for Residential award nominations.
- October 2024:
 - Selection and Announcement (Residential Awards)
- Early October 2024:
 - Finalize the selection of Residential award recipients.
 - Prepare award certificates, trophies, or plaques for winners.
 - Plan the Residential awards ceremony and guest invitations.
- Late October 2024:
 - Host the Residential awards ceremony, celebrating and honoring the winning residents.
 - Publicize the Residential award winners through press releases and local media.

This timeline allows ample time for planning, promotion, nomination evaluation, and awards ceremonies for both the Business and Residential categories, ensuring a successful and well-executed award program in 2024.

RESOURCES:

1. Local Government and Municipal Offices:
 - a. Community Development Department: They can provide guidance on local regulations, permits, and resources for beautification projects.
 - b. Tourism and Cultural Affairs Offices: They can offer support in promoting the program to tourists and visitors.
2. Chamber of Commerce:
 - a. Local chambers often have networks of businesses and can support your program by spreading the word among their members and providing sponsorship opportunities.
3. Community Organizations and Nonprofits:
 - a. Collaborate with local environmental organizations, gardening clubs, and beautification nonprofits. They might offer volunteers, resources, or expertise.
4. Local Businesses:
 - a. Approach local businesses for sponsorship, in-kind donations, or volunteering for beautification projects.
 - b. Nurseries and landscaping companies might provide plants or landscaping expertise.
5. Educational Institutions:
 - a. Partner with schools, colleges, or universities for student volunteers, artwork for promotional materials, or environmental education programs related to beautification.
6. Media Outlets:
 - a. Local newspapers, radio and TV channels can help in promoting your program through news coverage or interviews.
7. Online Platforms and Social Media:
 - a. Leverage the City of Vallejo website or social media pages to share information about the award program, accept nominations, and showcase winners.
 - b. Leverage social media platforms for targeted promotion and engaging the community.
8. Professional Judges and Experts:
 - a. Engage professionals in landscaping, architecture, or environmental conservation as judges to ensure fair evaluation of nominations.
9. City Historical Societies:
 - a. Historical societies can provide insights into the historical aspects of your community, which can be integrated into the beautification efforts.
10. Physical Award/Plaque
 - a. Eagle Eye Vacaville or Minute Man Press for Plaques.
 - b. Costs are estimated at \$800.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Vice-Chair Sheila Tennyson, Commissioner Howard and Commissioner Wright are Adhoc Members of the Business and Residential Sub-Committee will research costs and resources for advertising and promotion.
- Other Beautification Commission Members will vote on final decisions.
- Vallejo residents will provide nominations, voting and selection of award winners.

STRATEGY:

- Shelee Loughmiller, Community and Volunteer Coordinator will guide us in real time on the necessary steps to get this executed.
- CITY COUNCIL LIAISON, Councilmember Verder-Aliga will advise us on how to get this approved by City Council.
- The Commission
 1. Define Clear Goals and Objectives:
 - Clearly define the goals of the award program, outlining what you aim to achieve for both businesses and residents.
 - Set specific objectives, such as the number of participants, community engagement levels, and the overall impact on beautification efforts in Vallejo.
 2. Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Engage local businesses, residents, community organizations, schools, and local government agencies as stakeholders.
 - Conduct meetings and workshops to gather input, build partnerships, and foster a sense of community ownership.
 3. Robust Promotion and Outreach:
 - Develop a multi-channel marketing strategy to promote the award program, including social media, local newspapers, community events, and partnerships with local influencers.
 - Utilize visually appealing promotional materials to create awareness and generate interest.
 4. Streamlined Nomination and Evaluation Process:
 - Create user-friendly online nomination forms for businesses and residents.
 - Establish clear evaluation criteria and engage a diverse panel of judges within the community.
 5. Event Planning and Execution:
 - Plan engaging and memorable award ceremonies for both business and residential categories.
 - Ensure seamless logistics, including venue arrangements, catering, audio-visual setup, and volunteer management.

6. Data Collection and Analysis:
 - Collect and analyze data related to nominations, participant demographics, community engagement, and feedback.
 - Use insights to measure the program's impact, assess the effectiveness of strategies, and make data-driven decisions for future initiatives.
7. Recognition and Follow-up:
 - Publicly recognize winners through various media channels to celebrate their achievements.
 - Follow up with participants, sponsors, and volunteers with thank-you notes and updates on the program's outcomes.
8. Continuous Improvement:
 - Conduct post-event evaluations and stakeholder meetings to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement.
 - Use lessons learned to refine strategies, enhance community engagement, and make the award program even more impactful in the future.
9. Documentation and Knowledge Sharing:
 - Document the entire process, including successes, challenges, and best practices.
 - Share your experiences and insights with other communities and organizations to promote the concept of local beautification and community involvement.

By implementing this comprehensive strategy, the Vallejo Beautification Commission can create a vibrant, engaging, and impactful Local Business and Residential Award Program that not only celebrates achievements but also inspires a lasting culture of beautification and community pride in Vallejo.

Love Your Block 2023 Application

Every day, mayors and the cities they serve struggle with the negative impacts that vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating properties have on neighborhoods and the people living in them. Blighted properties – including but not limited to abandoned single-family homes, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, vacant lots, deteriorating parks, and other public spaces – harm neighborhoods by posing safety hazards, decreasing surrounding property values, reducing tax revenue, and eroding social cohesion. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these problems, particularly for communities and people in economically distressed areas, and cities continue to feel the harmful effects of blight today.

Building on more than a decade of support for mayors led by Michael R. Bloomberg and Bloomberg Philanthropies that includes millions of dollars in funding and a growing portfolio of government innovation initiatives, the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins is pleased to announce that applications are open for Love Your Block, an impact volunteering grant program supporting volunteer-fueled projects that address local public problems. This grant program focuses on supporting cities to partner with community groups and activate resident volunteers to repair, remediate, and address blight in their neighborhoods.

Love Your Block is based on the Cities of Service [Love Your Block Blueprint](#) and builds on the experience and lessons learned from 14 years of program implementation in 50 cities around the country. In collaboration with the AmeriCorps VISTA program, Love Your Block furthers the principles of an anti-poverty focus, community empowerment, sustainable solutions, and capacity-building to exemplify transformation in communities. [Click here](#) to learn more about AmeriCorps.

Instructions

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 4, 2023. Cities that previously participated in Love Your Block programs are not eligible to apply. “Eligible organizations” refers to U.S. cities that meet the eligibility criteria.

Final applications must be completed and submitted online at <https://publicinnovation.jhu.edu/love-your-block-application/>.

For help or support, email bcpicivicengagement@jh.edu.

Application Sample – For Information Only

Application questions

Question #	Question	Answer format
1	Please tell us about the public problem the eligible organization hopes to alleviate or solve with the proposed project. Specifically include the scale of the problem, who is impacted, and how. Please provide quantitative and qualitative data to describe the scale of the problem and the impact of this issue.*	3000 characters
2	Please describe the eligible organization's commitment to addressing this problem and why it is a priority. Describe how the mayor or city chief executive has prioritized this problem. If relevant also, describe what has already been done to address this problem.*	2500 characters
3	Please provide a brief description of your proposed project. In a few sentences, share your project's elevator pitch. *	500 characters
	For the following questions, please describe the specific project being proposed for this grant. Please provide enough detail to give us a concrete understanding of your proposed project. For helpful guidance, review the application and the FAQs.	
4	How will volunteers be engaged in the project? How many volunteers do you expect to engage? Please describe what activities volunteers will take on and the volunteering frequency.*	3000 characters
5	How will you recruit volunteers who are from and/ or currently live in the impacted communities and who are representative (e.g., gender, race, age, different-ability) of the area of focus?*	3000 characters
6	Who will act as the executive sponsor (e.g., chief of staff, deputy mayor, deputy chief of staff) of this project within the mayor's office and ensure the project has executive support?*	1000 characters
7	What role will the mayor or city chief executive play during the design, implementation, and celebration of the project?*	1000 characters
8	When would the project launch?	500 characters
9	Which city departments/ agencies will be involved in the project? What will their roles be throughout the project?*	3000 characters
10	Which community partners will be involved in this project? What will their roles be throughout the project? For	3000 characters

Final applications must be completed and submitted online at <https://publicinnovation.jhu.edu/love-your-block-application/>.

For help or support, email bcpicivicengagement@jh.edu.

Application Sample – For Information Only

	example: nonprofits, community based organizations, businesses, schools, churches, colleges/ universities, hospitals, corporate partners and other interested community partners.*	
11	What result(s) do you expect to achieve through Love Your Block? For example: number of volunteers engaged, volunteer hours, community projects completed, pounds of trash removed, square feet of graffiti removed, trees planted, and community partners engaged.*	1500 characters
12	How will you measure the impact of Love Your Block? Please identify up to five (5) measures the mayor and other key executives (e.g., council members, chief of staff, etc.), as well as engaged residents and community partners will receive to show the impact of the project on the stated public challenge.*	1500 characters
13	How will you track metrics for the project (e.g., dashboard, bi-weekly status meeting, etc.)? You may provide examples of how the city has tracked similar project-related metrics.*	3000 characters
14	How often does the eligible organization collect demographic data? Who is tasked with this data collection?*	1500 characters
15	What demographic data does the eligible organization collect, and how is that information used?*	1500 characters
16	Please describe how the eligible organization has made grants to community partners and residents in the past. If the eligible organization has not provided such grants, please describe how you will implement such a process and what, if any, support you will need to do so, including partnering with a city agency, nonprofit, or university.*	3000 characters
17	How will you ensure that residents and community groups with limited or no involvement are made aware of the opportunity to apply for Love Your Block mini-grants? What activities, resources, or workshops do you plan to make available for residents and community groups to support them during the application process?*	3000 characters
18	Please describe the eligible organization's practices and considerations around diversity and inclusion when making grants to community partners or residents. What top lessons learned will you translate or adapt to this grant? If this is a new commitment, describe what best practices and considerations you plan to incorporate. We value learning, so please highlight any shortcomings with your past efforts towards diversity and inclusion that you would improve or address with this project.*	3000 characters

Final applications must be completed and submitted online at <https://publicinnovation.jhu.edu/love-your-block-application/>.

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Application Sample – For Information Only

19	Please describe plans for sustaining the project after the two-year grant period. Indicate any relevant conversations about future funding and partnerships with the eligible organization and community partners such as community foundations, local businesses, or universities.*	3000 characters
20	Please identify staff who will be responsible for this project. Provide their title, full name, the role they will play in the proposed project, and what their other responsibilities are. Explain why this project falls under their purview.*	3000 characters
21	Please describe how the eligible organization will recruit, manage, and support the AmeriCorps VISTA member and how the VISTA will support the implementation of the project. Describe how the eligible organization plans to train, support, and deploy the AmeriCorps member. Include the organizational structure, where the AmeriCorps VISTA will be placed in the organization and to whom they will report. Please include in the organizational structure the office of the mayor, city chief executive, and/ or department director. Please describe how the VISTA will lead volunteer recruitment and impact volunteering through outreach, marketing campaigns, building a social media presence and other key activities. AmeriCorps VISTA members' time must be used in accordance with the core principles of the VISTA program to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Include any information about previous experience the city has had with AmeriCorps VISTA members.*	3000 characters
22	Please describe how the eligible organization will recruit, manage, and support the Love Your Block Fellow for two years. Please describe how the city plans to recruit, train, support, and deploy the two-year Love Your Block Fellow, including where the Fellow will be placed in the organizational structure, and who will supervise the Fellow.*	3000 characters

Final applications must be completed and submitted online at <https://publicinnovation.jhu.edu/love-your-block-application/>.

For help or support, email bcpicivicengagement@jh.edu.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

Program Guidelines

Every day, mayors and the cities they serve struggle with the negative impacts that vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating properties have on neighborhoods and the people living in them. Blighted properties – including but not limited to abandoned single-family homes, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, vacant lots, deteriorating parks, and other public spaces – harm neighborhoods by posing safety hazards, decreasing surrounding property values, reducing tax revenue, and eroding social cohesion. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these problems, particularly for communities and people in economically distressed areas, and cities continue to feel the harmful effects of blight today.

Building on more than a decade of support for mayors led by Michael R. Bloomberg and Bloomberg Philanthropies that includes millions of dollars in funding and a growing portfolio of government innovation initiatives, the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins is pleased to announce that applications are open for Love Your Block, an impact volunteering grant program supporting volunteer-fueled projects that address local public problems. This grant program focuses on supporting cities to partner with community groups and activate resident volunteers to repair, remediate, and address blight in their neighborhoods.

Love Your Block is based on the Cities of Service Love Your Block Blueprint and builds on the experience and lessons learned from 14 years of program implementation in 50 cities around the country. In collaboration with the AmeriCorps VISTA program, Love Your Block furthers the principles of an anti-poverty focus, community empowerment, sustainable solutions, and capacity-building to exemplify transformation in communities. [Click here to learn more about AmeriCorps.](#)



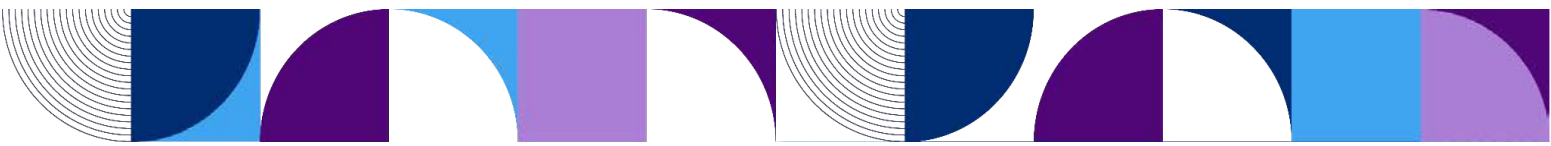
Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

About the Love Your Block Program

The Love Your Block program brings city leaders and residents together to build stronger neighborhoods, one block at a time. Cities participating in Love Your Block invite community groups to identify priority projects and award mini-grants to support neighborhood-driven solutions that the community can implement. From turning vacant lots into community gardens to helping elderly neighbors with home repairs so they can avoid fines and safely age in place, resident volunteers are “loving their blocks” and making their neighborhoods and cities better places to live. The Love Your Block Program is a two-year grant in the amount of \$100,000 which includes a Fellow and an AmeriCorps VISTA focused on impact volunteering and civic engagement.

The benefits of Love Your Block go far beyond physical improvements. Urban Institute found in its 2021 [Study of Love Your Block](#) that social networks sparked by deep resident-to-city-hall engagement can initiate neighborhood-level improvements in addition to larger, sustainable improvements to municipal practices and policies. Love Your Block activates and builds social networks between residents, their neighbors, and city hall. This resident-to-city hall engagement can lead to collective efficacy that is often bidirectional. City officials can leverage neighborhood social capital in service of mayoral goals, and residents can leverage greater responsiveness from officials to address their needs and priorities. Love Your Block is a proven starting point for cities to more meaningfully engage their residents to help improve their communities in holistic and sustainable ways.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

Award Benefits

Over the two years of the grant term, selected cities will receive:

- \$40,000 in funding for program implementation and volunteer-led mini-grant projects.
- \$60,000 in funding to support a local, full-time Love Your Block Fellow from the community. The Love Your Block Fellow must have strong ties to the community being served (i.e., current resident or a previous longtime resident with active ties to the neighborhood) and have a track record of building local relationships. Working under the direction of the designated city lead, the Fellow is responsible for developing and implementing a robust community engagement strategy and project management of program activities.
- One (1) AmeriCorps VISTA member each year working under the direction of the designated city lead. The VISTA will lead volunteer recruitment and impact volunteering in accordance with the core principles of the [VISTA program](#) to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.
- High-touch training, coaching services, and programmatic support from the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins.
- Peer-to-peer learning with current and former Love Your Block grantee cities.
- Invitations to an annual convening.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

- Recognition as a Love Your Block grantee city in the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins collateral, including on social media, the Center website, and other media.

Love Your Block Eligibility

This opportunity is an open invitation to all U.S. cities that meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Minimum population of 30,000
- Mayor has at least three years remaining in their current term
- Mayoral signature and commitment to the Cities of Service [Declaration of Service](#)
- The capacity to recruit for and manage a Love Your Block Fellow for a two-year fellowship
- The capacity to recruit and manage an AmeriCorps VISTA member each year of the two-year grant program
- The capacity to manage and complete all programmatic reporting documentation and tasks

Cities that previously participated in Love Your Block programs are not eligible to apply.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

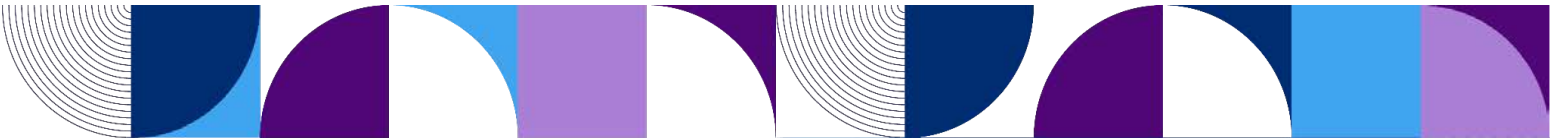
Guidelines & FAQ

Selection Criteria

Up to twenty (20) cities will be selected to participate in Love Your Block.

Applications will be judged on criteria including but not limited to:

- The nature of the public problem the city is trying to solve as it relates to vacant and abandoned properties and the mission of the Love Your Block grant program.
- The readiness of the mayor and city team to accept the Love Your Block grant and related supports and engage in the program.
- How the proposed impact volunteering initiative will tackle the challenge. We are looking for initiatives that tie to larger city strategies or that address the problem in innovative ways that are supported by impacted residents and other stakeholders.
- The role of resident volunteers. We are looking for cities to engage volunteers within the neighborhoods of focus. In addition, we are looking for initiatives that engage volunteers early in the project design stage as well as during implementation and evaluation. We are looking for cities to engage volunteers for their time as well as for their lived experiences and skills.
- The role and level of engagement of the city chief executive and relevant city agencies and departments.
- The specific neighborhoods that will be the focus of the initiative. We are looking for demonstrated involvement of



Love Your Block 2023 Program

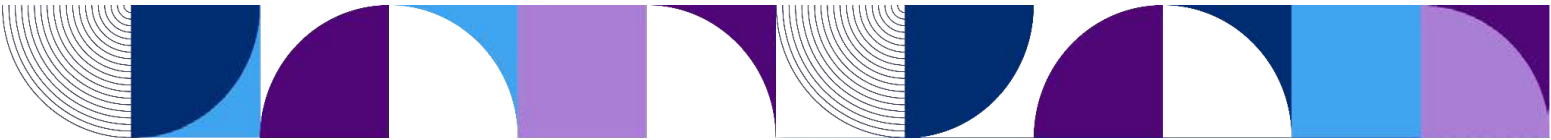
Guidelines & FAQ

neighborhood-specific stakeholders in the proposed initiative or commitment to doing so during the grant period.

- The proposed roles for the AmeriCorps VISTA member and Love Your Block Fellow and how the city will support them in their work.
- Clear commitment to tracking critical metrics to demonstrate impact.

Important Application Dates

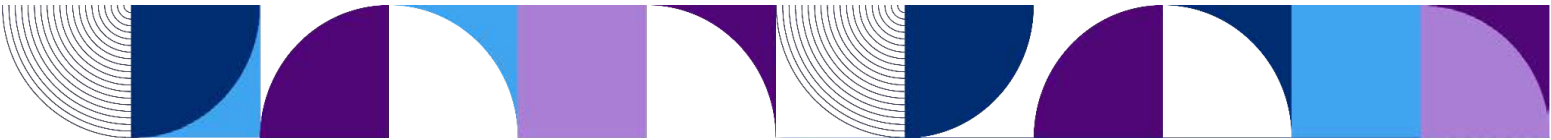
Application Launch	November 6, 2023
Informational Webinar	November 9, 2023 (Register here)
Session 1	<i>Note: Attendance at Informational Webinar Session 1 OR Session 2 is mandatory to submit an application.</i>



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

Office Hour	November 16, 2023 (Register here) A one-hour session dedicated to applicants who have an idea they would like to discuss or who need specific points of clarification prior to submitting the grant application. <i>Note: Attendance at the Office Hour is optional.</i>
Informational Webinar Session 2	November 28, 2023 (Register here) <i>Note: Attendance at Informational Webinar Session 1 OR Session 2 is mandatory to submit an application.</i>
Application Deadline	11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 4, 2023



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

Important Program Dates for Selected Cities

Welcome Webinar for Participating Cities	February 6, 2024
Love Your Block Fellow and AmeriCorps VISTA Recruitment Commences	February 6, 2024
Grant Agreements Executed	February 1 – March 31, 2024
Love Your Block Fellow Start Date	April 1, 2024
Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA Start Date Range	April 1, 2024 – April 30, 2024

Use of Funds

Awarded cities will be expected to use funds in accordance with the intentions of the Love Your Block program and for direct support of the impact volunteering initiatives.

Fellowship grant funds are restricted to the direct compensation of the identified Love Your Block Fellow.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

Acceptable use of project implementation grant funds includes but is not limited to costs associated with engaging volunteers in:

- Activating vacant lots or empty storefronts/buildings
- Neighborhood clean-ups
- Transforming vacant lots into vibrant community spaces
- Educational outreach and skills-based support for individuals and community groups
- Basic code compliance repairs for homes

The Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins grant funds may not support:

- Services covered by existing city infrastructure, such as standard trash collection and existing staff salaries
- Rent or utilities
- 501(c)(3) incorporation fees
- Speaker honorariums
- Improvement projects that primarily serve churches and/or other religious organizations
- Scholarships or other direct support to individuals or families



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

- Partisan political organizations, political candidates, fundraisers, or projects
- Events such as block parties, conferences, festivals, dinners, sports competitions, art exhibits, and fundraisers (e.g. dinners, walks/runs/relays, golf tournaments, and auctions) unless directly in service to the larger strategic initiative
- Capital campaigns, endowments, or endowed chairs

About the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins

The Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins drives innovation in local government by marrying cutting-edge practice with world-class research. Together with public servants and government innovators around the world, the Center is transforming the culture in municipal management, delivering exceptional results for residents, and deepening trust in public service worldwide. The Center integrates successful global approaches to government innovation with an array of programs that serve city governments and work to build innovation capacity among public servants.

Contact

For questions, please feel free to contact bcpicivicengagement@jh.edu.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

When did Love Your Block start?

Since 2009, Cities of Service has supported Love Your Block grant programs in 50 cities. Many other cities have implemented Love Your Block on their own using our [Love Your Block Blueprint](#).

Does my city need to join the Cities of Service Coalition to apply?

Yes. If your city is not a coalition member, please complete and upload a [Declaration of Service](#) for your application to be considered. The Declaration of Service must be signed by the city chief executive currently serving. If you are unsure if your city is a member, click [here](#) to check.

If my city is a previous Cities of Service grantee, can it still apply?

Yes. However, the cities that participated in the Love Your Block City Hall AmeriCorps VISTA program in 2015, 2018, or 2021 may not apply.

What is the duration of the grant?

The grant term is two years. However, the second year of funding is contingent on the successful completion of the first year's activities and milestones.

How do you define “blight”?



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

We use the word blight to refer to properties in need of significant repair or remediation. Love Your Block projects can address property blight by engaging volunteers to transform vacant lots into community gardens, repair or replace dilapidated playground equipment, or remove trash and debris from a public right of way. Love Your Block projects can also address property blight by preventing vacancy in the first place.

What is the definition of “volunteer engagement”?

We are looking for projects that involve community members at various points of the project. This includes project design, implementation, and evaluation.

[Check out some of our favorite engagement techniques](#) that could be used during each of these stages.

What is included in the grant award?

Selected cities will receive support from one (1) [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) member annually for two years, \$60,000 to hire a Love Your Block Fellow for two years, and \$40,000 in seed funding for the Love Your Block program implementation and mini-grants. Participants will receive high-touch technical assistance, coaching, and program support from the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins, as well as training and peer-learning opportunities.

What is the best way to distribute the funding?

A key component of the Love Your Block program is the mini-grant competition – small grants typically in the range of \$500 to \$2,000 made from the city to a community partner such as a neighborhood association. The mini-grant competition is a great way for the city to generate awareness of and enthusiasm



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

for the initiative, provide seed money and other resources for the most promising proposals, help empower residents to take ownership over their neighborhoods/blocks, and build the capacity of neighborhood groups to design and implement these programs. The eligible organization will need to design a process to solicit mini-grant proposals from neighborhood groups and community partners, inform relevant communities about the opportunity and encourage them to apply, and select the winners.

What support can I expect from Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins if my city is selected for Love Your Block?

Participating cities will receive high-touch technical assistance, training, coaching, and program support from the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins. Delivered during mandatory technical assistance calls and office hours, the technical assistance is designed to help cities develop and implement the Love Your Block program. Selected organizations will be required to play an active role in the Love Your Block community of practice.

This includes attending the Love Your Block webinars and other training as a group, such as conference calls, workshops, and a cohort-wide convening where team members can network and learn from peers. The AmeriCorps VISTA members will receive additional training and support through a dedicated Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA Leader.

What are the expectations for a Love Your Block Fellow?



Love Your Block 2023 Program

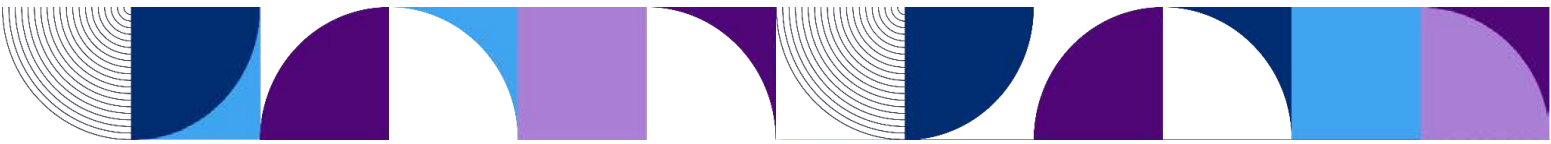
Guidelines & FAQ

The Love Your Block Fellow should be someone who comes from the community on which your Love Your Block program will focus, who has existing relationships within the community that could be leveraged throughout the life of the program. The Love Your Block Fellow must have strong ties to the community being served (i.e., current resident or a previous longtime resident with active ties to the neighborhood) and have a track record of building local relationships.

Working under the direction of the designated city lead, the Fellow is responsible for developing and implementing a robust community engagement strategy and project management of program activities. The Love Your Block Fellow's priority should be day-to-day program planning and management, assisting with program outreach strategies, partnership development, data collection, and anything else that would help move the work forward in inclusive, equitable, and sustainable ways. Fellow eligibility does not have the same restrictions as the AmeriCorps VISTA program.

What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

AmeriCorps VISTA is a federal anti-poverty program. AmeriCorps VISTA members are full-time volunteers who support projects at nonprofits, grassroots organizations, and local government agencies that operate programs to help alleviate poverty in the United States. They strengthen and support these organizations by improving their infrastructure, expanding community partnerships, securing long-term resources, training program participants, and developing other activities that help build long-term sustainability for overcoming poverty.



Love Your Block 2023 Program

Guidelines & FAQ

AmeriCorps VISTA members commit to a full year of service and receive a living stipend as well as an end-of-service award upon completion of their service. One (1) AmeriCorps VISTA member each year works under the direction of the designated city lead. The VISTA will lead volunteer recruitment and impact volunteering. AmeriCorps VISTA members' time must be used in accordance with the core principles of the [VISTA program](#) to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

To learn more about the AmeriCorps VISTA program, eligibility requirements, and benefits, visit:

<https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps/americorps-vista>.

What are the obligations for cities that receive an AmeriCorps VISTA grant ?

As an AmeriCorps VISTA program, this grant requires the initiative to target low-income communities, specifically neighborhoods that are lower than the Census Bureau's average median household income in the city.