

Development Services Division

Memorandum

To: Angell Neighborhood Assoc. Marsh Field Neighborhood Assoc.
Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood Assoc. McLaughlin Neighborhood Assoc.
Campbell Neighborhood Assoc. Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Assoc.
E. Muskegon Neighborhood Alliance Nims Neighborhood Assoc.
Glenside Neighborhood Assoc. Oakview Neighborhood Assoc.
Jackson Hill Neighborhood Assoc. Marquette Neighborhood Assoc.
Lakeside Neighborhood Assoc. Sheldon Park Neighborhood Assoc.
Steele Neighborhood Assoc.

From: Planning Department, City of Muskegon

Date: March 12, 2026

Re: 2026 Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Program (NEP)

The time has come again for the Neighborhood Association Grant application process. **Please be aware of the changes this year. Grant applications will be received in the Development Services Division Office, following the receipt and approval of the 2025 Year-End Budget Report. Grants applications received on or before May 1, 2026, will be eligible to request up to 100% of the 2026 grant award; applications received after the aforementioned date will be eligible to request Neighborhood and Enhanced Neighborhood Grants for only up to 50% of the 2025 grant award. No grant applications will be accepted after June 1, 2026.** Also, be aware that some awards will be paid after successful completion of an activity per NEP guidelines.

This year's Neighborhood Empowerment Grants will be applied for and granted in **three different tiers**. The \$1500 Neighborhood Grant of years past will essentially run the same, building on to it, the Enhanced and Earned Grants. Please be aware that certain areas of the grants have stipulations that must be met *before* they can be applied for. If the prerequisite activities have not taken place, please give your Neighborhood's commitment as to when they will. *Special attention should be given in these circumstances.* If activities do not happen as planned, funding may need to be returned as a result. We encourage all Neighborhood Associations to carefully consider your budgets and only request what you will actually need. If you have a special project in mind, include it in your budget and explain how additional funds will assist your group. **Please note – copies of bank statements will be required in each year's reporting.**

To be eligible to receive Neighborhood Empowerment Grant funding, the association must represent an identified neighborhood within the City of Muskegon, which is accepted as such, through the City of Muskegon Community Policing Program. Eligible Neighborhood Associations have been listed above. If you would like to participate through a neighborhood that is not currently active, please see City of Muskegon NAM Liaisons for more information.

Grant Amount

Grant amount will vary. Maximum grant amounts will be specified throughout the application for each portion of the grant.

Repetitive Assistance

The Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Program is part of the annual City budget. Funding for the Grant Program could be eliminated or reduced in the future. As such, the City cannot guarantee funding to any organization beyond one year. Applicants should demonstrate the capacity to support their programs on an ongoing basis and should not grow dependent on City funding as their sole means of support.

This year's applications will be evaluated and recommended on the following:

- Complete and accurate information.
- Applications that propose a variety of activities, aimed at membership development.
- Continued success of neighborhood involvement and engagement.

Additional evaluation criteria if the neighborhood received previous funding in **2025**:

- The neighborhood's need for additional grant funding.
- Ability to meet goals and objectives proposed.
- Thoroughness and *timeliness* of **2025** Year-end Budget Report and required documentation.

Please make sure to include all information with your application. If you have any questions regarding this year's grant application, please contact Development Services at (231)724-6702.

CITY OF MUSKEGON -- 2026 NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT GRANT PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE GRANT

The City of Muskegon recognizes the Neighborhood Associations within the City as viable and necessary to the positive functioning of our City. The Neighborhood Associations assist the City with information dissemination through meetings, newsletters, etc., as well as through general improvement of the neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods help drive quality of life, as they can help provide activities that engage residents, improve living conditions, provide social opportunities, and positively affect crime. It is the intent of this grant program to empower eligible Neighborhood Associations in funding basic organizational activities, as well as assisting in their efforts to become more active and invest in themselves, and therefore, our City.

Active Neighborhood Associations will be eligible to receive funds from the City of Muskegon in three ways: Neighborhood Grants, Enhanced Neighborhood Grants, and Earned Neighborhood Grants.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING – NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Completed applications must be received by the City of Muskegon’s Development Services Division no later than 5 p.m. on the funding deadline(s) date specified in the cover letter of this application.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Narratives should be brief and limited to factual information. Forms are provided for completion of the budget information; however, additional documentation may be provided for clarification. Applications must be signed by a member of your organization’s executive board.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION IDENTIFICATION CERTIFICATION AND ASSURANCES

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION	CONTACT PERSON/TITLE
ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP
PHONE	EMAIL

TOTAL REQUESTED FUNDS

**The applicant hereby assures and certifies the following:

1. It possesses the authority to submit this application for funding.
2. Its governing body has duly adopted or passed an official act/action authorizing the person identified as its official representative to submit the attached application for Neighborhood Association Grant Funding, including these Assurances and Certifications, and identified said person as its official representative to act in connection with the submission of the grant and to provide such additional information as may be required (copy of official board action is attached).

The applicant further certifies that all information contained in the attached Application for Neighborhood Association Funding is true to the best of its knowledge. The applicant agrees to use the grant funds received in the way indicated herein if approved by the City of Muskegon.

SUBMITTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2026

SIGNED: _____ (President/Chair or Designee)

PRINTED NAME & TITLE: _____

WITNESSED BY: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT

All active neighborhood associations are eligible to receive a \$1,500 Neighborhood Grant annually. An active neighborhood association is defined as a neighborhood association that accomplishes all of the following in a given year:

1. Holds at least two general membership meetings per year.
2. Holds at least two additional board meetings per year.
3. Has a board member in attendance of at least 6 Neighborhoods of Muskegon (NAM) meetings each calendar year.
4. Prepares and delivers at least two neighborhood association newsletters per year.
5. Actively participates in the City's designated National Night Out (can be an individual event or the combined event held at Marsh Field).
6. Holds at least two community Dumpster Day events within the boundaries of the neighborhood.

Eligible activities include those that will contribute to membership development and increased community activities within the neighborhood. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Newsletter publication, printing, mailing
- Insurance for neighborhood activities
- Office supplies
- Office equipment
- Matching funds for state and federal grants
- Funding for specific neighborhood activities
- To gain 501c3 status (or other non-profit designation)

These Neighborhood Grant Dollars are available April 1 of each year and must be spent on community-related purchases or activities. These funds may not be rolled over from year to year.

CITY OF MUSKEGON - 2026 NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT GRANT PROGRAM

NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT

ITEM	2026 BUDGET	ONGOING EXPENSE?
ADVERTISING		Y/N
DUES/SUBSCRIPTIONS		Y/N
INSURANCE		Y/N
MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS		Y/N
NEWSLETTERS		Y/N
PRINTING		Y/N
DELIVERY/POSTAGE		Y/N
SUPPLIES		Y/N
RENT		Y/N
TELEPHONES		Y/N
UTILITIES		Y/N
EVENT: _____		Y/N
FOOD		Y/N
ENTERTAINMENT/ EQUIPMENT		Y/N
OTHER		Y/N
EVENT: _____		Y/N
ENTERTAINMENT/ EQUIPMENT		Y/N
OTHER		Y/N

BUDGET WORKSHEET

NEIGHBORHOOD/CONTACT PERSON:

TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT AMOUNT REQUESTED: _____

Please attach a copy of:

- Board of Directors: name, position, address, phone number and e-mail address
- Neighborhood Association's By-laws
- Copies of your complete association's budget
- Documentation of Incorporation and IRS tax-exemption status is also required (if applicable)

CITY OF MUSKEGON - 2026 NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT GRANT PROGRAM

ENHANCED GRANT

Up to \$3,000 in Enhanced Neighborhood Grants are available annually. Dates can be actual or proposed. To be eligible for the Enhanced Neighborhood Grant, the neighborhood association must undertake a fundraising campaign (raising at least \$250 of private donations for the neighborhood association). Tell us about your anticipated fundraising below:

FUNDRAISING TYPE	2026 PROJECTED DONATIONS \$	DATE(S)

Tell us about the events/activities you plan to undertake in 2026:

ENHANCED GRANT

EVENT/ACTIVITY	2026 BUDGET	ONGOING EXPENSE?
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N

The number of activities that your Neighborhood Association accomplishes for the **Enhanced Grant** will determine the award amount. Please indicate the total number of activities that will be completed in 2026, along with your requested grant amount:

3 - \$750	4 or more - \$1250	7 or more - \$2000	10 or more - \$3000
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SUBTOTALS

NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT: _____ ENHANCED GRANT: _____ TOTAL MONIES REQUESTED: _____

*These Enhanced Neighborhood Grant Dollars are available April 1 of each year and must be spent on community-related purchases or activities. These funds **may not** be rolled over from year to year.*

EARNED GRANT

All active neighborhood associations are eligible to **earn** neighborhood grants by volunteering to undertake certain beautification activities in the City of Muskegon, as follows:

- Fundraising Match
- Other Beautification-Related Activities (case-by-case basis, depending on funding availability)*
- Adopt-A-Lot Program

***PLEASE SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR FURTHER DETAILS.**

PLEASE REFER TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM FOR FULL DETAILS AND REQUIREMENTS.

EARNED GRANT - FUNDRAISING MATCH

Type of Fundraising Campaign(s)	Date(s)	Amount Raised

The City will provide \$500 to any active NA that successfully raises more than \$1,500 of non-city funds for youth-related neighborhood activities. ***Only available to neighborhoods that have met the requirements to receive at least \$2,000 in Enhanced Neighborhood Grants.***

EARNED GRANT – BEAUTIFICATION RELATED ACTIVITIES

Type of Activity/Date(s)	Location	Total Cost

**Approved on a case-by-case basis if funding is available.

AAL LOT DETAILS

- No limits to the amount of lots
- Lots do not have to be located within the geographical boundary of the neighborhood
- Lots must be adopted prior to May 1 of each calendar year
- Lots must be:
 - Mowed throughout the mowing season (May-September): kept less than 6 inches
 - Trash removed weekly
 - Fallen leaves removed by November 30th of each year
- \$250 will be paid for each lot adopted and successfully maintained
 - \$125 will be paid the 1st billing cycle in April
 - \$75 will be paid the 1st billing cycle in July
 - \$50 will be paid the 1st billing cycle in October

EARNED GRANT – BEAUTIFICATION RELATED ACTIVITIES:

- Earned Grant Beautification funds may be used for neighborhood beautification and maintenance activities, including but not limited to: snow plowing or shoveling, leaf cleanup, lawn mowing, trimming or pruning, sand cleanup, playground maintenance, alley cleanup, trash removal, and front-yard beautification projects within your neighborhood.
- Beautification-related activities are intended to improve the appearance, safety, and overall quality of life in neighborhoods, while helping to reduce the physical, time, and financial burden on residents.
- The proposed activity/activities must be described in detail and need to include how they benefit the neighborhood, and who will carry out the work (volunteers or hired services). Supporting documentation, such as estimates, invoices, and photos, may be required.
- Please see the Grant Administrators (Sam or Sarah) prior to the application for programming for pre-approval. **Please see the attached implementation plan.**
- Earned Neighborhood Grant Dollars must be spent on community-related purchases or activities. They may be rolled over from year to year as the neighborhood association saves funds for planned neighborhood needs/activities. Unless otherwise indicated, these grant funds will be released upon successful completion of the approved activity.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT MUST BE SIGNED & SUBMITTED WITH APPLICATION

IMPORTANT POINTS

- Payments will not be made in the event that code enforcement activities are undertaken by the City’s Code Enforcement Department.
- Repayment may be required in the event that lots are not kept up to the City’s code enforcement standard.
- Repayment may be required in the event that any payment has been made and accepted by the neighborhood association for any lot(s) that have become ineligible for the program.

PLEASE SEE PROGRAM DOCUMENT FOR FULL DETAILS. THIS IS MEANT TO HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT POINTS.

****If more space is needed for additional lots, please make copies of the attached form and include the same information for each lot.*

EARNED GRANT – ADOPT A LOT

LOT #	LOT LOCATION: NEIGHBORHOOD	LOT ADDRESS	LOT SIZE – STANDARD/MULTIPLE PARCEL

If your Neighborhood would like to adopt your previously adopted lots, please indicate that on this form.

GRANT TOTALS

NEIGHBORHOOD: _____ ENHANCED: _____ EARNED: _____ TOTAL MONIES REQUESTED: _____

ADOPT A LOT – STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT

I understand that my role, as a participating neighborhood, with the City of Muskegon’s Adopt A Lot Program, is a significant responsibility, and will make it a priority. Along with my application, I submit my acknowledgment of the program requirements and my responsibilities as an adopting neighborhood representative. I, _____, commit myself as the representing party to the following:

- Be knowledgeable of the program in its entirety.
- Treat all parties involved with respect.
- Maintain communication at all times with City Staff Liaison, Samantha Pulos, for the AAL Program. Update contact information immediately if changed. Actively participate in all requests for assistance and response.
- Acknowledge and accept the following responsibilities in caring for the lots:
 - Grass will be kept to 6 inches or less.
 - Trash will be removed weekly.
 - Leaves will be removed by November 30th.
 - Adopters will have 7 days to correct a lot issue that has been indicated to be out of compliance. Per program guidelines, “Payments will not be made in the event code enforcement activities are undertaken and repayment may be required in the event that lots are not kept up to code.”
 - Signs will be on each of the lots indicated as adopted through this program if requested by liaison. They must be upright and visible at all times.
 - This program runs for the duration of one year.
 - Adopters will put eyes on each of their adopted lots at the beginning and throughout each program year. If any lot, or portion of, has development started or has been sold, the lot will immediately become ineligible for the AAL Program. Failure to report changes in a timely manner could result in monies due back to the City.

I have read and fully agree to this Statement of Responsibility and Commitment and look forward to participating in the City of Muskegon’s Adopt A Lot Program for 2026.

Signed _____ Date _____

Print name _____

Neighborhood _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Step-by-Step Guide to Using Earned Grant Beautification Funds

Step 1: Identify a Neighborhood Need

Meet with your neighborhood association or residents to decide what beautification or maintenance project(s) are needed.

Eligible examples include:

- Snow plowing or shoveling
- Leaf cleanup
- Lawn mowing
- Trimming or pruning
- Sand cleanup
- Playground maintenance
- Alley cleanup
- Trash removal
- Front-yard beautification projects

The project(s) should improve the neighborhood's appearance, safety, or overall quality of life.

Step 2: Define the Project Details

Clearly outline:

- What specific work will be done
- Where the work will take place
- How it will benefit the neighborhood
- Who will complete the work (volunteers or hired contractors/services)
- The estimated timeline for completion

Be as detailed as possible.

Step 3: Gather Supporting Documentation

Depending on the project, you may need:

- Written cost estimates

- Contractor invoices
- Photos of the area (before and after photos)
- Volunteer sign-in sheets (if applicable)

This documentation helps verify the need and cost for grant purposes.

Step 4: Obtain Pre-Approval

Before submitting your application:

- Meet with the Grant Administrators (Sam or Sarah)
- Review your proposed beautification project and budget
- Obtain pre-approval for the planned activity(ies)

This step is required before moving forward.

Step 5: Submit the Application

Complete and submit your Earned Grant application with:

- A detailed beautification project description
- Budget information
- Supporting documentation

Ensure all required information is included.

Step 6: Complete the Approved Activity

Once approved:

- Carry out the project as described
 - Keep all receipts and documentation
 - Take before and after photos if applicable
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Step 7: Submit Final Documentation

Provide:

- Proof of completion
- Receipts or invoices
- Any required photos or reports

This confirms the project was completed as approved.

Step 8: Plan for Future Projects

Unused Earned Neighborhood Grant Dollars:

- May be rolled over from year to year
 - Must be used for community-related purchases or activities
 - Can be saved for larger, planned neighborhood improvements
-