



## Neighbourhood Connections Small Grants Toolkit



### **You've Got a Great Idea? Now What?**

Consider if your idea matches your capacity and the experience of your group of organizers. You can always plan bigger and better things as you gain community support and experience.

#### **Determine if your idea matches the eligibility criteria.**

Review the project criteria and contact the Project Coordinator if you have any questions.

The Coordinator ([neighbourconnectionsgrants@gmail.com](mailto:neighbourconnectionsgrants@gmail.com)) can assist with any permits, permissions, or questions that may need to be answered to make your idea possible, like knowing how to apply for a road closure for a street party or a permit to book an event at a local park.

#### **Look for Helpers**

Seek out the help of community members you know you can rely on for help with your project.

Get a group of neighbours together who are willing to bring the project to life. Look for ways to incorporate their suggestions to enhance your project. Neighbours willing to get involved can help brainstorm ideas, assist with grant writing, contribute to stages of planning, and, of course, volunteer and participate in the event.

Identify possible resources, supporters and contributors which will make your idea a success.

#### **Consider ways to draw in your neighbours by making plans that promote accessibility and inclusion.**

This could include considerations such as making accommodations for physical limitations, food choices, and cultural considerations.

#### **Get your neighbourhood youth involved.**

Engage them early in the process and welcome their input in the design of the event and in planning promotions.

Consider having fun acts and attractions at the event such as clowns, entertainers and/or music (possibly by youth). Consider planning physical activities such as tug-of wars, baseball, basketball and street hockey. Consider advertising using social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN Messenger and YouTube. Say hi to any young people who attend and welcome them.



## **Consider accessibility to make it easier for people with disabilities to participate.**

For example, is the information about the event being distributed in large font or alternative formats? Is the location of your gathering barrier free? If the event is outdoors, is the ground level enough for people to ensure easy access or what accommodations can be planned?

Consider ways to include seniors and support their participation. Be attentive to their needs, such as providing chairs, bringing the food or the activity to them, or simply asking if there is anything that they need.

## **Be sure to include neighbours who may not share your language or cultural background.**

Can you make invitations in the languages of your neighbourhood or in simple, plain English? Can you reach out to someone in the neighbourhood to help you with translations? You might want to encourage your neighbours to share their culture through the neighbourhood activity being organized. For example, if the activity involves food, music or dance, people from all backgrounds might have something special to share.

## **Consider the Timing**

Consider what other events in the community might be happening, but don't try to find a perfect time. There will always be someone who cannot attend.

Plan the date for completing activities. Consider how picking the best date and time for your event can influence others ability to participate. Check out dates for what else is happening around town and consider whether that might impact attendance at your event.

## **Plan for Rain**

Don't let the rain spoil your fun with activities planned for out of doors. Have a back-up plan for what you will do if it rains such as a raincheck day, a tent, or an indoor location.

## **Consider how you will promote your activity to others in the neighbourhood.**

Bringing neighbourhoods and communities together to make new connections and create a sense of belonging is just as important as the project itself.

Start by being clear when letting people know how you are defining your neighbourhood. Your neighbourhood could include formal association boundaries, a city block, a certain street(s), an apartment building, a condo, or all houses surrounding a local park.

## **Decide how to invite your neighbours.**

Inviting everyone in your neighbourhood is a very important task, and one in which you can use the support of volunteers.

Talk it up! Know that the best invitation is the one that is given in person! Mention it to them when you see them, and also go door to door. Tell them about it and hand them an invitation. It is also a good time to recruit more helpers if you need any more. If no one is home, you can leave an invitation in the mailbox.

Share the news with schools, neighbourhood associations, and other community groups. Post notices in your neighbourhood and on social media.

Make some posters and place them where people can see them when they go for a walk such as on street posts, super-mail-boxes and billboards. Sidewalk chalk works great too! Write attractive invitations on the neighbourhood sidewalks, where everyone can see them. Equally as important, remember to place them in the recycling bin and clean up after the event day.

### **Information to include on an invitation might be:**

- A description of the activity and its purpose to promote neighbourhood connections
- The date, start and end times and a rain date or alternate location
- The chosen location - This should be a place where everyone can gather, either indoors or outdoors, and be easily accessible. If a street has been closed to traffic for the occasion, include that too.
- A request if there is anything that neighbours should bring along or do to contribute. For example, bring instruments to play, or bring food to share.

### **Recruit neighborhood volunteers able to take on necessary tasks.**

It helps to have many people committed to making your project a success.

Start by asking some neighbours that you know well to join with you. They can also help you find more volunteers within your neighbourhood. This can also be a heads up to your neighbourhood that something is being organized.

As well as taking on tasks, your volunteers will most likely help spread the word about your activity and make those personal invitations to other neighbours.

Keep in mind that as you recruit helpers, it is best if you share with them what tasks need to be done and let them choose. They might surprise you by taking on more than you were hoping.

Get youth involved in the planning or tasks. High school students are often looking for volunteer experience to put on their resume.

In the planning stages, ideas and contributions from all your helpers can be very valuable and enrich everyone's experience. It will be more fun for everyone that way.

## **Decide on the most appropriate location of your gathering (City Park, City Facility, on your lawn, etc.)**

If you are hosting on apartment building or condominium building property, please get a permission letter from your condo/apartment building manager or association prior to starting your application

### **Develop a budget. Budget Creatively**

Seek out discounts or look for craft and party supplies on a budget.

The next step is creating a budget including your costs and matched contributions. Determine the cost of putting your idea into action. List the general estimated expenses (materials, food, etc.). Then, determine how to match the value of the grant. Volunteer labour, cash contributions or donations of goods and services are just a few examples. Food costs must equal no more than 50% of the total grant funding requested. Be sure to budget and plan for inclusive food choices such as dietary, allergy, and cultural needs.

### **Submit Your Application**

Wait for Your Results



Volunteers from your community review applications. You will know if your application was approved between two and eight weeks.

**HOORAY! YOUR APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL!**

### **Time to Bring Your Idea to Life**

Your program funding will be sent to you via cheque or direct deposit.

Your approval package will include details on the amount of funding, requirements for permits and approval, information to recognize receiving grant funds, and any other criteria or considerations related to the grant funding.

Be sure to keep all your receipts and track all your volunteer hours, donations, and spending.

If there are any significant changes in your project that will impact the budget, simply contact the program coordinator as soon as you know about this. This might include changes in budget (perhaps you received unexpected food donations and now want to use the food budget for another purpose) or changes in the project itself (perhaps your summer event needs to move to the fall due to construction on your road).

### **Share Your Story**

Be sure to take a few photos and share them with us. This will help inspire more people to follow your lead.

Remember to take pictures throughout the process and at the event itself. It may be best to find a volunteer with some experience and interest in photography to be responsible for this and thereby free you up to do complete oversight of the event.

## Wrap up Your Project



Once you have successfully completed your project, a project report and financial summary should be submitted within one month. The report asks a few short questions about how the project went. The financial summary is a chance for you to show your final expenses and match it in comparison to your original project budget.

### Project Ideas (stand alone or in combination)

- Fun fairs
- Jam session in the park with neighbours performing, singalongs, invite musicians
- Arts and craft workshop for all ages and skills
- Group fitness, yoga in the park, street/ball hockey challenge, “let’s play in our park”
- Learn orienteering, find nearby geo-caches (there are hundreds of caches in our area)
- Potlucks, BBQ’s, picnics
- Host workshops, for example, preserving your garden harvest, themed cooking classes, building an emergency evacuation kits
- Invite a historian to talk about the history of your neighbourhood/ and display photos
- Invite an artist to lead a workshop and create art for every neighbor to display in their windows or lawns
- Invite youth to teach seniors to use iPads/tablets
- Parking lot BBQ for your townhouse with all residents involved
- Moms and toddlers event
- Outdoor movie night
- Halloween pumpkin carving and front door display contests
- Neighbourhood mini golf
- Amateur talent show
- Plan and hold a flash mob
- Neighbourhood clean-up/ dress-up.
- Offer wreath making, flower box display workshops
- Build a Neighbourhood message board, little library, bench, outdoor art display
- Scavenger hunts
- Photo contests and gathering to vote for favourites, for example, best selfie with pet, best floral pic, funniest photo, etc. all taken in the “hood” that week
- Sidewalk/ driveway chalk art contest
- Street party
- Fun run, bike rodeo, sports in the park

- Neighbourhood pet walk, pet costume parade, how many pet's names do you know contest
- Make new neighbor welcome bags
- Plant and seed exchange
- Driveway book swap
- Neighbourhood gently used items swap
- Clean up a trail, river bank

**Sample Invitation : Event**

Our (Street Name or Community Name) Neighbourhood Is Celebrating and all Neighbours are Invited!

We are getting together to get know each other and have fun learning, playing and hanging out together. And we want you to join us!

What's Happening:

Where:

Date & Time/ Rain Date or Location Change:

Please Bring:

For Further Information Contact:

This Activity is/is not Wheelchair Accessible

Is there anything we can consider to make your participation possible? Please let me know.

**Sample Invitation: Event Planning**

Would you like to join me to plan a neighbourhood celebration?

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live in your neighbourhood!

We can plan an activity, a date, and figure out what needs doing and who can do it!

Please, contact me before -

How to contact me –

Yes I would like to help

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My contact is \_\_\_\_\_