



*Department of Community and Economic Development*

## NEIGHBORHOOD CATALYTIC CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM

### PROGRAM GUIDELINES

**Due Date:** **September 12, 2025 at 5:00 PM EST**

**Acceptance Email:** [communitydevelopment@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:communitydevelopment@cincinnati-oh.gov)

#### I. **Funding Purpose**

The City of Cincinnati's Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Investment Program (NCCIP) provides pre-development funding to advance transformative neighborhood projects to the next phase of the development process or to determine the economic viability of a project vision. Applicants must demonstrate proposed pre-development activities that would result in progress toward a catalytic neighborhood project. A catalytic project is defined as a project that will have an outsized impact on catalyzing their neighborhood's transformation, revitalization, and activation.

***The maximum dollar request limit for each funding request is \$100,000. The City of Cincinnati is seeking to fund as many catalytic projects as possible. Per City Ordinance No. 219-2025, the total amount of funds available for the 2025 -2026 program year is \$500,000.***

#### II. **Eligible & Ineligible Uses**

**NEW FOR 2025: Projects are ineligible if they have received Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP) funding or NCCIP funding from past years.**

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed pre-development activities would result in progress toward a catalytic neighborhood project.

Eligible uses consist of pre-development work including, but not limited to, third-party market and feasibility studies, stabilization (\$30,000 limit), environmental assessments, design and engineering studies, preliminary construction cost verifications, and site and security capital improvements. For more examples, please consult FAQs (below). **Applicant must demonstrate site control of proposed project site.**

Ineligible uses include, but are not limited to, staff salaries, developer fees, fundraising activities, property holding costs, "hard" construction costs (exception for stabilization up to \$30,000), food & beverages, and travel. Costs incurred prior to an agreement with the City for use of awarded funding are also ineligible for reimbursement.

#### III. **Submission Requirements**

To achieve a uniform review process and a degree of comparability, proposals should contain the following information in the RFP response form provided:

##### a. **Applicant Information & Qualifications**

- i. **Project Team:** Names and titles of key members of the project team, including as applicable: lead organization, owners, project partners, consultants, and contractors. Applicant team must identify which entity intends to hold a contract with the City, the relationship between the contract holder and the entity that controls the site, and the proposed entity that will have the long-term commitment to completing the proposed

development project as outlined in the application.

- ii. **Applicant's Legal Structure:** Evidence of corporate status including, where applicable, Articles of Incorporation, or a partnership certificate and/or agreement, name and title of individuals/entities holding an ownership interest of 20% or more. For non-profit organizations a roster of the board members and key officers is required.
- iii. **Capacity & Experience:** Concise narrative describing Applicant Team's background, history, and project experience, including examples of comparable projects completed by the applicant, project team members, and/or committed partners.
- iv. **Examples of Evidence of Site Control:** Deed, lease, purchase option, access agreement to perform and complete the proposed work in the application.

**b. Project Description**

- i. **Scope of Work:** Narrative detailing the entire project to be completed with all funding sources and how the proposed use of funds enables project to reach next stage of development.
- ii. **Anticipated Timeline:** Applicant should list milestones for pre-development, due diligence, and implementation of proposed scope of work.
- iii. **Concept Site Plan:** If available, drawings showing preliminary ideas for building placement, parking layout, access drives, and landscaping as applicable.
- iv. **Community Support:** Proof of notification and/or support letters from community council and other stakeholders.

**c. Pre-Development Budget**

- i. **Sources & Uses:** List all sources of capital and expected uses in the proposed project.
- ii. **Funding Commitments:** Letter(s) addressed to the City of Cincinnati, Department of Community and Economic Development. Each letter should include the name, title, company, address, and phone number of the individual providing the letter.

**IV. Evaluation Criteria and Process:**

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a review panel which includes seven economic and community development practitioners in the Cincinnati community. Committee recommendations will be presented to the Director of DCED and the City Manager for final determination of awards, to confirm the City's policy objectives are met. Applicants are encouraged to describe unique or creative aspects of their proposal that may result in favorable outcomes for the neighborhood and City if selected for award.

- **(20 points) Neighborhood Impact:** Meets goal(s) in neighborhood or community vision plan. Enhances an underutilized site through the removal of blight. Creates an environmentally sustainable development. Creates or preserves naturally occurring affordable housing to promote a balanced mixed-income neighborhood without displacing lower income residents. Requires a substantial amount of investment relative to the average real estate values in surrounding neighborhood.
- **(10 points) NEW SECTION - Neighborhood Impact (ACT)** – Projects that demonstrate clear alignment with the objectives of [ACT for Cincy's](#) five pillars: thriving neighborhoods, reduced youth firearm access, improved well-being, increased youth support, and evidence-based policing innovations.
- **(20 points) Benefit to Strategic Investment Areas:** Impacts Low/Mod job creation, Low/Mod area benefit or the removal of Slum and Blight.

- **(20 points) Community Support:** Demonstrates community support and has written confirmation from, but not limited to, community council, business association, community development corporation, and other stakeholders.
- **(10 points) Project Scope and Budget:** Clearly explains work needed to complete the project. Thorough and reasonable budget with line items verified through quotes and bids.
- **(10 points) Private Leverage:** Project budget demonstrates Applicant has identified and is actively seeking sources of funding to advance the project to the next stage of development. The amount of funding committed to the project is a strong consideration.
- **(10 points) Organization’s Capacity:** Applicant’s capacity to carry out the project (i.e., complete pre-development activities and pursue additional sources of funding and financing).
- **(10 points) Completeness of Application:** All required information included along with applicable supporting documents verifying budgets, and financial commitments.

**V. Timeline:**

- **RFP Release** July 17, 2025
- **Application Close** September 12, 2025
- **Award Announcements (Estimated)** November 2025

**VI. Strategic Investment Areas**

- A Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) is a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grantee-designated area targeted for revitalization reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

<b>NRSA (Strategy Area)</b>
Beekman Corridor NRSA
Bond Hill NRSA
Camp Washington NRSA
East End NRSA
Evanston-Walnut Hills NRSA
Kennedy Heights NRSA
Linwood NRSA
Madisonville NRSA
Mount Airy NRSA
OTR-West End NRSA
Pendleton NRSA
Price Hill NRSA
Riverside-Sedamsville NRSA
Roselawn NRSA
Upper Mill Creek NRSA
Uptown NRSA
Westwood NRSA

<b>CDBG Local Target Areas</b>
Avondale
Bond Hill
Camp Washington
Carthage
Corryville
CUF
East End
East Price Hill
East Westwood
English Woods
Evanston
Kennedy Heights
Linwood
Lower Price Hill
Madisonville
Millvale
Mount Airy
Mount Auburn
North Fairmount
Northside
Over-the-Rhine
Pendleton

Riverside
Roselawn
Sedamsville
South Cumminsville
South Fairmount
Spring Grove Village
Villages at Roll Hill
Walnut Hills
West End
West Price Hill
Westwood
Winton Hills

**VII. Conditions of Award**

Upon an award of City funds, the City and recommended awardee(s) would negotiate a funding agreement for disbursement of City funds towards the awarded project(s). The funding agreement(s) will provide the terms and conditions for the work to be performed and disbursement of funding.

**VIII. Post Award Procedures**

As part of the City’s effort to ensure that viable projects are provided the resources to proceed and resources are not held back for projects that are no longer viable, the City expects continued progress in producing required documents and responding to City staff on project details to ensure that the City has the information necessary to have contracts drafted, mutually negotiated and executed so the project proceeds in a timely manner. The City may set specific timelines for delivery of documents or information regarding the project that must be met by the awardee, or the award of funds may be withdrawn. If the awardee fails to respond to the request by the City or fails to meet established deadlines for delivery set by the City staff, the City may rescind the funding award for failure to demonstrate that the project remains viable to proceed.

Following awards, projects may need to seek minimal alterations to their original proposals due to unforeseen circumstances. Minimal alterations may be approved by City staff. The City may reject substantial alterations , which may be the basis for rescinding an award. Applicants may consult with City staff to delineate a minimal versus a substantial alteration.

**IX. Procurement Handbook for Developers**

If awarded funding, projects may be subject to the following City of Cincinnati procurement requirements:

- Meet & Confer
- Selection of Subcontractors
- Debarred Contractor Search
- S/M/WBE Goals
- Prevailing Wage
- Wage Enforcement
- Living Wage
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
- Preconstruction Meeting

For more information on any of these requirements, applicants should consult the City’s [Procurement Handbook for Developers & Subrecipients](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Are for-profit, not-for-profit, hybrid, and sole proprietorships equally eligible?

- a. Yes.

### 2. What are pre-development activities?

- a. Pre-development activities include any initial tasks and processes that need to occur before actual construction begins for a property. These tasks and processes are important to assess the feasibility, secure necessary approvals, and lay the groundwork for a successful project. The proposals should primarily include tasks and services that will support the planning, analysis, and preparation to ensure that the project can proceed smoothly and efficiently once construction starts.
- b. Examples of Pre-Development Activities:
  - i. Market research – Research to understand the demand and supply dynamics of the real estate market. Analysis of demographic trends, economic conditions, and local real estate market conditions.
  - ii. Site selection and acquisition
  - iii. Structural stabilization (capped at \$30,000)
  - iv. Feasibility studies – Assessing the viability of the project from financial, legal, and technical perspectives. Estimating costs, potential revenue, and return on investment.
  - v. Environmental site assessments – Conducting environmental impact studies to identify potential environmental issues, concerns, and risks. Ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.
  - vi. Zoning and land use approvals – Reviewing local zoning laws and land use regulations.
  - vii. Site survey – Detailed site surveys that describe the physical characteristics of the land.
  - viii. Due Diligence – Research to uncover existing legal or physical encumbrances.
  - ix. Community engagement and public relations – engaging with local community members and stakeholders to gather feedback and address concerns regarding the proposed project. Building support for the project through public engagement efforts.
  - x. Design and architectural planning – Initial design concepts and architectural plans by working with architects, engineers, and designers to create preliminary plans and schematics.
  - xi. Financial planning and capital stack building – Preparation of financial models and budgets to present to other private lenders for leverage support.

### 3. Timeline: When would the funds be released to the project?

- a. The City and recommended awardee(s) will negotiate a funding agreement for disbursement of City funds towards the awarded project(s). The funding agreement(s) will outline the terms and conditions for disbursement of funding.
- b. Upon an award of City funds, the City and recommended awardee(s) will negotiate a funding agreement within 4 months depending on the complexity of the project and the applicant's ability to provide certain due diligence items required to initiate the funding agreement(s). The funding agreement(s) will outline the terms and conditions for disbursement of funding, including a retainage requirement.
- c. City funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. **ELIGIBLE EXPENSES CANNOT BE INCURRED BEFORE THE CONTRACT EXECUTION DATE.** Recommended awardee(s) may inquire about advance funding with the Program Administrator.

### 4. ACT for Cincy: What is ACT for Cincy? I have never heard of it.

- a. [Achieving Change Together for Cincinnati \(ACT for Cincy\)](#) builds on a public health approach to violence prevention, focusing on addressing root causes of violence through proactive and collaborative strategies. ACT for Cincy seeks to make neighborhoods safe and vibrant through community well-being, reducing access to firearms, and targeted policing innovations. The five pillars of this program are:
  - i. **Thriving Neighborhoods:** Safe public spaces, community-based programs, and economic development create the conditions for residents to thrive and youth to succeed.

ACT for Cincy prioritizes investments in local organizations that lead grassroots efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and reduce violence as well as best police practices rooted in problem solving and best practices for Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP).

- ii. **Reduced Accessibility of Firearms to Youth:** Gun violence among youth poses a significant threat to community safety. ACT for Cincy takes a comprehensive approach to reducing the accessibility of firearms to youth by targeting illegal gun trafficking and increasing education on gun safety.
- iii. **Improved Wellbeing:** Cincinnati recognizes that violence prevention is deeply tied to mental health, trauma support, and access to essential services. ACT for Cincy emphasizes holistic well-being by connecting individuals and families with mental health care, housing stability, and social services that reduce stress and build resilience.
- iv. **Improved Youth Support:** Supporting youth through mentorship, education, and skill development is critical to preventing violence. ACT for Cincy invests in programs that help young people succeed in school, find positive outlets for creativity, and access mentorship opportunities to navigate life's challenges without resorting to violence.
- v. **Evidence-Based Policing Innovations:** Innovative law enforcement strategies are essential for reducing violent crime. ACT for Cincy emphasizes data-driven, community-based policing strategies that build trust and reduce violence at its source.

**5. Regarding the Balanced Development Priorities Table, what is the relevance of the questions "does the project development exceed \$5 million, and does the City assistance exceed \$3 million."**

- a. The Balanced Development Priorities table is attached to the RFPs for informational purposes only. These are intended to help applicants consider the potential benefits of their project. Unless other City sources have already been secured for the project, the Balanced Development threshold will not be achieved.

**6. These RFP applications requires narrative descriptions. Does our previously submitted "application for funding" meet the application requirements?**

- a. Information from previously submitted applications will not be reviewed during the NCCIP RFP selection process. Please submit proposals using the forms provided for this program.

**7. Where is the DCED information regarding best practices for living wage policy?**

- a. In cases where the project involves job creation, best practice would be for the proposed wages to meet or exceed the City's living wage if the project seeks to represent it will meet or exceed the City's living wage policy when completing the Balanced Development Framework.

<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/inclusion/bid-contract-requirements/living-wage/>

**8. In the table under "transformative Project" there is reference to "targeted Neighborhood" and "Catalytic Project" definition. as defined in Ordinance No. 275-2017, as amended. Is there a link to this?**

- a. [Click here](#) for a link to Ordinance No. 275-2017
- b. However, the Balanced Development Priorities table is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the **Section VII. Strategic Investment Areas** within the RFP for a list of defined priority areas for this program.

**9. How do we contact the community, business association, and community development corporation for letters of support?**

- a. [Please refer to this database to obtain community contacts.](#)

**10. Applicants must demonstrate the proposed project would not be financially feasible if limited to only real estate tax incentives or other available DCED programs (on the RFP). – how do we demonstrate this? Are we eligible for these incentives/programs?**

- a. Applicant can include a summary of their financial feasibility analysis of the project (e.g., debt capacity and eligibility for other types of funding).
- b. Typical real estate financial assistance programs offered by the City include partial property tax abatements, gap financing, and forgivable loans. Entities seeking general assistance for a real estate development or business lending/economic development project may complete a [Financial Assistance Application](#).
- c. Please refer to Chooscincy.com for a listing of incentive and funding programs currently available for real estate, neighborhood, and business development projects and eligibility requirements.
  - <https://choosecincy.com/real-estate-development/>
  - <https://choosecincy.com/neighborhood-services/>
  - <https://choosecincy.com/small-business/>

**11. What is an operating/partnership agreement for entity applying for assistance?**

- a. Operating Agreement – This is the legal document that governs the entity that will be undertaking the development. A non-profit will have a different governing document (articles of incorporation and bylaws) from a for profit LLC (operating agreement). The documents provided must show the ownership and control of the organization.
- b. For profit entities will need to list individuals with ownership interest if not articulated in the legal document and non-profit applicants should provide a roster of board members and key officers.
- c. Partnership Agreement – Documentation detailing the organizational structure and responsibilities of the final project. This is required for projects being undertaken by two or more individual entities that will develop and/or occupy the project site.
- d. Long-term Lease - In the case of an applicant gaining site control through a long-term lease, please include a copy of the lease agreement.

**12. How do we demonstrate a Certificate of Good Standing for all organizations that will be involved in the project?**

- a. Cincinnati Income Tax requires a Taxpayer in Good Standing Letter from each applicant. Applicants must email Income Tax by email ([tiq.standing@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:tiq.standing@cincinnati-oh.gov)). Applicants must use their corporate entity information. Income Tax will not respond to requests for LLC affiliates.
- b. The applicant must also be in good standing with the Ohio Secretary of State as evidenced by a Certificate of Good Standing. This can be secured from the Ohio Secretary of State [here](#).

**13. Is there a specific format you need the Corporate Resolution attachment to be in?**

- a. The Corporate Resolution should state that the individual submitting the proposal is authorized by the organization to sign/act on behalf of the organization.