

# PRO NEIGHBORHOODS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GRANTS

### **What is the pre-application?**

PRO Neighborhoods wants your project to be funded! The pre-application is a chance for us to get to know you. It will provide us information about your group and your project idea early in your planning process. When we receive the pre-application, PRO Neighborhoods' staff will work with your group to make sure you meet our criteria and that the project meets as many of our funding priorities as possible. Only groups that qualify will be asked to submit an application. If it is easier for your group, you can meet with a PRO Neighborhoods' staff person and we can fill out the form together.

### **How do I get a pre-application and grant application?**

Call us at 882-5885, e-mail us at [info@proneighborhoods.org](mailto:info@proneighborhoods.org), drop by our office in the Santa Rita Building at 310 N. Commerce Park Loop, or visit our web site at [www.proneighborhoods.org](http://www.proneighborhoods.org) for a pre-application. Pre-applications are available electronically on request so that you can complete them on a computer. If your group qualifies for a grant, you will be asked to submit an application and we will provide the forms at that time.

### **How long does it take to find out if our project was funded?**

Pre-applications are accepted any time. They are reviewed three times a year (see grant application guidelines). If your group qualifies, you will be given five weeks to complete the application form. Groups are usually informed of their award status within six weeks of the application deadline and may begin to receive funds two to four weeks later. Please see the application guidelines for upcoming deadlines.

### **What happens if I don't get my application in by the deadline?**

Assuming that our guidelines don't change, your application will be reviewed during the next cycle.

### **What does it mean that the group should be part of a "neighborhood"?**

Most members of the group driving the project need to live in the neighborhood or rural community where they are doing the project. A neighborhood doesn't have to have a name or be defined by a neighborhood association, but it should be generally described by some boundaries such as streets, rivers, etc. In rural areas, a town, village, or district may describe the area. For urban areas, people in a neighborhood generally should live within 2 miles of each other.

### **How organized does the group have to be?**

The group can have a long history or be newly formed. Many of the groups that apply to PRO Neighborhoods have gotten together just to complete a single project. They've never done anything together before. It is not necessary for the group to have bylaws or officers, but it is required that the group have a name, that the group have held at least one meeting together where this project was discussed, and that at least five people are committed to moving the project forward.

### **Do you fund formal neighborhood or homeowners' associations?**

Yes. However, it is strongly encouraged that the group demonstrates a financial commitment to the success of the project. PRO Neighborhoods can assist the group in identifying other funding sources prior to submitting the application if given enough lead time (minimum one month).

### **Does our group need to have nonprofit status?**

No. If funded and you don't have nonprofit status, you'll be asked to sign a paper that says you will use the funds for "charitable purposes" to help us follow IRS regulations. Most new groups choose to open a bank account in

the group's name to handle the grant funds. Other groups may ask a larger, more established organization to handle the funds for them.

### **Does a school, church, or scout troop qualify as a group?**

No. Projects must be initiated and led by neighborhood groups. However, collaboration with others such as school, church, or scout troops is encouraged whenever appropriate. (Note: This is a change from past guidelines.)

### **Does PRO Neighborhoods fund individuals, such as artists, to do projects with communities?**

PRO Neighborhoods will consider applications from groups, not individuals. A group may request funds to pay an artist or other consultant to help with a project, but the project must be driven by the neighborhood group. So, if an artist or other consultant is working with a group, he/she may want to share information about PRO Neighborhoods' grants, but the group itself will need to be in charge of the project.

### **PRO Neighborhoods says it wants to fund projects, not programs. What's the difference?**

A project is something that can be finished within approximately a year and has a start and an end. A program is something that needs to be maintained year after year with new resources. PRO Neighborhoods funds projects. That said, many of PRO Neighborhoods' grants have supported small projects that are part of larger programs or the establishment of something that will be self-sufficient in the future.

### **Can PRO Neighborhoods fund a project on private property?**

Yes. PRO Neighborhoods may consider funding projects on private property, e.g. a church, apartment complex, or vacant lot, as long as the project demonstrates a contribution to strengthening community. Your group should ask the owner of the property to sign a contract that guarantees community access to the project for a reasonable period of time and submit the contract with your application.

### **Can we use PRO Neighborhoods funds to buy large equipment, or to pay consultants or contractors?**

Yes, if these are necessary expenses within a project that builds community relationships. If community members are very involved in the planning and implementation of a project, and the process itself helps them organize as a group, PRO Neighborhoods will consider granting funds for necessary expenses such as large equipment. For example, several groups have used money to buy equipment that was useful in the long term, but the purchase process was also used as an opportunity to bring community members together for workshops and discussions. However, if a group falls apart and the equipment is no longer available to the community, PRO Neighborhoods may request that it be returned to be used by another group.

### **Does PRO Neighborhoods fund sidewalks and streetlights?**

These projects, sometimes called capital improvements, tend to be very expensive. PRO Neighborhoods grants a maximum of \$5,000 - this will not buy much sidewalk. It is possible that a group could find a way to do an improvement with donations and volunteer labor, and a PRO Neighborhoods grant could supplement their efforts. In general though, it is not practical to rely on PRO Neighborhoods for these kinds of improvements.

### **Does PRO Neighborhoods fund salaries?**

No. A PRO Neighborhoods grant may be used for stipends or consultant fees. However, paying one or more people a stipend or consultant fees should not affect the group's effort in leading, managing, and carrying out the project. In

other words, all group members are still expected to share the work associated with the project and non-paid members should contribute significant volunteer time.

### **How do we estimate costs for our application?**

Be realistic! Grant reviewers will be suspicious if your costs seem too high or too low. Include amounts for all donations you expect to receive, including donations of time, money, or materials from group members, local businesses, etc.

### **What's the average size of a grant?**

PRO Neighborhoods offers small grants ranging from \$500 to \$5000; in the last few years, grant awards have averaged \$3,000.

### **Do you always get less than you ask for?**

No. If your group is funded, it may be for the full amount you requested or for part of your request. A group is often awarded less than it requested when parts of the application budget don't make sense, are unrealistic, or don't demonstrate support from other sources.

### **If we get funded, does PRO Neighborhoods just write us a check for the amount we requested?**

Depending on the amount of the grant and the schedule of the project, PRO Neighborhoods will usually write three to four checks over the course of the project, as needed. You will be asked to submit reports with receipts every three months; PRO Neighborhoods' staff will review these reports before issuing subsequent checks.

### **Can the same group apply to PRO Neighborhoods more than once?**

Yes. The same group may apply if they have spent all the funds from the previous grant and successfully completed the project. However, they may not receive funds for the continuation of the same project. Please note that a second application will have a greater chance of being funded when the group can show they have significant cash and in-kind donations in addition to the amount being requested. Given enough time before a grant submission deadline (minimum one month), PRO Neighborhoods can provide assistance in how to identify other sources of funding.

### **Can we submit additional information with our application?**

Yes. Pictures, maps, drawings, or lists are often submitted to give us additional information about projects. However, try to be as clear as possible in answering the questions on the application so that additional information will not be necessary.

### **What kinds of things will we be required to do if we get the grant?**

A PRO Neighborhoods staff member will meet with your group to go over our contract before you receive funding. In order to keep in touch with funded groups and report back to our own funding sources, we ask groups to (1) write reports every three months and submit a final report, (2) host two separate visits (one is a final site visit) from a PRO Neighborhoods' staff member, and (3) fulfill a requirement of 15 volunteer hours in the PRO Friends program. Any group member or combination of members can complete these hours in various ways. The group will be required to organize and host an informal community meeting, inviting 10 people from the neighborhood who are not already involved in the project. This will give you an opportunity to tell neighbors about your project and maybe get them involved, as well as help us let more people know about PRO Neighborhoods. The remaining hours can be completed by participating in PRO Neighborhoods' sponsored workshops and events or working with other neighborhood groups to help them do projects.