



Canopy Grants

Building Stronger, More Connected Neighborhoods Together

Program Guidelines

Purpose

The Canopy Connection Grant Program provides financial support to registered neighborhood groups to strengthen community identity, increase resident engagement, build leadership capacity, and advance locally identified priorities. Grant awards are tier-based and reflect a neighborhood's organizational readiness and engagement level.

Grant Types

- **Canopy Development (Tier 1):** Supports emerging or early-stage neighborhood organizations building foundational structure and visibility.
- **Canopy Activation (Tier 2):** Supports established neighborhood groups implementing engagement initiatives and community-building activities.
- **Canopy Impact (Tier 3):** Supports highly engaged neighborhoods undertaking broader or multi-phase initiatives with demonstrated organizational capacity.

All Canopy Grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis and are subject to available funding.

General Requirements

Eligibility

Canopy Grants are available only to registered Canopy Connection neighborhoods in good standing. To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be current on annual registration requirements
- Have completed required quarterly check-ins
- Be operating within their approved neighborhood boundaries
- Meet the tier requirements associated with the requested grant type

Each registered neighborhood may receive one Canopy Grant per fiscal year.

Award Amounts

Tier 1 – Canopy Development Grant

- Up to \$750 per fiscal year

Tier 2 – Canopy Activation Grant

- Up to \$1,500 per fiscal year

Tier 3 – Canopy Impact Grant

- Up to \$2,500 per fiscal year

Matching funds are required for award amounts exceeding \$1,500.

Eligible Uses

Grant funds may be used for activities that strengthen neighborhood identity, increase engagement, or build organizational capacity, including:

- Organizational formation costs (e.g., incorporation, filing fees)
- Outreach and communications (mailers, printing, translation)
- Neighborhood events and gatherings
- Beautification or placemaking initiatives
- Leadership development or facilitation
- Community surveys or engagement efforts
- Strategic planning or visioning sessions

Village staff may review additional expenses for eligibility.

Ineligible Uses

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Political activity or lobbying
- Individual household improvements
- Private benefit projects
- Compensation to individual residents
- Alcohol purchases
- Expenses incurred prior to approval

Reimbursement

All Canopy Grants are reimbursement-based. To receive reimbursement for eligible expenses from the Village of Oak Park, applicants must:

- Submit a completed and approved grant application
- Provide itemized invoices and proof of payment
- Demonstrate that the funded activity has occurred
- Submit a brief summary of outcomes and impact

Reimbursement will be issued after documentation has been reviewed and approved. Grant awards are subject to federal and state tax reporting requirements.

Review & Approval

Grant applications will be reviewed by Neighborhood Partnerships staff and are subject to available funding.

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Alignment with Canopy Connection goals
- Community impact and engagement potential
- Organizational readiness

- Budget clarity and feasibility
- Inclusivity and representation

The Village of Oak Park reserves the right to approve, deny, or modify any grant request at its discretion.

Terms and Conditions

- Applicants may receive no more than one Canopy Grant per Village fiscal year, regardless of the number of applications submitted.
- Grant applications will be considered in the order they are received and are subject to available funding.
- Applicants must pay eligible expenses in full prior to seeking reimbursement.
- Reimbursement grants may be subject to federal and state tax reporting requirements. Awards may be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099. Grant recipients are required to provide a taxpayer identification number. Applicants should consult their tax advisor for tax liability information.
- An applicant is defined as the registered neighborhood organization responsible for the administration and implementation of the funded initiative.
- The Village of Oak Park reserves the right to approve, deny, or modify any grant application or reimbursement request at its discretion.
- Reimbursement will only be issued after:
 - The funded initiative has occurred,
 - All required documentation has been submitted (invoices, receipts, proof of payment), and
 - Compliance with program guidelines has been verified.
- Grant recipients must use awarded funds solely for the purposes outlined in the approved application. Any substantive changes to the scope of work must be approved in writing by Neighborhood Partnerships staff.
- Failure to comply with program guidelines or reporting requirements may result in ineligibility for future Canopy Grant funding.