



BUILDING **BLOCKS** let's get together!

Intent of Building Blocks Program

United Way's Building Blocks (BB) Program assists informal groups of individuals or residents to invest in their neighbourhoods and/or demographic communities by:

- Supporting activities that increase the social capital¹ of a neighbourhood or demographic community;
- Developing personal skills, assets and abilities that will be used to build a community or neighbourhood and increase social capital.

The BB Program provides small amounts of capital (\$100 to a maximum of \$1 000) to purchase materials, supplies or services. The program enables small informal groups of people to identify solutions to local neighbourhood or community issues and act on them using Community Development² values and principles.

Scope of Building Blocks Program

The program is offered citywide in high need, low serviced neighbourhoods and to demographic communities not represented by a citywide or provincial organization.

Building Blocks Program Eligibility

- Non-incorporated groups of individuals that are working together to improve their neighbourhood. (Minimum 3 individuals).
- Informal groups of residents that are not primarily connected to formal institutions or established groups.
- Informal groups of individuals or residents who do not operate in long term or re-occurring partnership with an organization holding a charitable number.
- Individuals who require information or knowledge in order to assist their neighbourhood or community to improve and are seen as leaders in their neighbourhood or community.

¹ Social capital is the ability of individuals to gain benefits from the social networks they participate in.

² Community Economic Development is action by people locally to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis.

In Plain Language:

- If nobody is going to help us, then we have to help ourselves;
- If we are going to help ourselves then we have to start with what we have;
- If we are going to work together then we have to weave together each others' motivations and interests
- Once we have a plan – then – we have to do it.

Non Eligible Expenses

- No funding is to be used to compensate individuals for their time or personal expenses.
- No funds will be approved for the purchase of capital assets such as computers, chairs, tables or to supplement larger neighbourhood or community events with budgets over \$1 000.
- No funds will be approved to support already existing and ongoing programs/activities.

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of projects are eligible?

Projects that embody:

- Local ownership and decision making³.
- Local knowledge and skill development³.
- Health and well-being³.
- Neighbourhood stability and community cohesion³.
- Human dignity³.

Eligible activities should focus on specific solutions to community challenges and may include:

- Improving neighbourhood safety, such as conducting a neighbourhood safety walk.
- Building information connections among area residents by publicizing and holding an information session on a topic of choice valuable to members of a neighbourhood or demographic community.
- Building personal connections among area residents through activities such as developing a community garden.
- Making neighbourhoods good places for children to grow up in through activities such as a family movie afternoon to bring children and their families together from within a neighbourhood or demographic community.
- Obtaining or enhancing personal community development skills through activities such as a lunch and learning workshop organized by informal groups of residents from a neighbourhood or demographic community.

Can I reapply for a Building Blocks Grant?

A total of 1 Building Blocks Grant will be granted per group per year. Consideration will be given to the nature and results of past efforts of a similar nature.

Questions to consider if reapplying:

- How will the project impact participants after the event?
- What will be done to continue and nurture relationships made?
- How will the next project build on the community development momentum established with the first activity supported by the Building Blocks program?

Are there specific dates for submitting proposals?

Applications are accepted throughout the year. However, depending on the number of approved applications, the grant may be closed before the end of the fiscal year (March 31 of each year).

³ Source: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/ia/programs/neighbourhoods/toolbox/ced.html>

Building Blocks Application Process

Submit a 1 page letter or e-mail to a Community Investment Manager describing:

- The neighbourhood that will be the focus.
- The individuals advancing the request.
- The total budget for the project and how the requested funds will be used.
- The time frame in which they will be used.
- How United Way's Community Investment Committee will know the funds have been spent.
- If re-applying for a Building Blocks grant, respond to *questions to consider if reapplying* (as outlined above) in the application letter.

Note: The letter must be written by a person who is a volunteer involved in planning, organizing and hosting the event/activity and has also agreed to serve as the representative of the group.

Reporting and Responsibility of Approved Groups

- One individual is required to sign a letter of commitment and agree to be responsible for the funds.
- Complete activities within 1 year of approval.
- Submit final report on outcomes or submit pictorial report.
- Submit copies of receipts for products purchased.
- If submitting a report on a second approved project, indicate how the second project built on the relationships and social/community benefits achieved through the first project.