# **Love Your Block 2023 Application**

Every day, mayors and the cities they serve struggle with the negative impacts that vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating properties have on neighborhoods and the people living in them. Blighted properties – including but not limited to abandoned single-family homes, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, vacant lots, deteriorating parks, and other public spaces – harm neighborhoods by posing safety hazards, decreasing surrounding property values, reducing tax revenue, and eroding social cohesion. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these problems, particularly for communities and people in economically distressed areas, and cities continue to feel the harmful effects of blight today.  
  
Building on more than a decade of support for mayors led by Michael R. Bloomberg and Bloomberg Philanthropies that includes millions of dollars in funding and a growing portfolio of government innovation initiatives, the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins is pleased to announce that applications are open for Love Your Block, an impact volunteering grant program supporting volunteer-fueled projects that address local public problems. This grant program focuses on supporting cities to partner with community groups and activate resident volunteers to repair, remediate, and address blight in their neighborhoods.

Love Your Block is based on the Cities of Service [Love Your Block Blueprint](https://citiesofservice.jhu.edu/resource/love-your-block/) and builds on the experience and lessons learned from 14 years of program implementation in 50 cities around the country. In collaboration with the AmeriCorps VISTA program, Love Your Block furthers the principles of an anti-poverty focus, community empowerment, sustainable solutions, and capacity-building to exemplify transformation in communities. [Click here](https://americorps.gov/) to learn more about AmeriCorps.

## **Instructions**

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 4, 2023. Cities that previously participated in Love Your Block programs are not eligible to apply. “Eligible organizations” refers to U.S. cities that meet the eligibility criteria.

### **Application questions**

| **Question #** | **Question** | **Answer format** |
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| 1 | Please tell us about the public problem the eligible organization hopes to alleviate or solve with the proposed project. Specifically include the scale of the problem, who is impacted, and how. Please provide quantitative and qualitative data to describe the scale of the problem and the impact of this issue. | 3000 characters |
| 2 | Please describe the eligible organization’s commitment to addressing this problem and why it is a priority. Describe how the mayor or city chief executive has prioritized this problem. If relevant, describe what has already been done to address this problem. | 2500 characters |
| 3 | In a few short sentences, please provide a brief description or elevator pitch of your proposed project. | 500 characters |
|  | For the following questions, please describe the specific project being proposed for this grant. Please provide enough detail to give us a concrete understanding of your proposed project. For helpful guidance, review the application and the [FAQs](https://publicinnovation.jhu.edu/love-your-block/). |  |
| 4 | How will volunteers be engaged in the project? How many volunteers do you expect to engage? Please describe what activities volunteers will take on and the volunteering frequency. | 3000 characters |
| 5 | How will you recruit volunteers who are from and/or currently live in the impacted communities and who are representative (e.g., gender, race, age, different-ability) of the area of focus? | 3000 characters |
| 6 | Who will act as the executive sponsor (e.g., chief of staff, deputy mayor, deputy chief of staff) of this project within the mayor’s office and ensure the project has executive support? | 1000 characters |
| 7 | What role will the mayor or city chief executive play during the design, implementation, and celebration of the project? | 1000 characters |
| 8 | When is the project launch? | 500 characters |
| 9 | Which city departments/agencies will be involved in the project? What will their roles be throughout the project? | 3000 characters |
| 10 | Which community partners will be involved in this project? What will their roles be throughout the project? For example: nonprofits, community based organizations, businesses, schools, churches, colleges/universities, hospitals, corporate partners and other interested community partners. | 3000 characters |
| 11 | What result(s) do you expect to achieve through Love Your Block? For example: number of volunteers engaged, volunteer hours, community projects completed, pounds of trash removed, square feet of graffiti removed, trees planted, and community partners engaged. | 1500 characters |
| 12 | How will you measure the impact of Love Your Block? Please identify up to five (5) measures the mayor and other key executives (e.g., council members, chief of staff, etc.), as well as engaged residents and community partners will utilize to show the impact of the project on the stated public challenge. | 1500 characters |
| 13 | How will you track metrics for the project (e.g., dashboard, bi-weekly status meeting, etc.)? You may provide examples of how the city has tracked similar project-related metrics. | 3000 characters |
| 14 | How often does the eligible organization collect demographic data? Who is tasked with this data collection? | 1500 characters |
| 15 | What demographic data does the eligible organization collect and how is that information used? | 1500 characters |
| 16 | Please describe how the eligible organization has made grants to community partners and residents in the past. If the eligible organization has not provided such grants, please describe how you will implement such a process and what, if any, support you will need to do so, including partnering with a city agency, nonprofit, or university. | 3000 characters |
| 17 | How will you ensure that residents and community groups with limited or no involvement are made aware of the opportunity to apply for Love Your Block mini-grants? What activities, resources, or workshops do you plan to make available for residents and community groups to support them during the application process? | 3000 characters |
| 18 | Please describe the eligible organization’s practices and considerations around diversity and inclusion when making grants to community partners or residents. What top lessons learned will you translate or adapt to this grant? If this is a new commitment, describe what best practices and considerations you plan to incorporate. We value learning, so please highlight any shortcomings with your past efforts towards diversity and inclusion that you would improve or address with this project. | 3000 characters |
| 19 | Please describe plans for sustaining the project after the two-year grant period. Indicate any relevant conversations about future funding and partnerships with the eligible organization and community partners such as community foundations, local businesses, or universities. | 3000 characters |
| 20 | Please identify staff who will be responsible for this project. Provide their title, full name, the role they will play in the proposed project, and what their other responsibilities are. Explain why this project falls under their purview. | 3000 characters |
| 21 | Please describe how the eligible organization will recruit, manage, and support the AmeriCorps VISTA member and how the VISTA will support the implementation of the project. Describe how the eligible organization plans to train, support, and deploy the AmeriCorps member. Include the organizational structure, where the AmeriCorps VISTA will be placed in the organization and to whom they will report. Please include in the organizational structure the office of the mayor, city chief executive, and/or department director. Please describe how the VISTA will lead volunteer recruitment and impact volunteering through outreach, marketing campaigns, building a social media presence and other key activities. AmeriCorps VISTA members’ time must be used in accordance with the core principles of the VISTA program to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Include any information about previous experience the city has had with AmeriCorps VISTA members. | 3000 characters |
| 22 | Please describe how the eligible organization will recruit, manage, and support the Love Your Block Fellow for two years. Please describe how the city plans to recruit, train, support, and deploy the two-year Love Your Block Fellow, including where the Fellow will be placed in the organizational structure, and who will supervise the Fellow. | 3000 characters |