SAFE AND CLEAN NEIGHBORHOOD FUND
GUIDELINES AND GRANTMAKING PROCESS
(updated October 22, 2026)

In Fiscal Year 2026-2027, the City of Cincinnati is investing $549,060 in the Safe and Clean Neighborhood Fund with the ongoing annual investment of $50,000 (Safe & Clean Grant) will continue as usual during this period. **The grant is reimbursable, meaning that grantees must first make purchases of goods & services before submitting receipts for reimbursement from the Safe & Clean Neighborhood Fund.**

Safe and Clean funding is intended for projects based on crime prevention through environmental design where improved beautification enhances community ownership and reduces violence. This funding is open for organizations prioritizing youth-led initiatives to promote positive physical changes in neighborhoods.

Goals of the Safe and Clean Neighborhood Fund

There are three goals for the Safe and Clean Neighborhood Fund:

- To support and encourage youth-led, community-based, and community-initiated projects.
- To support projects that harness the power of young people to create lasting, positive physical changes in their communities.
- To provide financial support for one-time costs **(not ongoing operating expenses)** for neighborhood-led initiatives to improve the quality of life within the City's neighborhoods.

Priority Focuses for FY 26-27 Grant Cycle:

- **Engage Youth Leaders:** Projects should be led by or actively involve young people who are passionate about improving their neighborhoods.
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    - What decisions are youth making in relation to the project?
    - Think about what specific decisions the youth will make in the formation of your project.
    - Think about how youth will be included in the scanning and analysis of the project, not just the response.
    - What factors will drive your decision on the youth selected to participate?
- **Promote Physical Changes:** Focus on transforming the physical environment, whether it's through litter pick-up, renovations to shared spaces, or creative enhancements to buildings in their area (murals are not a priority focus).
- **Implement Crime Prevention Principles***: Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies to reduce crime and increase community safety.

- **Enhance Community Ownership:** Initiatives should aim to beautify public spaces, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among residents.
- **Focus on high-crime Neighborhoods:** Winton Hills, Over-the-Rhine, West End, Walnut Hills, Avondale, Central Business District, Westwood, West Price Hill, Roselawn, East Price Hill.

Eligibility and Criteria

Grant applications will be accepted from a wide variety of community groups and organizations including youth leadership councils, youth advisory councils, community councils, neighborhood business district organizations, Citizen on Patrol organizations, Community Problem-Oriented Policing (CPOP) teams, and other recognized community organizations such as neighborhood improvement groups, block watch groups, etc. **Collaboration between various groups and organizations is strongly encouraged.**

Funding is awarded for one-time costs associated with projects that improve the safety and livability of a community. Certain expenses are **not** allowable, including alcohol, adult beverages, entertainment, t-shirts and other clothing, and personnel costs (ongoing payroll, overhead costs, utilities). Contracted services (ex. artist) and stipends **are eligible** for reimbursement.

When necessary to protect the health and safety of project participants, and/or when helpful to promote participant engagement in project activities, funding can be used for inexpensive food and non-alcoholic beverages to participants. We require that the recipient provides the following: the date and purpose of the event, the projected number of attendees, and the projected cost of providing refreshments for the event.

Youth(ages 15-24) must be paid for their time at a minimum of $15 per hour (youth stipends are reimbursable). Transportation reimbursement(within City limits) is strongly encouraged.

Generally, law enforcement equipment such as drones, speed radars, license plate readers, shot spotters, public cameras, etc. is **not eligible** for Safe & Clean funding. Technologies such as these may interfere with the work of the Cincinnati Police Department. If a request is deemed eligible and is funded, equipment must be wholly owned, managed, and maintained by the grantee. If part of a Safe & Clean grant, private security cameras should be registered at: https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/police/online-camera-registration/.

Projects that may include other **City Departments** such as the Department of Transportation Engineering (DOTE), Public Services, etc. must consult that City department before applying for funding and notify Ty before submitting your application. We encourage applicants to get a bid/estimate of costs before applying for funding no later than **2 weeks** before the deadline.

Projects that include **Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS)** students and properties must contact Ty at least **3 weeks (4 weeks for testing months)** prior to allowing CPS to review the project and write a letter of support. Principals/leadership of the school must contact Tyrone Walton, Director of Facilities. MOUs/Partner Agreements are required.

Projects must demonstrate measurable outcomes (i.e. changes in the conditions of safety, cleanliness, and livability) as a result of completing the funded project/program. Grant applications must provide information according to four key selection criteria:

- The severity of the Problem or Condition
- Leverage of Resources (financial, volunteers, etc.)
- Effectiveness of the Proposed Response (including measurable outcomes, examples of measurable outcomes are in the Safe and Clean PowerPoint and can be viewed here)
- Partnership/Collaboration

Strengths in the above four criteria will enhance the competitiveness of any proposal. Other guidelines include:

- All prospective applicants (even if you've received funding or applied before) must meet with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful before applying. Please contact Ty@KeepCincinnatiBeautiful.org to discuss your project at least 10 days before the deadline to be eligible.
- All projects/programs receiving grants must be implemented within the City of Cincinnati limits.
- Projects/programs must demonstrate a commitment to the S.A.R.A. problem-solving framework during planning and execution.
- All projects/programs must be initiated in the program year and demonstrate measurable impact within one year from receipt of funds.

Additional Guidelines for the Safe & Clean Grant

- While not required, priority focus will be given to projects in one of the City of Cincinnati's "Top-Ten" neighborhoods for statistical shooting crimes. As of 2025, they are Winton Hills, Over-the-Rhine, West End, Walnut Hills, Avondale, Central Business District, Westwood, West Price Hill, Roselawn, East Price Hill.
- Organizations applying for funding must be in operation for 6 months or more and cannot have an open grant with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful.
- Projects/programs must demonstrate a focus on "safe" and "clean" which together promote neighborhood livability.
- Projects/programs must demonstrate a specific community need for improvement of public safety including but not limited to violent crime reduction, pedestrian safety, and elimination of blight or public nuisance conditions.
- While not required, projects/programs requesting funds can show evidence of matching funds from the community. This can take the form of volunteer labor, donated materials, or professional services, and/or cash.
- Applicant organizations with an operating budget of $1,000,000.00 or less shall receive a competitive priority through the Fund application process.
- Minimum grant award of $1000 with no maximum award. Grant requests over $30,000.00 are considered bigger asks.
- Average amount per project funded in FY 2024-2025: $24,305.00

Number and Amount of Grants

Through the Safe and Clean Neighborhood Fund, the City of Cincinnati will disperse up to $524,177.50 this year until the funds are depleted. Each application is evaluated on its merit by a joint citizen-administration committee, which then makes its decision.

This agreement is conditioned upon the availability of funds appropriated to Keep Cincinnati Beautiful or available to it from the City of Cincinnati. This agreement is subject to the determination by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful that sufficient funds have been appropriated by the City of Cincinnati to Keep Cincinnati Beautiful for the purposes of this contract, and to the

certification of funds by the City of Cincinnati. If Keep Cincinnati Beautiful determines that sufficient funds have not been appropriated for the purposes of this contract, or the City of Cincinnati fails to certify the availability of funds, this Agreement, renewal, or any amendments thereof will terminate on the date that the funding expires without further obligation by either party.

Grantmaking Process

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful will convene a six-member Fund Advisory Committee to review grant applications and make recommendations for funding. The composition of the Fund Advisory Committee will be as follows:

- One representative from Keep Cincinnati Beautiful; this representative will also serve as the Fund Advisory Committee's convener **(non-voting)**
- One representative from Community Development and Planning
- One representative from the Police Department
- One representative from the City Manager's office (ex officio member)
- One representative from Public Services
- One member from the private sector (representing a broad cross-section of the community) selected by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful

In the case of the resignation or removal of a representative, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful will replace the representative in time to participate in the upcoming round of application reviews and recommendations.

To Apply

You are required to meet with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful before your grant submission. **Please meet with Ty at least 10 days before the deadline to be eligible.** Applications must be electronically submitted by 11:59 pm on or before the appropriate due date. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for that round. Applications that are missing the budget worksheet will not be considered for funding.

Grant applications are now accessed via Submittable, and applicants will need to create a Submittable profile to apply. Most grant communications and documentation will be conducted through the Submittable platform. Please remember to scroll down to the bottom of the page on Submittable and hit "Save" to save your progress, it can be resumed at any time before the deadline.

Application assistance is available, please contact Ty to learn more or visit our website to view grant writing resources. Ty offers application peer reviews, please send Ty your application draft and drafted budget no later than **7 days** before the deadline.

Application and Disbursement

The Fund Advisory Committee may review applications from citizen and community groups 3 times per year and make decisions for disbursement. Safe and Clean Neighborhood Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, so depending on the volume of grant applications received, funds may be depleted towards the end of the fiscal year (June 30). To learn more about the Safe and Clean Neighborhood Fund's status, visit https://www.keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/programs/safe-and-clean/

REMINDER: You are required to meet with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful before submitting your grant application 10 days before the deadline.

Grant deadlines: Tentatively January 2027 and May 2027
Grant Applications open: 30 Days before the deadline
Grant Award Notification: Within 60 days after the deadline via Submittable portal/email provided on the application. The committee's application feedback is available to all applicants.

Grant dollars will be dispersed on a reimbursement basis from submitted invoices. Invoices may only be submitted for materials/services within the approved grant. ACH payments and reimbursement checks will be sent to the fiscal sponsor.

A midway report is due halfway through project completion or no later than 6 months after the term starts. A final report is due at the end of the project, both the midway and final reports will need photos to show the progress and impact. Failure to submit a midway report and or a final report will result in ineligibility to receive future Safe and Clean Neighborhood funds.