

Strong

Neighborhoods –

West Milwaukee



WEST MILWAUKEE

A Housing  
Renovation  
Initiative

West Milwaukee Community  
Development Authority

4755 W Beloit Road

West Milwaukee, WI 53124

## Overview

Strong Neighborhoods is an initiative developed by the Village of West Milwaukee to help increase the attractiveness of West Milwaukee housing stock. Strong Neighborhoods aims to work with citizens to invest in them and their homes. The Strong Neighborhoods initiative will assist with residential exterior housing improvements and property maintenance compliance. The new program is financed through a TIF financing law known as the "Affordable Housing Extension" which allows the extension of a TIF to benefit a municipality's housing stock. Funds for these programs will be available in the form of grants as outlined in State Statute 66.1105. Investing in the Village's housing stock will result in a ripple effect that will benefit everyone within the Village.

## Goals and Objectives

Strong Neighborhoods is aimed at updating the Village's residential homes. The main goal is to increase the quality of housing stock with several objectives to help us define what success looks like.

## Administration

The West Milwaukee Community Development Authority (WMCDA) and Property Maintenance Department will administer the Strong Neighborhoods initiative. Administration includes but is not limited to, promoting, and advertising the program, accepting and reviewing completed applications, interpreting program guidelines, and approving or disapproving property reimbursement requests.

Any grant funds that are not used in full and/or any unused funds within the calendar year will be carried over to the next calendar year's budget.

Approving or disapproving applicant grants will be done monthly. Qualified projects will be approved on a first come first served basis.

The Community Development Authority will have a final determination on the amount and who receives funds from the program.

## Program Summary

The initiative intends to preserve affordable homes while rebuilding the Village's aging housing stock.

## Program Details

The program is available to assist in the repair and replacement of various exterior housing improvements. It is a grant program to help eligible single and two-family homes increase the curb appeal of their home. The program is a matching grant program and will provide funds of up to \$5,000 for eligible expenses: 1:1 match for owner-occupied – 1:2 match for non-owner-occupied. Funding is limited to one (1) project annually, per property.

Example:

| Home Type          | Total Project Amount | Grant   | Private Match |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Owner Occupied     | \$5,000              | \$2,500 | \$2,500       |
| Non-owner Occupied | \$5,000              | \$1,667 | \$3,333       |

- A. **Eligible Properties:** Properties that meet the following criteria may apply for up to \$5,000, owner-occupied must provide 100% matching funds and 200% for non-owner-occupied units.
  - a. Single Family or Two-Family Residence use properties.
  - b. Property owner cannot spend more than 30% of their gross monthly household income on housing-related expenses.
  - c. Property owner has not received Strong Neighborhoods funding within the past year.
  - d. Grants of \$500 or less can be approved by staff; however, all paint-related projects must be approved by the CDA.
  
- B. **Ineligible Properties:** *See Additional Program Details*
- C. **Eligible Projects:** *See Additional Program Details*
- D. **Grant Guidelines:**
  - a. The applicant must submit a completed application packet, including before photos, before any work is completed to be considered for the grant program.
  - b. A project timeline must be submitted with the application.
  - c. This program is a reimbursement grant. The applicant is required to pay all expenses related to their approved project and then submit for reimbursement from the Village. Grants are issued on a first come first serve basis, as funds are available.
  - d. Property owner must provide 100% matching funds if owner occupied and 200% if non-owner occupied.
  - e. The homeowner must agree to obtain all necessary permits (e.g. building, plumbing, electrical, roofing, permits, etc.).
  - f. All work must meet local, state, and national standards including, but not limited to lead and asbestos.
  - g. For painting or staining projects applicants are required to scrape and prime all surfaces before painting or staining. Photo documentation of the finished prep work is required.
  - h. Up to 10% of the total project grant reimbursement can be for trees and shrubs planted in the front yard.
  - i. Projects must be substantially completed within six (6) months of grant approval.
  - j. It is suggested to submit a minimum of two (2) bids; excessive bid costs will be reviewed on a base-to-case basis.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DETAILS**

### **Income Requirements**

Grants shall be given as outlined in 66.1105(6)(g)3 or to an individual who does not meet the state requirement of affordable housing as defined in section 66.1105(2) (ab). No more than 30% of the household's gross monthly income can be spent on housing-related expenses. Housing-related expenses include mortgages, property taxes, and home insurance. (\$5,000 Gross Monthly Household Income = \$1,500 maximum amount spent on housing costs). "Household" is defined in section 66.1105(2) (bq) as an individual and his or her spouse and all minor dependents.

### **Housing Standards**

To maintain the historic character and quality of West Milwaukee's older homes, all houses that use program funds must abide by the guidelines outlined in Appendix (A).

## Ineligible Properties

A property that has any one or more of the following conditions is ineligible for the rehabilitation program:

- A. A property is not located within the corporate limits of the Village of West Milwaukee.
- B. Any property where the owner of that property is delinquent on any debt it owes to the Village of West Milwaukee.
- C. Properties owned in part or in whole by a tax-exempt entity.
- D. A property that has an open or issued **Correction Notice**. Applications that are submitted for projects that will close a Correction Notice may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- E. Projects that do not employ professional labor, except for painting, staining or landscaping projects.

## Eligible Projects

Eligible items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Bringing non-compliance features up to code.
- B. Replacing the roof.
- C. Repair/Replacing windows.
- D. Exterior masonry repair/replacement.
- E. Front porch repair.
- F. Replace/ repair existing siding.
- G. Install guards and handrails.
- H. Paving of the driveway.
- I. Replace, repair, or install garage.
- J. Demolition and removal of structures deemed dilapidated by the Building Inspector as part of a larger project.
- K. Repair, replacement, or installation of fences.
- L. Repair or replacement of gutters or trim.
- M. Repair or replacement of soffit and fascia.
- N. Lead and asbestos remediation.
- O. Shrubs and Trees within the front yard (not to exceed 10% of total project reimbursement).
- P. Exterior Infrastructure
- Q. Other projects may be eligible for reimbursement upon approval of the Community Development Authority.

## Labor

Only professional labor can be claimed for reimbursement. Professional labor is considered work done by an individual who is trained and engaged in such work for a career. Projects done by non-professional labor shall not be considered for grant dollars.

- All receipts or invoices must be submitted by or on behalf of the contractor selected for the project.
- Painting, staining, and landscape projects are exempt from the professional labor requirement.

### **Ineligible Grant Expenditures**

Items/projects that are not eligible for reimbursement under the Grant Program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. The repair or replacement of dog houses or any other structure for animals.
- b. Any interior projects to the primary building, detached garage, or accessory building.
- c. Materials that have been purchased or projects that are completed or underway before issuance of a signed Contract for Services and Grant Award Letter.
- d. The purchasing of permanent equipment or tools (ladder, paint sprayers, etc.) is not an eligible expense.

### **Application Process**

The Property Maintenance Department shall ensure a complete application is submitted and then will process the application. The Community Development Authority reviews and approves.

- A. Complete a Grant Application
- B. Submit a timeline outlining when the project will be completed.
- C. A completed W-9 Form. A completed W-9 form must be completed and submitted in order to be eligible for the program. Please note this grant is taxable.
- D. The Property Maintenance Department determines whether the applicant owes money to the Village and if there are any correction notices on the property.
- E. It is anticipated that an applicant will receive a response whether they are eligible or ineligible for the program within 45 days from the date received.
- F. Before photos of the proposed project. Items will not be considered if before photos are not submitted. Before photos shall be submitted digitally in jpeg, pdf, or png file format. Along with images of the area of work must be submitted that displays the entire house from the street.
- G. A signed Contract for Services Form. Submit a signed Contract for Services Form. If approved, a signed copy of the contract from the Village will be sent back to the applicant.
- H. Additional Requirements: Please retain for your records, in case audited by Department of Revenue (DOR): a. Three (3) recent consecutive months of paycheck stubs, and b. Last one (1) year full tax return (federal) and supporting documentation; and c. Most recent mortgage loan statement (if any), homeowner's insurance policy coverage page and property tax statement.

### **Community Development Authority**

The Community Development Authority on a monthly basis shall review all requests for the property maintenance order program. The Property Maintenance Department will make a recommendation to the WMCDA on all projects. The recommendation will be considered by the WMCDA for approval or denial of the project. The following criteria will be taken into consideration by the Community Development Department and the Housing Authority:

- The applicant's financial history.

- History of the applicant and/or listed contractors including past ordinance violations and/or citations.
- The quality of work performed by the applicant in any other applicable home renovation.
- The Project quality.
- The neighborhood impact of the project.

### **Program Amendments**

Any update clarifying the intent of the document and/or process that does not drastically change the program details or the program intent may be made by the Administrative Staff. Those changes that would alter the intent of the program, drastically change the review and approval process, or alter a funding amount shall require the consent of the Community Development Authority.

### **Marketing Funds**

It is the expressed intent of this initiative that up to \$1,500 shall be budgeted per calendar year to market and advertise the initiative. The Community Development Department will determine how best to use the budgeted marketing funds to promote the initiative.

### **APPENDIX A**

The village's housing programs are primarily aimed at renovating existing homes. These homes have a character that is unique and should be preserved and enhanced when at all possible. When a structure is renovated, with the use of West Milwaukee funds, the purpose of the renovation is not to make an old house new but to improve or repair the existing features. The original home's design, structure, and style should be maintained when at all possible. The following is a design guideline to ensure that the aesthetics of existing homes are not lost with renovation projects.

#### **A. Siding:**

- When existing wood siding exists, it is preferred that the existing siding is maintained as opposed to replacing it with new siding.
- New siding shall be applied in a manner that preserves all existing distinguishing architectural features and ornamentation.
- The width of the new siding is consistent with the type, age, and style of the house.

#### **B. Brick and other Exterior Masonry:**

- When at all possible, all existing exterior masonry will be preserved and repaired. Only in cases of irreparable damage can the exterior masonry be removed.
- New masonry shall be applied in a manner that preserves all existing distinguishing architectural features and ornamentation.

#### **C. Porches:**

- Existing porches will be maintained and repaired. In no case should a salvageable porch be removed.
- Existing front porches will be maintained and repaired to their original appearance and condition.

**D. Windows and Doors:**

- The style and design of any new window or door should match the original.
- The removal of a window or door shall not be permitted unless the removal of the window or door is vital to the completion of the project.
- The replacement of windows shall not destroy any distinguishing features or architectural ornamentation.
- A new window or door may not be smaller than the existing window or door.

**E. Outbuildings:**

- Any outbuilding, shed, garage or other structure will conform in style and color to the principal structure on the lot.