

City of Salem Youth Development & Family Engagement Initiative

Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant Program

Program Guidelines

Program Overview

The Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant Program is a demonstration project of the City of Salem's Youth Development & Family Engagement Initiative designed to activate neighborhood spaces through safe, structured, and community-led programming.

By aligning with the City's Play Streets model, this program supports decentralized, neighborhood-based events that expand youth engagement, strengthen families, encourage positive community activity, and increase access to recreation and enrichment opportunities throughout Salem.

The initiative is intended to create welcoming, activated public spaces while supporting organizations and grassroots leaders directly connected to Salem's neighborhoods and families.

This program will be implemented as a demonstration project to test innovative neighborhood-based youth and family engagement strategies and gather practical lessons to strengthen future implementation. The City of Salem intends to use the demonstration project to evaluate what approaches are most effective in activating public spaces, engaging youth and families, supporting violence prevention goals, and strengthening community partnerships. Findings and feedback from grantee partners will help inform future program design, funding priorities, operational improvements, and long-term sustainability strategies. The demonstration project is intended to be iterative, allowing the City and community partners to refine and improve the model over time.

Public Purpose

All funded activities must serve a clear public purpose that aligns with one or more of the following goals:

- Youth development and engagement
- Family and neighborhood cohesion
- Violence prevention through positive programming
- Recreation, wellness, and healthy lifestyles
- Activation of parks, streets, and public spaces
- Community pride and neighborhood connection

- Educational and enrichment opportunities
- Positive community visibility and engagement

Demonstration Evaluation & Program Assessment

As part of this demonstration project, the City of Salem seeks to better understand:

- Which neighborhood engagement strategies are most effective;
- What types of programming generate the strongest youth and family participation;
- Operational challenges faced by community organizations;
- Best practices for community-led event implementation;
- Opportunities to improve coordination, outreach, safety, and sustainability.

Findings from the demonstration project may help guide:

- Future funding opportunities
- Expanded Play Streets programming
- Long-term sustainability strategies
- Potential endowment or dedicated funding development
- Broader youth and neighborhood revitalization efforts

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Schools and school-affiliated groups
- Faith-based organizations
- Community and neighborhood groups
- Youth-serving organizations
- Civic associations

Applicants must demonstrate a meaningful presence or engagement within Salem County.

Examples may include:

- Prior programming within Salem County
- Partnerships with Salem-based organizations or schools
- Service to Salem County youth and families
- Neighborhood engagement history
- Local leadership, volunteers, or membership

Note: Informal or unincorporated groups may apply, but may be required to:

- Operate on a reimbursement basis, and/or
- Utilize a fiscal sponsor or partnering organization

Capacity Building & Technical Assistance

The City recognizes that smaller grassroots organizations often play an important role in neighborhood engagement and youth programming. Organizations with annual operating budgets under \$100,000 will be required to participate in technical assistance and capacity-building support as part of the mini-grant process.

Technical assistance may include:

- Budgeting and financial management
- Event planning and logistics
- Reporting and documentation
- Marketing and outreach
- Youth safety procedures
- Organizational development
- Volunteer coordination
- Partnership development

Applicants will be asked to identify the areas where support would be most helpful.

Eligible Activities

Examples of eligible activities include:

- Play Streets activations
- Block parties and neighborhood events
- Youth engagement programs
- Family fun nights
- Sports and recreation activities
- Arts and cultural programming
- Wellness and fitness activities
- Educational workshops
- Career and leadership exposure programs
- Community resource events
- Enrichment trips and supervised outings

Programs should prioritize accessibility, positive youth engagement, and family participation.

Funding Structure

Awards will generally range from: **\$500 – \$5,000 per event or activity**

Funding may be provided through:

- Reimbursement of approved expenses
- Direct vendor payments by the City of Salem

Important: No unrestricted cash payments will be issued.

All expenses must be:

- Pre-approved
- Documented with receipts or invoices
- Directly connected to approved programming

Compensation Policy

Allowable Costs

Event Coordinator Stipend

- Up to 20% of total award
- Maximum recommended amount: \$1,000
- Must reflect actual planning, coordination, and implementation work

Program Staff / Facilitators

Examples include:

- Coaches
- Instructors
- DJs
- Artists
- Performers
- Workshop facilitators

Compensation must directly support event activities.

Youth Stipends (Optional)

Youth stipends may be allowed for:

- Structured participation
- Leadership roles
- Volunteer support
- Youth ambassadors

All youth participation must be supervised and documented.

Non-Allowable Costs

The following expenses are not permitted:

- Administrative or overhead fees
- Lump-sum undocumented payments
- Compensation not tied to a defined role
- Unapproved purchases
- General organizational operating expenses unrelated to the event

All compensation and major purchases must receive prior approval.

Post-Event Reporting Requirements

- Attendance Documentation
- Financial Documentation
- Photos/Marketing Materials
- Program Summary
- Lessons Learned & Demonstration Project Feedback

Application Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Alignment with Youth Development and Play Streets goals
- Community impact and neighborhood benefit
- Expected youth and family participation
- Feasibility and organizational readiness
- Geographic equity across neighborhoods
- Quality and creativity of programming
- Organizational/community presence in Salem County
- Budget reasonableness and appropriate use of funds

Priority may be given to programs that:

- Serve underserved neighborhoods
- Activate public spaces
- Promote violence prevention and wellness
- Encourage collaboration among organizations
- Increase access to positive youth opportunities

City Coordination

Approved events must coordinate with the City regarding:

- Permits and approvals
- Street closures (if applicable)
- Public safety coordination
- Scheduling and event conflicts
- Use of parks or public facilities
- Cleanup and site management

Coordination is intended to support safe, organized, and successful programming.

Compliance Requirements

All funded organizations must:

- Use funds only for approved purposes
- Submit receipts and supporting documentation
- Complete a post-event report
- Follow applicable safety requirements
- Coordinate with City staff when necessary
- Comply with permit and insurance requirements when applicable

The City reserves the right to:

- Monitor funded activities
- Request additional documentation
- Conduct audits or site visits
- Reallocate unused or improperly used funds

Suggested Program Timeline & Event Opportunities

The following schedule represents suggested **weekly** programming opportunities for Summer 2026. Suggested themes and dates are intended to help coordinate citywide engagement while still allowing flexibility for organizations to propose locations, neighborhood activations, and event formats that best fit community needs.

Locations are intentionally flexible and may include neighborhood parks, public spaces, school grounds, community centers, streets designated for Play Streets activations, or other approved community gathering spaces.

**Suggested
Date**

Suggested Theme

Possible Locations

June 19	Juneteenth Celebration	Neighborhood parks, community spaces, public gathering areas
Late June	Summer Kickoff Play Streets	West Side, East Side, neighborhood streets, local parks
Around July 4	Fourth of July Community Celebration	School grounds, park spaces, downtown corridors
Mid July	Sports & Wellness Night	Recreation fields, park areas, neighborhood courts
Mid/Late July	Music, Arts & Family Night	Open community spaces, parks, neighborhood blocks
Late July	Community Resource Night	Community centers, neighborhood spaces, public parks
Late July/Early August	Community Flag Football or Recreation Day	Athletic fields, school grounds, park facilities
Early August	Public Safety & Career Night	Neighborhood gathering spaces, schools, parks
Mid August	Family Fun Night	Neighborhood corridors, community parks
Late August	Citywide Field Day	School grounds, athletic complexes, park areas

Late August	End of Summer Celebration	Neighborhood parks, waterfront areas, community spaces
Early September	Back-to-School Play Streets Event	School-adjacent areas, parks, neighborhood streets

Note: Organizations are encouraged to propose additional dates, locations, and creative programming concepts that align with the initiative's goals.