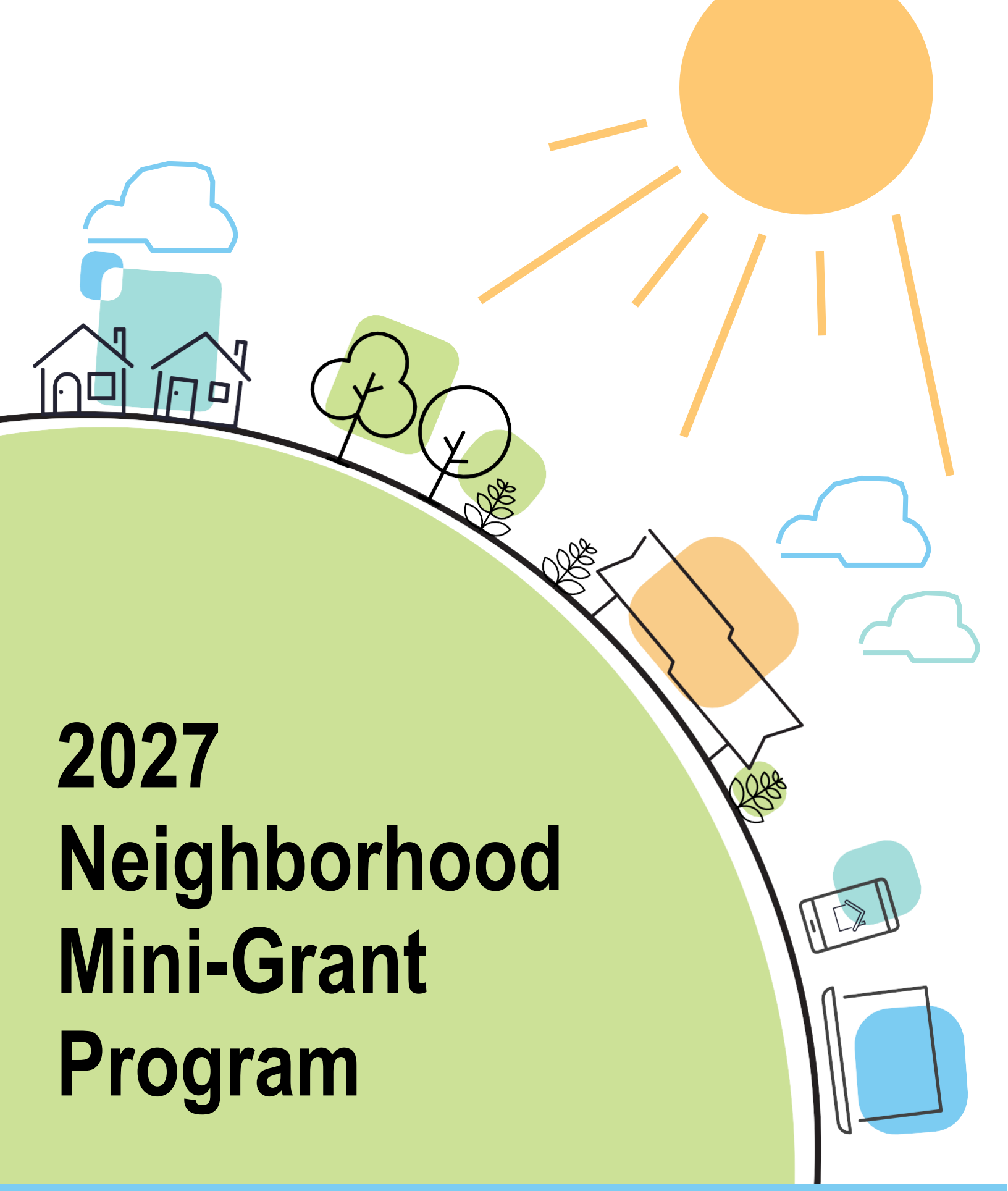

2027 Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program

Hillsborough County Florida

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Mini-Grant Program Introduction

The Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program empowers neighborhood organizations to create projects that foster healthy, safe, and engaged communities throughout Hillsborough County. This guide is designed to help neighborhood organizations understand the program's expectations and successfully navigate the application process.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about the below information, please contact your Neighborhood Relations team at Neighborhood-Relations@HCFL.gov or call (813) 272-5860.

Your Neighborhood Relations team is here to assist you every step of the way!

Section I: Eligibility

Eligible Organizations

Mini-Grant funding is available exclusively to qualifying neighborhood organizations located within unincorporated Hillsborough County and the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City.

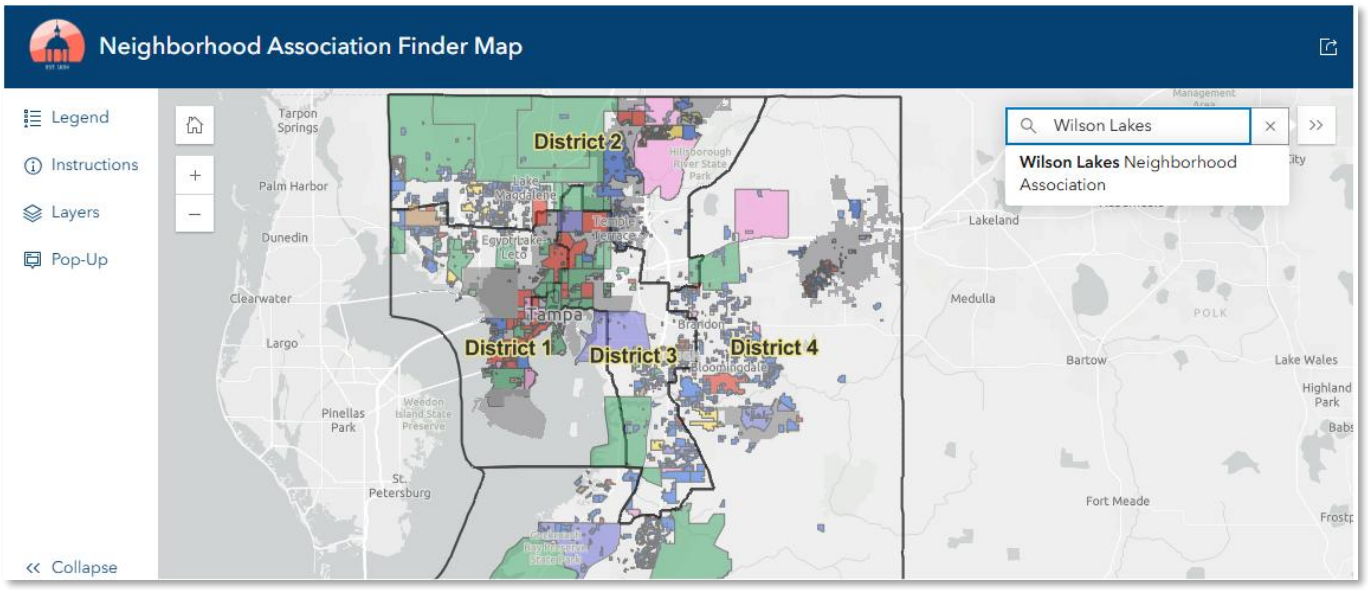
Eligible	Ineligible
Homeowners Associations	Clubs
Neighborhood Civic Associations	Community Civic Associations
Condominium Associations	Community Development Corporations
Neighborhood Associations	Community Development Districts
	For-Profit Service Providers
	Individuals
	Local Government Entities
	Maintenance Association
	Master Associations
	Neighborhood Watch Groups
	Nonprofit Service Providers
	Political Groups
	Special Taxing Districts

Each neighborhood organization may submit only one Neighborhood Mini-Grant application for a single project. Multiple applications or submissions for separate projects from the same neighborhood are not permitted.

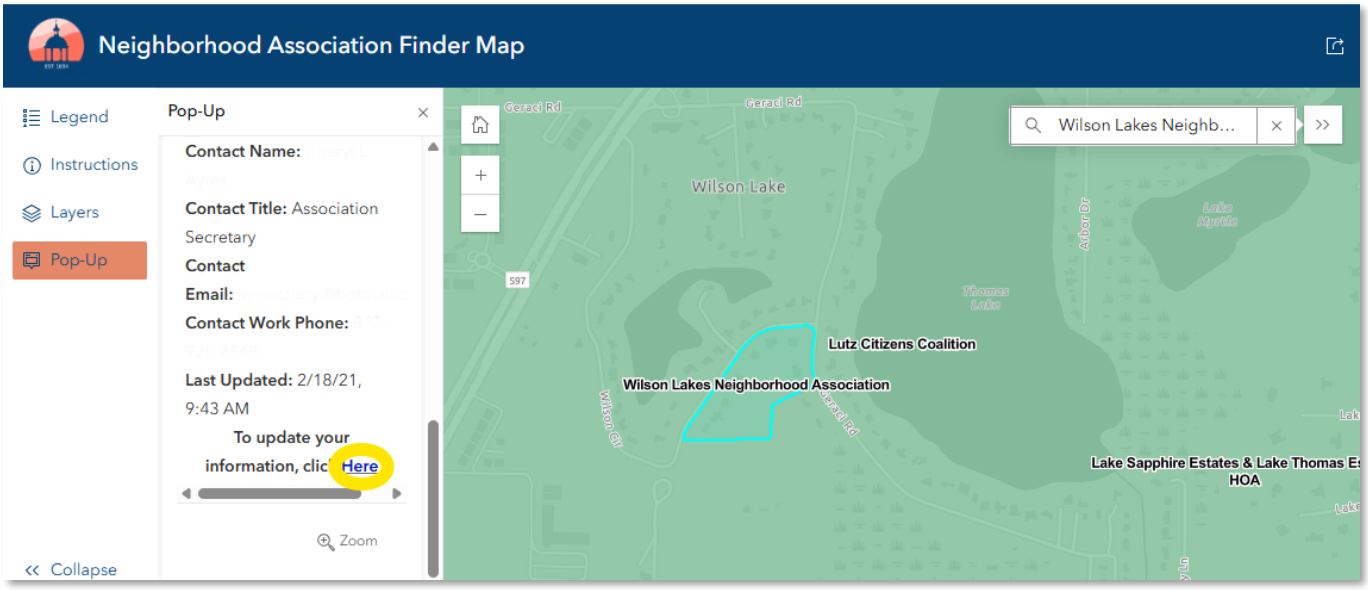
Neighborhood Listing

To qualify for a Neighborhood Mini-Grant, an organization must be listed in the Hillsborough County Neighborhood Listing. Prior to submitting an application, please visit the Hillsborough County Neighborhood Listing webpage and use the Neighborhood Association Finder Map in the center of the page to verify that your organization is included.

To confirm that your organization is listed in the Neighborhood Listing, click the magnifying glass on the top right. When the text box appears, type the organization name in the search bar as it is listed in Sunbiz, the Florida Department of State's official corporation records. If your organization is listed, your association's information will appear. Please click and verify that the organization's information is current.



To update your neighborhood organization's information, click "To update your information, click Here" link within the organization's information box. This will open the Neighborhood Listing Update Form, where you can submit any changes. It is the neighborhood's responsibility to make sure the information within their listing profile is kept up to date.



If your organization is not listed, you must complete the Neighborhood Listing Application to apply. Neighborhood Listing applications are due by **5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 1, 2027**. Late submissions will not be eligible for the Neighborhood Mini-Grant.

For any questions regarding these tools or the process please refer to the contact information on page 1 of this guide.

Project Categories

Your Mini-Grant project must actively involve residents and foster a healthy, safe, or engaged neighborhood. Each project must encompass at least one of the categories below:

- Healthy Neighborhood: Projects that promote wellness, sustainable living, or environmental stewardship. Examples: Community garden creation; low-volume irrigation; xeriscaping in common areas; neighborhood clean-up events; tree planting; healthy-eating programs; mental-wellness education; play/exercise spaces; healthy cooking demonstrations; or Zen Garden creation.

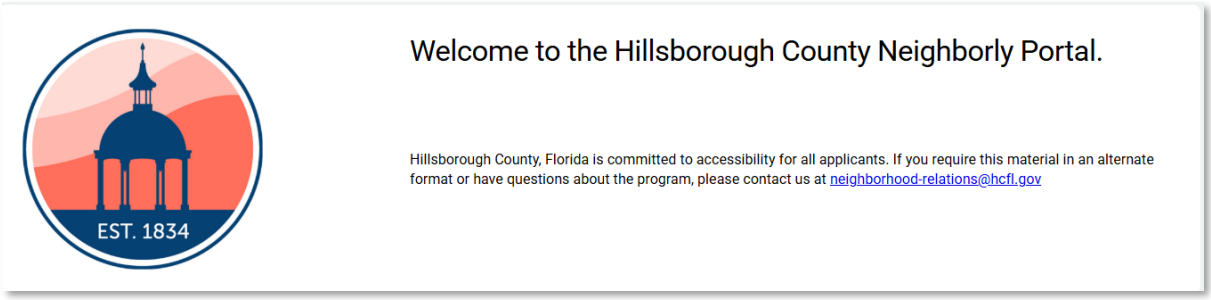
- Safe Neighborhood: Projects that focus on building community safety and preparedness.
  Examples: Workshops or training sessions focused on swim safety or cyber safety; anti-bullying initiatives; the creation and distribution of disaster preparedness kits; the development of neighborhood disaster response plans; or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) activities to support Hillsborough County's disaster preparedness efforts.

- Engaged Neighborhood: Projects that increase community participation and build community connections.
  Examples: Helping neighbors in need; hosting events that connect community members, such as block parties; shared meals; a neighborhood newsletter or bulletin board; or neighborhood cleanups that involve all residents.

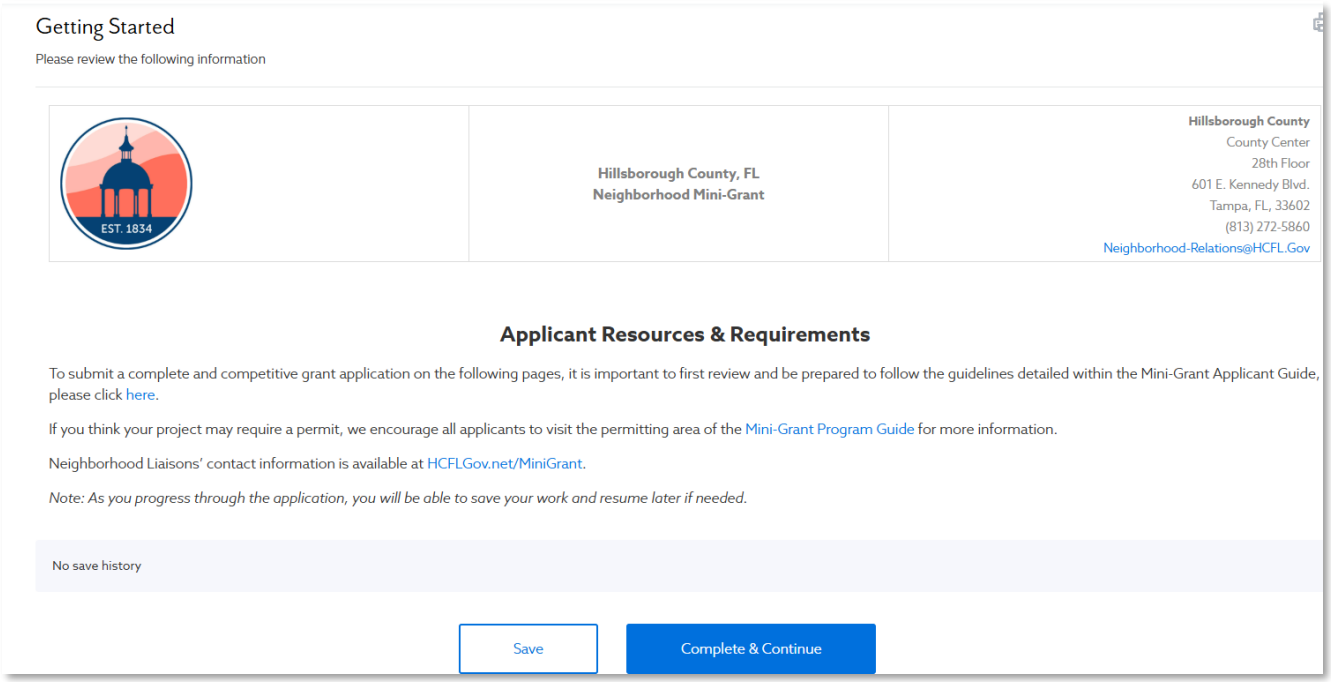
Section II: Application Process

How to Apply

Step1: Visit HCFL.gov/Mini-Grant to apply.

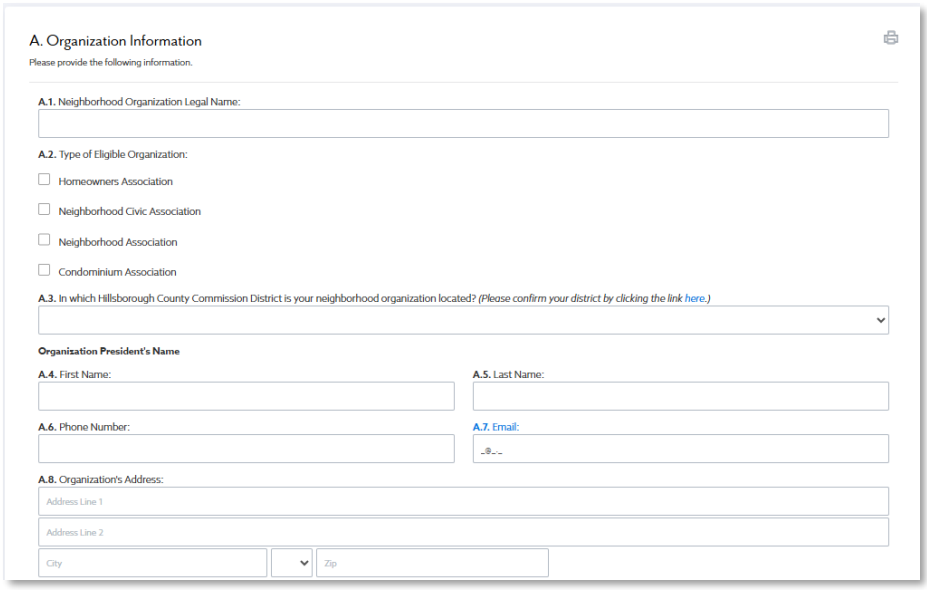


Step 2. Review the "Getting Started" section of the application where additional information and resources are made available and easily accessible.

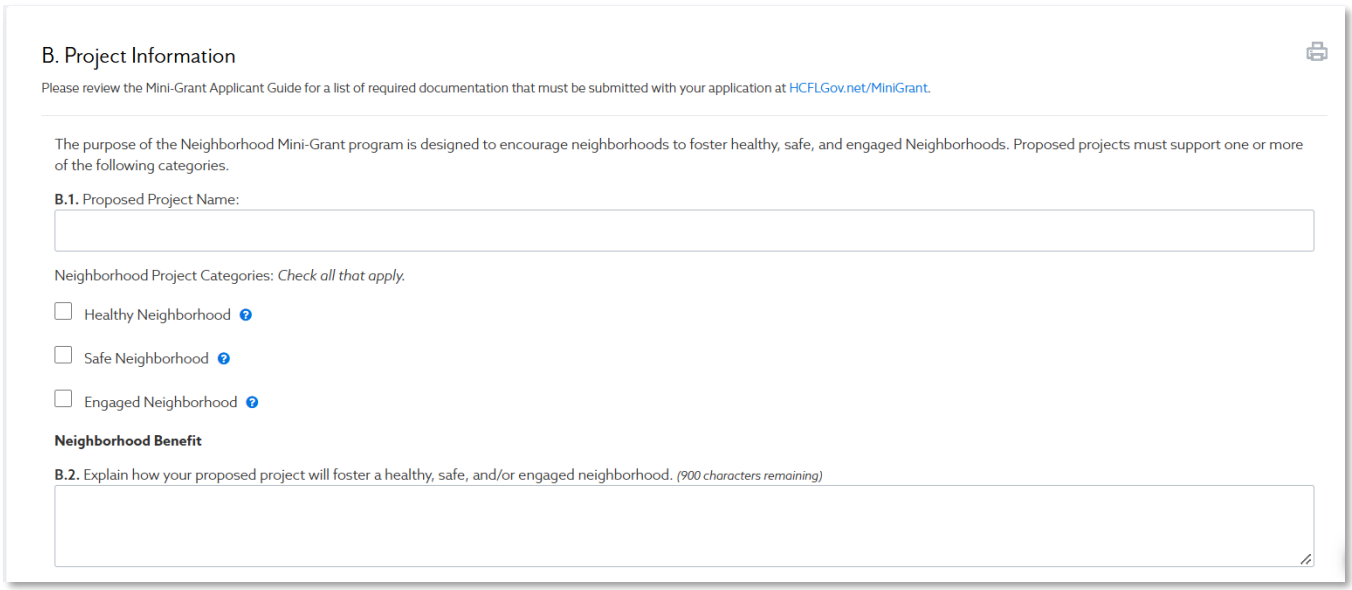


Step 3: Complete all sections of the application:

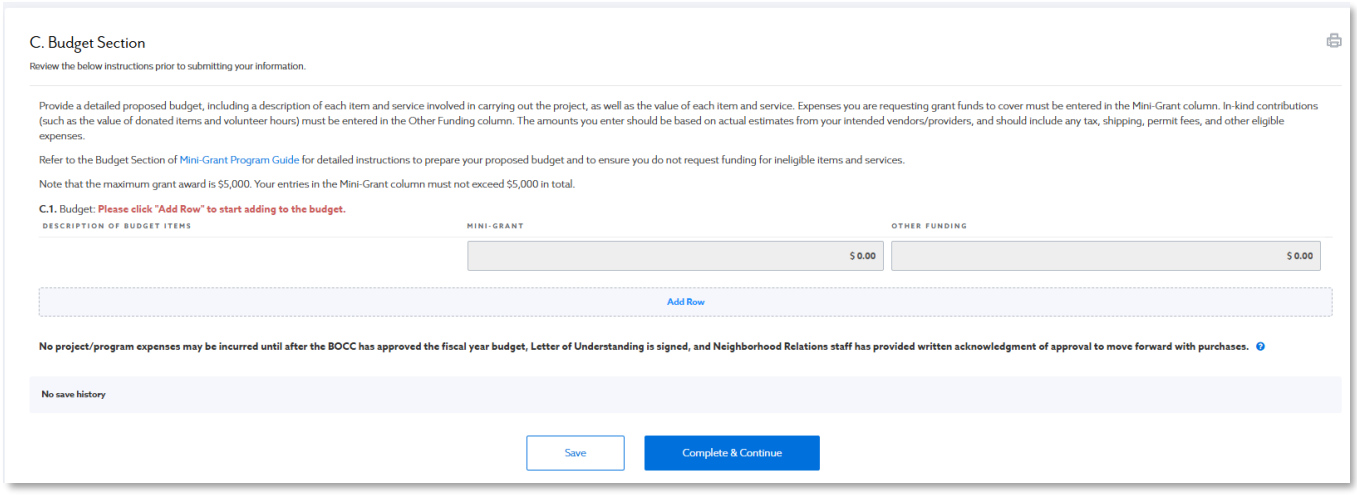
- **Section A.** Organization Information – Tell us about your neighborhood, who you are, the type of organization of your neighborhood, and who to contact.



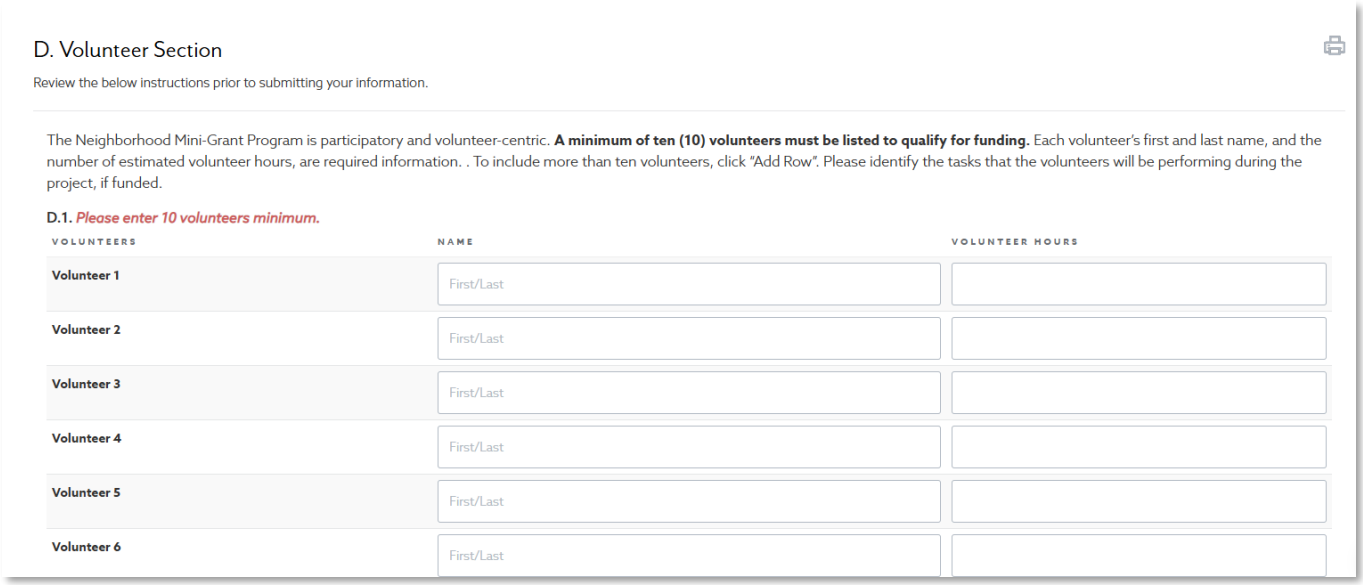
- **Section B.** Project Information – Tell us about your project, select all the categories that apply, what's the neighborhood benefit, how your project is creating a neighborhood legacy, and what makes your project idea creative and innovative.



- **Section C.** Budget Information – add rows as needed and line item out what your project costs entail.

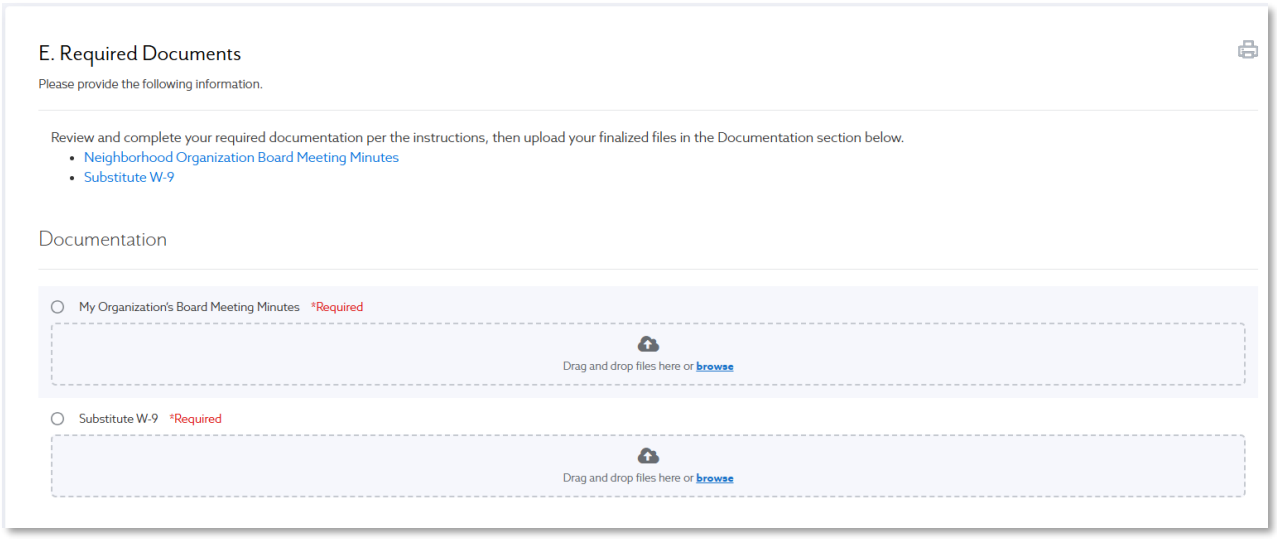


- **Section D.** Volunteer Section – Add a minimum of 10 volunteers exemplifying how your project is bringing your neighborhood together. It could be anything from assisting in making phone calls to vendors to installing project materials.



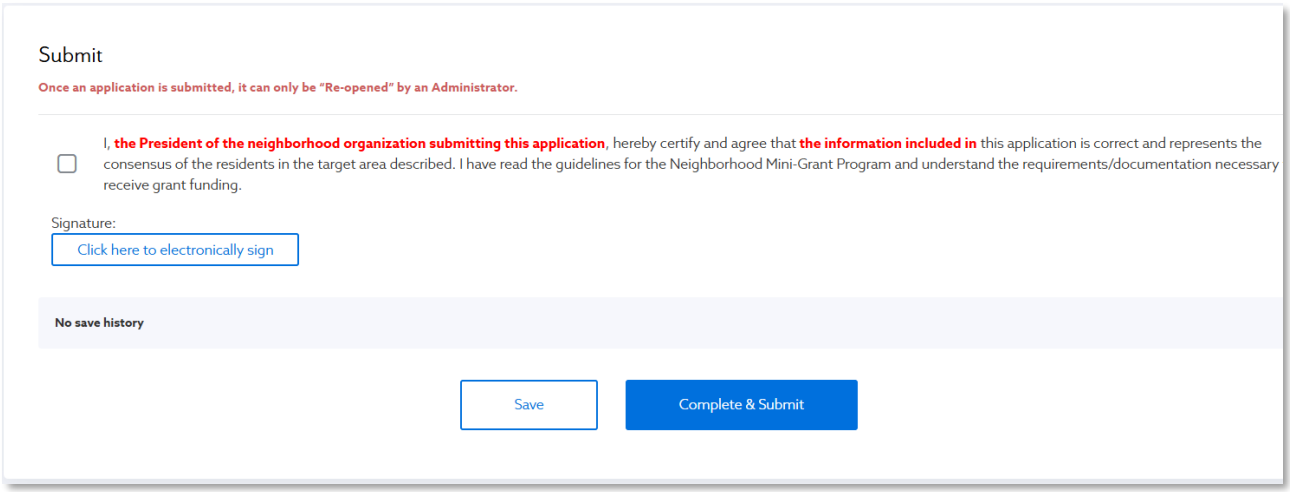
- **Section E.** Required Documents – Upload your required documents:
  - Board meeting minutes
  - Completed Substitute W9
  - Affidavit

Don't worry, we have added example board meeting minutes to make sure you know all the details that are required and have linked a blank Substitute W9 form and Affidavit for your convenience.



NOTE: The official board meeting minutes must include detailed information including mention of the Hillsborough County Mini-Grant, the proposed project and the board's vote.

Step 4: Before submitting, review your application to confirm all sections are saved and complete, required documents are uploaded, and budget calculations are accurate. Edits cannot be made after submission. Submit your application no later than **5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2027**. Click "*Complete & Submit*" to finalize your application. Early submission is strongly encouraged to avoid technical issues.


Submit
Once an application is submitted, it can only be "Re-opened" by an Administrator.
I, the President of the neighborhood organization submitting this application, hereby certify and agree that the information included in this application is correct and represents the consensus of the residents in the target area described. I have read the guidelines for the Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program and understand the requirements/documentation necessary receive grant funding.
Signature:
Click here to electronically sign
No save history
Save
Complete & Submit

Section III: Key Items to Note

Application Key Dates

- Application Deadline for 2027 Mini-Grants: **Friday, Feb. 12, 2027, by 5 p.m.**
- Mini-Grant application eligibility requires an active Neighborhood Listing status by **Monday, Feb. 1, 2027, 5 p.m.** (see page 4 for details).
- Notification of Neighborhood Mini-Grant Funding: **Early April 2027**

Mini-Grant Hints & Tips

Planning ahead is key to a successful Mini-Grant application. Allocate sufficient time to thoughtfully develop the project concept, meticulously complete the application, and efficiently execute the project, including the collection and submission of all required documentation.

- Start Early: Begin planning as soon as possible. Brainstorm project ideas that support healthy, safe, and engaged neighborhoods. Your organization's board of directors must approve the project at a board meeting with a quorum. Check early for any permitting needs and begin that process right away.
- Get Involved: The Mini-Grant program is designed to encourage active neighborhood participation through community-driven projects and initiatives. All individuals contributing their time and effort must be identified within the volunteer section of the application.
- Plan for Timing: Allow adequate time for manufacturing, shipping, and installation. Confirm item availability with vendors and ensure materials will be delivered and installed (if applicable) before the project deadline. Verify the expiration date of all vendor quotes as expired quotes may delay your Mini-Grant process.
- Submit Early: Submit your application and all required documents well before the deadline to avoid technical issues or last-minute delays that could delay your submission.

Pre-Plan Permitting Guidance

Permit Review and Approvals - before applying for a Mini-Grant, applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their county or city permitting department to confirm whether permits are required for their project. Understanding permitting needs early helps prevent delays and ensures proper planning. For more information, visit your local government's permitting website.

Hillsborough County Permitting

- To learn more about Hillsborough County permitting and to schedule a pre-submittal conference as it may relate to your project, call (813) 272-5600 or visit Hillsborough County Development Services Department. If applicable, complete a pre-submittal meeting request packet and email it to Neighborhood-Relations@HCFL.gov.
- Signs and Message Boards in Unincorporated Hillsborough County: If your project includes a message board, contact Hillsborough County at (813)-272-5600 (select Option 1, then Option 3) to obtain the current sign requirements. For additional assistance with sign-related questions, reach out to Fred (Sam) Ball at (813)-307-1876 or via email at BallF@HCFL.gov.

Municipality Permitting Resources

- City of Tampa Permitting – Call (813) 274-3100 (select Option 1), email: CSDHelp@tampagov.net, or visit City of Tampa Permit Contacts.
- City of Temple Terrace Permitting – Call (813) 506-6460, email: permitapplication@templeterrace.gov or visit City of Temple Terrace Permitting Services.
- City of Plant City Permitting – Call (813) 659-4254 (select Option 3), email: bldgemail@plantcitygov.com, or visit the City of Plant City Building Division

Project Enhancement Resources

Mini-Grant awardees may enhance their projects by pairing them with other Hillsborough County programs that add value and extend project impact. Available programs include the Tree Grant and the Community Cleanup Program. Learn more and check eligibility at HCFL.gov/Neighborhoods.

If your organization is in the City of Tampa, Temple Terrace or Plant City, be sure to check with your local government for similar opportunities. Partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, or other community groups are also encouraged, as in-kind support or services can significantly strengthen your project's application and success.

IV: Budget Planning Section

Mini-Grant Funding Considerations

- Make sure your budget supports and aligns with your project information.
- Include all costs in your budget worksheet. Be thorough – include tax, shipping, permit fees, supplies, equipment, professional services, printing, and any other eligible expenses. Provide clear descriptions for each item or service.
- Use precise, verified estimates by obtaining official vendor quotes and confirming how long pricing remains valid (typically 30 days). Avoid relying on assumptions, sale or discounted prices, and be sure to account for any potential price fluctuations.
- Confirm delivery and installation timelines. Ensure your vendor can deliver all materials within the required timeframe. Projects not completed by the deadline, including receipt and installation of materials, will be deemed incomplete.
- Use existing neighborhood resources whenever possible and seek donated items or services (such as event space or food) to help maximize your budget.
- Be realistic about your funding request. Consider all costs associated with your project and request the amount needed for a successful project.
- Ensure all dollar amounts are correct and consistent. Errors or discrepancies in financial figures may impact eligibility.
- Food and beverages cannot be purchased with grant funds. These items can only be listed as in-kind contributions under "*Other Funding.*"
- It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that any vendors or service providers paid with Mini-Grant funds have a valid business license and insurance in Hillsborough County or its municipalities. Funds can only be paid to a verified business, not a person.
- Neighborhood organizations that do not complete their project by the deadline will be ineligible to apply for a neighborhood mini-grant for two years. Additionally, any expenses incurred and submitted for reimbursement may not qualify for reimbursement.

Considerations for Previous Mini-Grant Projects

Mini-Grant funds may be used for previously funded projects when a replacement is necessary. Projects may also be considered if the new request is for a previous mini-grant in a different location. For any questions, please refer to the contact information on page 1 of this guide.

Projects and Items Ineligible for Funding

The listed items below are **ineligible** for funding consideration. Hillsborough County Neighborhood Relations retains the authority to designate additional unlisted items as ineligible in accordance with County policies and established guidelines.

NOTE: Any expenditures or financial obligations incurred prior to the execution of the Letter of Understanding (LOU) by the president of the awarded organization, and written confirmation from the Neighborhood Relations Liaison authorizing commencement of the project, shall not be eligible for reimbursement under grant funding.

- Funding for organizations located outside of Hillsborough County.
- Food, beverages, alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, lodging expenses, and transportation expenses.
- Computers (laptop/desktop), not directly tied to the project's purpose.
- Operating expenses (e.g., software, repairs, removal services, pool cleaning, lawn service, warranty items, insurance, painting, pressure washing, program fees).
- Projects that duplicate existing public or private programs, or programs already funded by another source (e.g., government-owned community centers, park programs, street signs, pet adoption fees, items for law enforcement or public parks, for-profit agencies, school-sponsored programs).
- Fines, penalties, and associated costs.
- Fundraising, investment management costs, administration costs, employee salaries, office equipment, and associated costs.
- Gift cards, gifts, giveaways, prizes, trophies, awards, and associated costs.
- Mini-Grant funding cannot be used for individually owned property or for projects that are not installed in a neighborhood common area.
- Multi-year or phased projects: Each project must be fully completed within the current grant cycle and standalone without future funding.
- Projects that conflict with existing city or county plans, policies, ordinances, zoning, and restrictions.
- Improvements to government-owned facilities (e.g., streets, parks, playgrounds, rights-of-way, painted intersections).
- Projects that are already funded or are eligible for funding from a local government source (e.g., street or traffic signs, intersection art, streetlights, sidewalks, roadway improvements, traffic calming).

How to Prepare the Financial Plan

The budget section should clearly outline the financial plan for your project. Your budget worksheet is one of the most important components of your application. Incomplete or inaccurate budgets will result in ineligibility. Make creative use of resources your neighborhood already has to help make your dollars go further – such as shared equipment, volunteer skills, or donated materials that would be identified in the "Other Funding" column.

Budget Example:

Budget: **Please click "Add Row" to start adding to the budget.**

DESCRIPTION OF BUDGET ITEMS	MINI-GRANT	OTHER FUNDING
Florida Friendly Plants + Sales Tax	$ 800.00	
Butterfly Chrysalises (shipping is free from vendor) + Sales Tax	$ 200.00	
Lighting (Lightning Bug Electrical, Inc.) + Sales Tax	$ 1,100.00	
Bench (Bench + $50 Shipping/Delivery + Sales Tax)	$ 650.00	
Butterfly Garden Signage (crafted and donated by resident)		$ 200.00
Permitting Fees for Garden Signage	$ 350.00	
Gardening tools + Sales Tax	$ 50.00	
Pots for flowers (20 pots + Sales Tax)	$ 200.00	
Soil (20 bags + Sales Tax)	$ 400.00	
Volunteer Hours - In kind ($29.95 per hr X 10 vols X 5 hrs per vol)		$ 1,497.50
	$ 3,750.00	$ 1,697.50

Description of Budget Items: Include a description of each item and service involved in carrying out the project.
Mini-Grant Column: Enter all expenses you're requesting for grant funds.
Other Funding Column: Enter all in-kind contributions.
Examples include:

- The value of donated food
- The value of borrowing a tent
- Your association's funds
- Volunteer hours, valued at $34.88 per person, per hour (for reporting purposes only; no payment is made to volunteers.)