



The Beautiful Blocks program gives Scranton residents an opportunity to improve their homes and their neighborhoods with the help of a matching grant for exterior improvements. The program provides an incentive for neighbors to work together to make exterior improvements to their homes, which will make neighborhoods more attractive places to live and increase property values. Through Beautiful Blocks, **each property can receive a matching grant of up to \$1,000 for exterior home improvements.** Each block group also gets funding for a small community project or block party.

Eligibility Requirements:

- All homes must be **located in the City of Scranton**. Both owner-occupied and rental properties are eligible.
- Residents must match their grant awards dollar-for-dollar, unless they meet certain income guidelines. If your household income is less than 80% of the area median income, however, you are only required to provide a 20% match. For example, if you meet these income guidelines and receive the maximum \$1,000 grant award, you must personally contribute at least \$200 towards your project. Otherwise, you must match the \$1,000 grant with \$1,000 of your own funds.
- Grants must be used for **exterior home improvements**. Work may be completed by the resident or a contractor. Any contractors used must be licensed (if required) to work in the City of Scranton.
- If using a contractor, residents must pay their contractor in full, then submit proof of payment to NeighborWorks before grant funds are issued. No payments will be issued to contractors directly.
- Work completed before the approval of grants will **not** be eligible for grant funding.
- Grant funds may **not** be used to purchase tools or equipment.
- Homes must be located near one another, preferably on the same block or street.
- If you have received a Beautiful Blocks grant in the past, you are welcome to apply again. However, at least half of the residents in your group must not have participated in 2020.
- Once your pre-application is submitted, additional homes may **not** be added to your group.
- Participating homeowners **may not have delinquent taxes or garbage fees**.

What are some examples of eligible improvements?

- Sidewalk repairs and replacement
- Porch repairs
- Front doors and screen doors
- Exterior lights
- Exterior painting
- Front yard landscaping
- Awnings
- And many more!

How are the projects selected?

The Beautiful Blocks program is a competitive matching grant program. Applications will be judged against one another based on several criteria:

Number of neighbors: All applications must include at least 5 properties. Applications with more neighbors are preferred and are more likely to be selected.

Details: The more detail you provide about your project and how your group will work together, the higher your application will score.

Organization: All applicants must designate a Block Captain to be the point of contact for the group. Groups that show good overall organization will be given preference.

Momentum: A goal of the program is to build a lasting bond between neighbors. Groups that provide a plan for continuing to work together for the benefit of the neighborhood are more likely to be selected.

How do I apply?

- 1. Recruit your neighbors for the program.**
- 2. Complete and submit the Pre-Application to NeighborWorks.** Designate a Block Captain to act as your point of contact and choose a “team name” for your block (ex: East Mountain Marvels). Feel free to be creative!
- 3. Fill out and turn in the Full Application.** After NeighborWorks staff review your pre-application, your Block Captain will be sent the full application for your group. Each member of your group will also receive an individual application. In this phase, your group members will detail the scope of work for each home, how each neighbor plans to complete the work, other resources neighbors can provide to the group, and how you plan to continue working with your neighbors to improve your block after the projects are completed. Project estimates will need to be submitted along with a photo of the project site prior to work beginning.

Important Dates

Pre-Application Due: **March 15, 2021**

Full Applications Due: **April 30, 2021**

Awards Announced: **May 2021**

Project Completion Deadline **November 1, 2021**

Contact Information

Contact: Gerard Hetman

Email: ghetman@nwnepa.org

Address: 815 Smith Street, Scranton, PA 18504

Phone: (570) 558-2490

Fax: (570) 558-2496