



# NEIGHBORHOODS <sup>1<sup>st</sup></sup>

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# Program Guidelines

We  City Life!



**CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND**

***A CHARACTER COUNTS! COMMUNITY***

**Department of Community & Economic Development**

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# Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> program creates a venue for **neighborhood based** citizen groups to **engage & collaborate** with local government in **community building & placemaking**.

This network of neighborhood groups works in **partnership** with the City of Hagerstown to **plan** and **implement** neighborhood events and projects which contribute to the **livability & sustainability** of their **unique** communities.

## Part 1 – Applicability

These guidelines apply to all groups with recognized status as a Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group who receive funding through the *Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup>* program.

## Part 2 – Definition

Neighborhood 1<sup>st</sup> Group: A group of residents, business, non-profit, property owners and/or others concerned with the well-being of a neighborhood recognized by the city meeting the standards of recognition and applicable guidelines contained herein.

## Part 3 – Standards for Recognition of Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Groups

Citizens interested in forming a Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group will request a meeting with the appropriate City staff for guidance on program start-up, guidelines and process.

All Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> groups shall maintain conformity with the following standards of recognition:

- (a) To request recognition groups must have no less than five (5) active members;
- (b) Hold at least one (1) well-publicized general neighborhood organizational meeting for the purpose of information and development of boundaries, group priorities and bylaws;
- (c) Adoption of bylaws that provide for:

- a. Participation in the group open to *all* neighborhood residents, business, non-profit, property owners and/or others concerned with the well-being of the neighborhood;
  - b. Minutes of all official board, committee and general meetings; one copy to be maintained by the group and another filed with the Appropriate City staff at the City; and
  - c. Geographic boundaries of the neighborhood developed in collaboration with City staff.
- (d) Groups must maintain communication between membership and appropriate City staff; and
- (e) Agree to uphold the duties and responsibilities as part of the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> program as contained herein.

#### Part 4 - Notice of Official Recognition

Upon recognition the City will highlight newly recognized neighborhood by means of the City of Hagerstown website, local access cable channel and social media. This recognition shall:

- (a) Include Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Group name, meeting times and geographic boundaries;
- (b) Encourage all neighborhood residents, business, non-profit, property owners and/or others concerned with the well-being of the neighborhood to participate in group meetings; and
- (c) Provide contact information for responsible neighborhood group member.

#### Part 5 – Neighborhood Group Responsibilities

Responsibilities of a Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group include:

- (a) Representation of neighborhood opinion to appropriate City staff;
- (b) Identification of neighborhood priorities, concerns and assets;
- (c) Preparation of Annual Neighborhood Priorities and Potential Uses of Funding forms;
- (d) Hold open neighborhood meetings to share information and determine opinions of interested stakeholders on at least a quarterly basis;
- (e) Undertake projects and events consistent with the mission of Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> and Annual Neighborhood Priorities, All projects and events are subject to review and approval of City Staff;
- (f) Reasonably notify all neighborhood residents, business, non-profit, property owners and/or others concerned with the well-being of the neighborhood of meetings, studies and other activities of the neighborhood group;
- (g) Communicate a summary of decisions and actions resulting from neighborhood meetings to all members of the group and the appropriate City staff;
- (h) Compliance with all website content guidelines, included in the attachment titled “Website & Communication Content Guidelines” for Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> groups with an existing site website; Creation of new websites should be done in collaboration with City Communications Manager and Community Development Manager;

- (i) It is highly recommend that groups designate an outreach liaison to coordinate group outreach/communication with media outlets; outreach shall be done, whenever possible in collaboration with and the City Communications Manager and Community Development Manager; and
- (j) Provide Appropriate City staff with Project/Event Approval Form 4-6 weeks in advance of planned group activity needing city services or funding.

## Part 6 – City Responsibilities

The City will provide recognized Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Groups with the following services, *subject to availability of resources*:

- (a) The appropriate City staff to aid in support of neighborhood groups;
- (b) Mailing, printing, and photocopying as appropriate for Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> projects and/or events;
- (c) Assistance in the preparation and implementation of Annual Neighborhood Priorities and Potential Use of Funds;
- (d) Timely notice to neighborhood group of any proposals affecting the neighborhood that come before advisory boards or Mayor and Council; and
- (e) Solicitation of the neighborhood group’s input on projects and/or issues especially affecting that neighborhood.
- (f) Note: Support may be provided to Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> partnership events (events in which Neighborhood groups are partnering and/or participating but not spearheading) at the discretion of the appropriate department head, charges may be incurred for these services.

## Part 7 – Annual Neighborhood Priorities

Each neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group will prepare annual neighborhood priorities and potential uses for funding on the forms provided as an attachment, forms must be submitted to the Appropriate City staff by June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. The forms will provide a framework for project/events and expenditure of funds for the upcoming fiscal year. City staff will provide technical assistance as needed, to ensure groups are able to complete the forms.

Please note some projects may require approval by Mayor and Council.

## Part 8 – Financial

The City if committed to assisting each of the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> groups in strengthening their neighborhoods.

- (a) City contribution. Each group maintaining standards of recognition of a Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group as listed herein shall be provided with up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year, at the discretion of the Community Development Manager and subject to availability. Any unused funds will expire at the end of the fiscal

- year. In addition, services of City staff and equipment will be made available without charge at the discretion of the Department Manager responsible for carrying out the activity.
- (b) Fund Raisers. Consistent with its Annual Neighborhood Priorities each group may undertake activities to raise funds for a particular project in addition to those contributed by the City. Funds raised by each group do not expire at the end of the fiscal year and will remain available for the exclusive use of that neighborhood group or subsequent Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group serving the same geographic location and carrying out the earmarked project. Appropriate City staff must approve all fund raisers prior to implementation. The status of any donations as tax-deductible for the donor is not guaranteed and is subject to IRS determination on a case by case basis. Sponsorship. See attached "Sponsorship Policy" for guidelines.
  - (c) Use of funds. Each group shall use the funds provided by the City or earned through other means to meet both the mission of Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> and the Annual Neighborhood Priorities. All funds must be request before June 1<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year, funds requested after June 1<sup>st</sup> are not guaranteed to be reimbursed from current fiscal year and may be drawn from the upcoming fiscal years funds.
  - (d) All funds raised must be deposited with the City of Hagerstown and earmarked for the appropriate Neighborhood group and project. All funds raised are subject to the control of the City of Hagerstown.
  - (e) Purchasing. All materials, equipment or professional services shall be secured in accordance with City of Hagerstown purchasing policies.
  - (f) Contracts. No member of an unincorporated group may enter into a contract on behalf of the group. All contracts must be reviewed by the City Attorney and appropriate City staff for approval.
  - (g) Taxes. All activities for which sales tax or other tax is due shall be paid in accordance with applicable law. All unincorporated groups will operate under the tax exempt status of the City of Hagerstown.
  - (h) Prohibited Uses. No funds either from City contributions or raised through other mean may be used for endorsement or support for any political candidate or payment for the time of any member of the group for work undertaken on behalf of the group.

## Part 9 – Non-profit Incorporation

An established Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group may incorporate as a non-profit organization and seek recognition as a non-profit organization by the Internal Revenue Service. If the group wishes to remain associated with the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> program and become an affiliate organization it must ensure organizational charter and by-laws meet with the mission, guidelines and spirit of Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> program.

Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> affiliate incorporated groups will annually provide the City with a certificate of Good Standing and proof of insurance in such form and amount as the City shall specify. If

an “affiliate” group wishes to maintain Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> funding it must work with the appropriate City staff to apply for an agency contribution for funding.

## Part 10 – Prohibited Actions

A group receiving funds through the *Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup>* program and any group with recognized status as a *Neighborhoods 1st* group or affiliate organization shall not:

- (a) Endorse or support any candidate for any elected office. However, individual members of groups may be active in local, state and national elections;
- (b) Fail to comply with the requirements of these guidelines; or
- (c) Engage in activity contrary to any law, ordinance or regulation.

## Part 11 – Non-compliance

The City of Hagerstown reserves the right to revoke recognition, affiliation and funding from any Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Group that fails to comply with guidelines as established herein.

## Part 12 - Attachments

- a. Annual Neighborhood Priorities
- b. Potential Use of Funding
- c. Website Content Guidelines
- d. Project/Event Approval Form
- e. Sponsorship Policy

## Helpful Web Links

**Hagerstown Police Department** – Report a Concern, File a Police Report, Get a Copy of a Police Report: [www.hagerstownpd.org/](http://www.hagerstownpd.org/)

**Code Administration Permitting** – Report a Property Code Concern/Code Violation: <http://www.hagerstownmd.org/215/Online-Services-Report-a-Concern>

**Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup>** – Group Information, Maps, Contacts  
<http://www.Neighborhoods1st.net>

## Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Sponsorship Guidelines

Part 8 of the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Program Guidelines allows Neighborhood 1<sup>st</sup> groups to seek sponsorships. Sponsorships are to be obtained so groups can carry out improvements in their neighborhood.

If a Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group decides to seek sponsorships, the following will apply:

1. Funds that are raised in exchange for a sponsorship must be used for a single/specific, group approved project. The project must be approved by City staff and depending on the nature of the project, Mayor & Council approval may also be required. See the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Program Guidelines regarding group project approval for more details.
2. Sponsorship program and fundraising mechanism must be approved in advance by Staff.
3. Sponsors shall be approved by the City Staff and all sponsorship contracts must be completed by each sponsor and reviewed and approved by City Staff prior to the receipt of sponsorship recognition.
4. Sponsorship recognition/benefits may include the following in the discretion of City Staff:
  - a. Recognition on a Channel 25 – Hagerstown’s Government Channel
  - b. Plaque or sign at project site (if possible)
  - c. Recognition letter/Recognition Certificate from the DCED Office
  - d. Name on City of Hagerstown’s press releases
  - e. Name on City of Hagerstown’s official website
  - f. When applicable recognition at a Mayor & Council meeting
5. Sponsors will not be guaranteed any additional recognition outside of what is outlined in the sponsorship contract, and may not utilize the marks or logos of the City of Hagerstown or Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> without express authorization to do so.
6. All funds raised shall be in the form of check or money order, shall be delivered to an appropriate City Staff member for deposit into a designated project account in the City of Hagerstown’s financial system, and will be monitored by the City of Hagerstown Staff. No cash donations are permitted. The City cannot guarantee the deductibility for tax purposes of any donation received.



## Website & Communications Content Guidelines

1. Websites and Communications presenting personal opinions of a citizen must be identified as such and the name of the author must be included.
2. Websites and Communications should not include statements that could be considered I defamatory.
3. Websites and Communications should include Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> logo and link to the City of Hagerstown Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Site.
4. Website and Communication content should be consistent with the overall mission and vision of the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Program.
5. Website and Communications content is subject to the review and approval of City staff in its absolute discretion.

## Annual Neighborhood Priorities

Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> groups must submit an Annual Neighborhood Priorities & Potential Use of Funding Form to the Department of Community & Economic Development by June 15<sup>th</sup> each year. Forms should provide a general outline of group priorities and expenditure of funds for the upcoming fiscal year.

Neighborhood 1<sup>st</sup> Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

President: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Priorities:

**Priority 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Priority 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Priority 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Potential Use of Funding

Each Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group must submit a Potential Use of Funding Form to the Department of Community & Economic Development by June 15<sup>th</sup> each year. Forms should provide a brief description of potential activities or projects to be carried out in the next fiscal year and the projected amount of funding to be used for said activities. Each group is awarded up to \$1,000 in funds per fiscal year from the City to expend on approved projects & activities. Funding for Block parties is capped at \$500, budget must be consistent with Annual Priorities. The form below should outline potential expenditures and planned fundraising/sponsorship activities.

Priority #	Activity/Project Description	Projected Amount

Summary of Potential Fundraising/Sponsorship Activities:

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I/We Certify that the above listed priorities/potential funding forms reflect the general consensus of the aforementioned Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Group.

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President