Supporting the District 3 community

Community Small Grants Handbook

Applications are due by

Sunday, November 2, 2025

11:59 PM Pacific Standard Time

www.seuplift.org/grants

Have questions or need support? Please contact:

Alex Cherin

Grantmaking Program Manager

3534 SE Main St, Portland, OR 97214

(503) 232-0010 x 2 | alex@seuplift.org

OFFICE OF
Community
& Civic Life

Promote the common good

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ABOUT SE UPLIFT NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

MISSION + VISION

Since 1968, SE Uplift neighborhood coalition has collaborated with the District 3 community to build informed, inclusive, and participatory neighborhoods that support our social and ecological well-being. We envision a more resilient future where everyone feels and is welcome, interconnected, and empowered with the resources needed to advocate for change on the issues that impact their lives.

A tax exempt nonprofit organization, SE Uplift partners with and supports a variety of neighborhood associations, business district associations, and grassroots groups to empower people to engage with our city and neighbors to improve the livability of the 19 communities in district 3. Additionally, we incubate grassroots-driven change ideas and uplift communities through a variety of skill-building trainings, events, and resources.
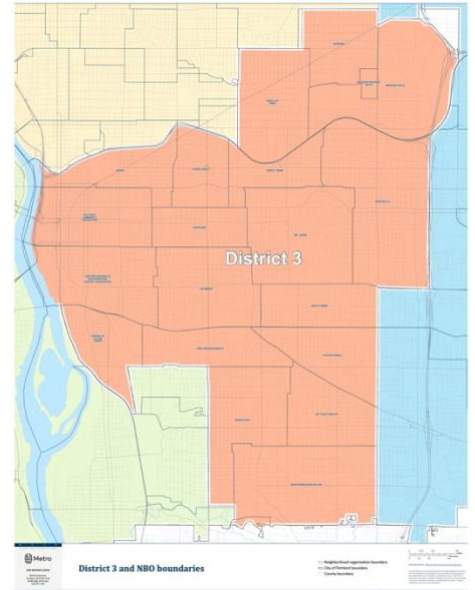
WE BELIEVE IN:

- **Relationship-Building:** That personal connections and networks strengthen our communities.

- **Community Involvement:** That organized neighbors can shape the future of our communities, including envisioning and enacting positive change. Through collaboration, we co-create the communities we want to inhabit.

- **Grassroots Democracy:** That we all have a role in determining the character and future of our city through grassroots, bottom-to-top participation.

- **Sharing, Teaching and Learning:** That with tools, support, and opportunities to connect, we can effect positive change.

- **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility:** In an inclusive, multicultural environment through which we can explore our differences and come together around common interests and goals.

- **Building Capacity:** That we strengthen our communities as we strengthen our neighborhood associations, community-based organizations and business districts to make change.

SE Uplift's small and mighty staff of four carry out the organization's programming and work in concert with a 36-seat Board of Directors featuring stakeholders from throughout the district.

To learn more, please visit us online at seuplift.org/about.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Introduction

Communities become stronger when neighbors come together across differences to build connections to one another and create a shared vision for change. Now in its 19th year, the Community Small Grants program helps grassroots groups working in, and/or for, the District 3 community in Portland with resources to identify their community's needs, develop collaborative projects, and bring their ideas to fruition. Through the program, SE Uplift provides seed funding and grant application support that helps applicants shape the places where they live, work, and play for current and future generations.

Amount

The Community Small Grants program will award over **$40,000** to projects through grants ranging **up to $3,000** and for Micro Grants **up to $500**. The average Community Small Grant award is approximately **$2,000**. Regardless of size, all applications must meet eligibility criteria and goals.

Timeline & Submission Process

Applications Available	Applicant Worshops	Submission Deadline	Applicants Notified	Grantee Celebration	Projects Completed	Final Reports Due
Sept. 2025	**Oct. 2025**	**Nov. 2, 2025**	**Dec. 12, 2025**	**June 4, 2026**	**Dec. 31, 2026**	**Jan. 31, 2027**

SE Uplift will open applications in September 2025, and host workshops in October to support applicants in submitting a compelling proposal (see page 9 for details). **The application deadline is 11:59pm PT on Sunday, November 2, 2025**. *This is not a postmark deadline*. Applications received after the deadline will not be eligible.

- Applicants will be notified of grant decisions by **December 12, 2025**.
- Projects awarded a grant will be required to attend an orientation session prior to receiving funds **January 14, 2026 at 7pm**.
- SE Uplift will celebrate Community Small Grants program grantees and their projects at an informal dinner at SE Uplift on **June 4, 2025 from 6-8pm.**
- All projects must be complete and funds spent by **December 31, 2026**.
- A final report will be due to SE Uplift no later than **January 31, 2027**.

Applications may be submitted via our online application form, or by email, mail, or hand delivery to SE Uplift. Electronic submission is preferred. Applications may be submitted in any language. Applications will be evaluated without regard to submission method or language. SE Uplift recommends that groups submit their application at least a few days early to ensure there is time for us to respond if the application is incomplete. Incomplete applications will be disqualified. **The application checklist can be found on page 10.**

How To Apply

- **Apply Online (Preferred):** https://www.seuplift.org/grants/
- **Apply by Mail**: SE Uplift | Attn: Alex Cherin | 3534 SE Main St. | Portland, OR 97214
  Applications must be received by the deadline.
- **Drop Off:** Tues-Thurs, 10 AM – 5 PM | SE Uplift | 3534 SE Main St. | Portland, OR 97214
- **Email:** Send a Word doc or PDF to alex@seuplift.org with "CSG Grant Application" in the subject line.

If you have questions about the application or submission process, please contact **Alex Cherin, Grantmaking Programs Manager**, at **(503) 232-0010 x 2** or alex@seuplift.org.

Selection Process

Grants will be awarded through a competitive process. Applications will be evaluated by a volunteer-led Grants Review Committee. Applicants may be contacted during the review process for additional information. Each application will be scored based on the project's alignment with the Community Small Grants program goals and SE Uplift's mission. Applications will also be evaluated according to the degree to which a project has the potential to positively impact, support and engage the community; and be completed within the project's timeline and budget. Projects typically score higher when they show strong community support and involvement as demonstrated by volunteer hours and donated or discounted services, and that promote a greater sense of inclusion and belonging among community members.

More specifically, applications will be assigned points according to this scoring criteria:
- 30%   Grant Purpose & Community Impact
- 20%   Supports inclusive participation and removes barriers through local, community-focused action
- 20%   Features Strong Community Engagement
- 20%   Project is Likely to Succeed
- 10%   First Time Applicant

Funding recommendations by the Grant Review Committee will be voted upon by the SE Uplift Board of Directors at its December 2025 board meeting. Applicants will be notified of their status by December 12, 2025.

Grantee Responsibilities

If awarded a grant, recipients are expected to:

1. **Attend** an orientation session prior to receiving funds. We are committed to your success!
2. **Acknowledge** support from SE Uplift in their programs and all related promotional material including publications, presentations, and websites.
3. **Complete** the project and spend all grant funds by December 31, 2026.
4. **Submit** a final report that will include a narrative, financial report, and images of the project. The final report must be submitted within 30 days of completing the project or no later than January 31, 2026.

ELIGIBILITY

Who May Apply

1. Applications will be accepted from nonprofit organizations, community groups, and collaborative project teams. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

2. The applicant must be a 501c3 nonprofit tax-exempt organization as designated by the IRS,

   OR

   a. Demonstrate that they have a current fiscal sponsorship agreement with a nonprofit tax-exempt organization,

   OR

   b. Declare in their application that they plan to apply for fiscal sponsorship through SE Uplift. NOTE: Groups that are registered only as a nonprofit with the Oregon Secretary of State do not have federal tax-exempt status. See page 9 for more details on SE Uplift's fiscal sponsorship program.

3. Past SE Uplift Community Small Grant recipients must have completed their project and submitted their final reporting paperwork to be eligible. Current SE Uplift grant recipients

must contact SE Uplift prior to applying to verify that they have made sufficient progress towards completing their grant project.

4. Past SE Uplift Community Small Grants recipients who have been awarded two years in a row may apply again only if they have a different project or project phase for funding.

Not a 501c3 non-profit? Learn about fiscal sponsorship options, including how to apply through SE Uplift, visit https://www.seuplift.org/fiscal-sponsorship/.

Project Requirements

- Projects must begin after **January 1, 2026** and be completed by **December 31, 2026**.

- Projects must take place in and/or benefit the residents in the **District 3 geographic area**.

- Grants may only be awarded for **project expenses**. Operating support is not eligible for funding.

Projects must directly engage the community as active participants and achieve one or more of the following goals:

- Increase the number and diversity of people who are **engaged** in the broader community.

- **Build community** leadership, identity, skills, relationships, and partnerships.

- Increase the community's **impact on public decision-making.**

Partnerships

Partnerships are encouraged but not required. To qualify as a partnership, the partnering organization must contribute to the project in a substantial and meaningful way. This could include providing critical resources, services, or technical expertise, or collaboratively executing the project.

For each organization confirmed as a partner, the applicant must submit a formal letter of support from the partnering organization that outlines their specific role in the project.

Project Restrictions

Proposed projects may not have received funding twice consecutively from SE Uplift. However, previously successful grant recipients may apply for a different project, or a distinctly different phase of the project from which they received funding twice previously.

Funds *cannot* be used for general operations including:

- Costs incurred in preparing the grant application, report or evaluating the project
- Ongoing general organizational support such as rent, utilities, or staff

In addition, grants will not be awarded to projects for:

- The benefit of specific individuals (e.g. scholarships or loans)
- Items intended for sale
- Fundraising activities or community events that cost money to attend. Events may have a suggested donation
- Direct social services such as food baskets or health clinic services
- Capital projects, unless built by volunteers

APPLICATION SUPPORT

Attend a Pre-Deadline Workshop

Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend one of SE Uplift's grant information workshops on October 5th at 7pm and October 22nd at 6pm. Workshops will be provided via Zoom and will include an overview of project criteria and eligibility requirements, tips for writing a successful grant application, and opportunities to ask questions or get feedback on your project idea. To RSVP for one of our workshops, please visit www.seuplift.org/grants.

Get One-on-One Support

You may contact SE Uplift at any time if you have questions. Time permitting, we are happy to assist you at any stage in your process – from discussing your project idea to reviewing a draft application. You can reach **Alex Cherin, SE Uplift's Partnerships & Grantmaking Programs Manager**, at **503-232-0010 x 2** or alex@seuplift.org to make arrangements.

About Fiscal Sponsorship with SE Uplift

Does your group lack federal designation as a 501c3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization, or the fiscal sponsorship from a nonprofit that does? SE Uplift lowers the barrier to applying for one of our grants by offering limited, free fiscal sponsorship services to successful applicants that would otherwise be ineligible to apply. Under this arrangement, SE Uplift would provide your group with limited bookkeeping and grant oversight services for free, *with restrictions,* for the grant period*.*

Groups seeking this service from SE Uplift must indicate on their application that they would need fiscal sponsorship from SE Uplift if they were selected to receive a grant. If you think this may apply to you, we urge you to attend one of our pre-application workshops to learn how fiscal sponsorship works. In the event your group is selected to receive a grant from SE Uplift, we would contact you to complete our fiscal sponsorship application. ***It is important to complete the fiscal sponsorship application within 30 days to avoid delay or forfeiture of your grant***.

> *Note: 501c3 status is a federal tax-exempt designation determined by the IRS. If you are a registered nonprofit with the Oregon Secretary of State's office, this is great but it's NOT the same. Your group must also have completed the extensive IRS application process and received a "determination letter" to be a considered federally-recognized tax-exempt organization to become tax exempt.*

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1) **Prepare your answers** to our online application by downloading our narrative and budget (next page) templates and completing them in their entirety before copying and pasting into our online form.
2) **Gather applicable attachments** listed below.
3) **Submit your application online according to instructions below.** Do not include any additional documents. See page 5 for alternatives to an online submission.

4)

A Complete Grant Application Must Include the Following Components	
Project Narrative: Download the narrative template. Prepare your answers to questions that will verify your eligibility, provide required contact information, and fully describe your project. Copy and paste your answers into the online application form. Please do not exceed the word count limits. The project narrative should not exceed three pages, single spaced.	☐
Budget and Budget Narrative: Download the budget template. Refer to the instructions in this handbook for guidance in developing your budget. Complete all four columns of the budget form. Provide a brief description of your budget categories and why they are necessary. Submit your budget by filling out the form and submitting via the online application.	☐
Provide Proof of Eligibility: **Applicants that are a tax exempt 501c3 nonprofit organization** must provide their tax ID number in the narrative application. **Applicants with an existing fiscal sponsor** must provide their fiscal sponsor's tax ID number and all the fiscal sponsor contact information required in the narrative application. They must also submit a copy of their contract with the fiscal sponsor and fill out the Fiscal Sponsorship Verification Form. **Applicants that are not a 501c3 organization or fiscally sponsored by one who is** must complete SE Uplift's fiscal sponsorship application by **January 31st.** Email fs@seuplift.org if you have questions. **Neighborhood Association (NA) applicants** must have formal approval via a vote of their NA's board and indicate this in the narrative portion of the application.	☐
(Optional) **Partnership Letters:** Include a letter of support from any confirmed partner organizations explaining how they will actively participate in the project.	☐

Creating Your Budget

Download our budget template. To create your budget, identify ALL costs associated with your project and list them under the appropriate category. Your budget should reflect your project's expenses, so feel free to add and delete rows and categories to best fit your needs. Your costs should be specific; do not include a "Miscellaneous" category. Below are definitions of common project costs shown in our sample. You will also be asked to provide a brief budget narrative that describes how the requested funds will be used.

Project Costs	The following are descriptions of common project costs.
Personnel	Include costs for professional services, participant stipends for items such as travel, donated services and labor, and general volunteer hours. Donated services or labor should be valued at the rate these individuals would have been paid for their services. Volunteer hours should be valued at $29.95/hr.
Supplies & Materials	List all items needed to complete the project. Donated equipment and supplies should be valued at the retail market rate these materials or equipment would cost if purchased. For discounted materials made available at a reduced rate by a retailer, the difference between the retail and discount price may be counted as an in-kind donation.
Outreach & Publicity	List any costs associated with advertising, printing, and mailing.
Event Related Expenses	List any event costs such as space rental, equipment rental, food, etc. Loaned equipment and donated space should be valued at market rates.
Permitting & Fees	List any fees associated with permits for events, installation, etc.
Insurance	If you do not already have general liability insurance to cover your activities, build the costs into your project.
Subtotals	**Tally each column and place subtotals here.**
Administration (fiscal sponsorship fees)	List any fiscal sponsorship fees or costs associated with project management or accounting. Refer to your fiscal sponsorship agreement terms to determine amount. Administration cost cannot exceed 10% of the subtotal cost. *Groups fiscally sponsored by SE Uplift will not be charged a fee for receiving a Community Small Grant.

TOTALS	This is the grand total for each column. Make sure your Requested Funds total matches the amount that you are seeking through this grant.

Sample Budget

This sample features common project costs and is intended to guide you in preparing your budget. While you may have different line items for your project's costs, your budget must include columns for a Budget Item Description, Requested Funds, Leveraged Funds and In-Kind Donations, Services & Time.

Line items that are specific to your costs	These columns are designed so you can specify which line items you need grant funding for versus things that will be funded through other sources.			
Project Costs	**Budget Item Description** *Provide a succinct description of each item needed to complete the proposed project.*	**Requested Funds** *List the grant funds you are requesting for each line item in your budget.*	**Leveraged Funds** *Show any additional dollars that are supporting this project such as other grants or cash contributions from individuals or businesses.*	**In-Kind Donations, Services & Time** *Estimate the value of any donated goods or services. Volunteer hours should be valued at $34.79/hr.*
Personnel	Mural Artist Fee	**$500**	$2,000 RACC grant	$500 (discounted fee)
	Volunteer Painters			$3,479 (100 hrs x $34.79)
	Volunteer project coordination			$6,958 (4 coordinators x 50 hrs each x $34.79)
Supplies & Materials	Paint & paint supplies	**$1,500**	$250 (donations from businesses)	$400 (donated by Sherman-Williams)
Outreach & Publicity	Flyers to announce project & invite to participate	**$200**		$347.90 (Flyer distribution: 10 hrs x $34.79)
Permitting & Fees	Mural Fee			$50 (waived by RACC)
Insurance		**$500**		
Subtotals		**$2,700**	$2,250	$11,734.90

Administration (fiscal sponsorship fees)	10% admin fee Stumptown Nonprofit, Inc.	**$300**		
TOTALS		**$3,000**	$2,250	$11,734.90

SE Uplift
NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

Collaborating with the SE Portland community to build informed, inclusive, and participatory neighborhoods that support our social and ecological well-being since 1968.

* SE Uplift also joyfully supports District 3 neighborhoods .

Visit us online at www.seuplift.org