

What is a "What If..." Mini Grant?



“What if...” Mini Grants are designed to foster growth in neighborhoods and strengthen the capacity of Syracuse residents who seek to make positive changes in their neighborhood.

Successful grants will make positive changes in their neighborhood while increasing community participation, awareness, and partnerships.

About the Program

These Mini Grants are only available to grassroots groups or individuals within the City of Syracuse. The Gifford Foundation supports “What if...” projects up to \$5,000.00.

“What if...” Mini Grants are unique because they allow individuals and grassroots groups to receive support for their ideas without having to compete with larger, more established nonprofit organizations.

Previous “What If...” projects have included an after-school youth mentorship program, a community-wide dinner for parents and students at the Ed Smith Elementary School, and a voter registration/education drive.

Since launching the program in 2011, **more than 200 different projects** have been funded amounting to **more than \$600,000 in total grant dollars.**



Learn More at GiffordFoundation.org/What-If

Guidelines & Eligibility



Eligibility

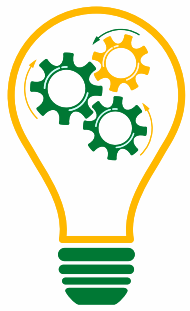
- City of Syracuse residents ages 12 and older.
 - Applicants under 18 must partner with an approved advisor and have written permission from a parent or guardian. The Gifford Foundation will help with this process.
 - We expect that youth applicants will actively participate in designing, implementing, and evaluating the project.



Guidelines:

1. The maximum project budget should not exceed \$5,000.
 - a. Please note: The Gifford Foundation rarely supports 100% of a project.
2. You must attend an orientation session before being able to apply.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for help! We are here to support you throughout the process.
4. An individual may apply for a "What If..." Mini Grant. However the funds will be processed by a fiscal agent who handles the money for the applicant (the individual will not receive funding directly).
 - a. A fiscal agent must have a 501(c)3 nonprofit status. (If you are already applying as a registered nonprofit organization, you do not need a fiscal agent.)
 - b. If you need help finding a fiscal agent to work with you, let us know! We can connect you with one.
5. No funds will be distributed for reimbursements.
6. The applicant must live in the City of Syracuse.
7. Collaborations and neighborhood focused projects are encouraged and will be viewed under special consideration.
8. If approved, you will be required to submit a brief written report after the grant project is completed.

Writing and Budgeting



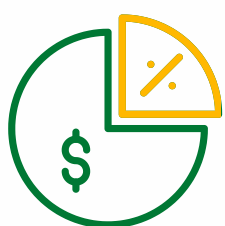
Developing Your Application

- Don't be shy about assuming you don't even know where to start! Feeling that way in the beginning is completely normal.
- Try to isolate the main reasons why you feel your idea is important. Being clear about these points will strengthen your application.
- Make sure you have an assessment of your real needs: consider every angle of your project to prepare yourself for its execution.
- Find a friend or adviser to help you brainstorm your idea and read over your application, especially someone who has applied for funding before.



Tracking Money and Materials

- Break down your project into tasks and items.
- Calculate the cost of each item in the task list and add up the total.
- Find a way to track materials: did you give out materials to the community? Who is in charge of the equipment you are using?
- Use our budget template (included in application form) as a guide.
- If you are buying a product or service, you can simply submit the name of the item and the cost in your application. When appropriate, consider asking for several estimates from different professionals to make sure you are getting the best deal.



Analyzing Budget and Impact

- Review your records to make a list of everything you purchased and how much it cost. Did you spend more or less than you expected?
- How many people did you reach? Was the impact less than or greater than what you anticipated?
- What did you learn? How would you do this differently if you were to do it again?
- What kind of feedback did you get from your volunteers and from the community?

Event and Volunteer Management



Event Planning

- Always schedule your event taking into account the season. Check the weather forecast and have a plan in case of sun, rain or snow.
- Remember to include an option for children so that parents can actively participate in planned activities.
- Consider the means of transport available to get to the venue, especially for your target audience.
- Make a checklist with descriptions of those responsible for each part of the event so that each person can focus on their designated activity.
- Be realistic when calculating audience expectations. Overall, a third of guests show up for events.
- Call ahead: does the space require a permit for use? Do you need to make a deposit to reserve it? Does your activity fit within the rules of the venue?



Volunteer Management

- Keep your volunteers engaged and up-to-date on how they're making a difference in your initiative.
- Ask for their opinions and ideas - give them a sense of ownership of the process.
- Be flexible and considerate of your volunteers' time and schedules.
- Train your volunteers ahead of the event - things will run smoother if they arrive prepared.
- Combine volunteers' talents and interests with a role that fits their motives for volunteering.
- Tap into their networks: it is likely that your volunteers can help promote your project or even connect you with other sources of support.