614 BEAUTIFUL

www.614beautiful.org

OVERVIEW:

The Neighborhood Design Center (NDC), in partnership with Councilmember Lourdes Barroso de Padilla and the City of Columbus Department of Neighborhoods, invites teams of neighborhood residents and community organizations to submit proposals for inclusive placemaking opportunities to celebrate neighborhoods across the city. 614 Beautiful is a program aimed at beautifying and unifying Columbus communities through place-based, public-facing improvements achievable with $10,000 of project support.

Beautification projects may include, but are not limited to: public art, landscape enhancements, wayfinding & signage, facade improvements, and/or transit-oriented interventions/streetscape improvements, and must be located within City of Columbus corporation limits. 614 Beautiful proposals should engage nearby residents, neighborhood businesses, and organizations, address environmental justice concerns, and create safe and equitable spaces. A jury consisting of project stakeholders and design professionals will review submissions and select winners to implement proposals.

Submission Deadline: Monday, November 2, 2026 by 5:00 PM EDT (no late applications will be accepted)
Program Website: www.614beautiful.org

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

614 Beautiful seeks to beautify communities through vibrant, neighborhood-driven solutions that address issues of equity and enable greater connectivity within the neighborhood. In addition to activating spaces and places, the program aims to encourage dialogue amongst neighbors, local businesses, and organizations, and promotes creativity and ingenuity in strategies that support all. Applicants should consider the following:

- Grants of up to $10,000 will be awarded to selected proposals.
- Projects must be located within the City of Columbus corporation limits. While project sites are open citywide, additional consideration will be given to those in identified opportunity neighborhoods.
- Proposals may include but are not limited to public art, landscape enhancements, wayfinding & signage, facade improvements, and/or transit-oriented interventions/streetscape improvements (see examples on the program website). The proposals cannot be solely used for community gardens, but may enhance an existing garden or community space for better public access/activation.
- Proposals must be in publicly accessible locations within the community.
- Implementation of the proposal, including the purchase of materials, payments to vendors, and acquisition of appropriate permits, are the responsibility of the applicant. Project implementation must involve the community (concept approval, volunteering, neighborhood contractors).
- Applicants are responsible for community buy-in and should consult with appropriate neighborhood stakeholder groups representing the community regarding final design considerations.

** Please note public right of way improvements will require coordination and approval from the Public Service Division of the City of Columbus. You are expected to have begun the process of coordinating and acquiring approval when you submit your application.*

Additionally, the program encourages proposals that:

- Utilize matching funds to increase the impact of their final projects
- Accommodate as many users as possible
- Build upon existing City initiatives that benefit the quality of life for all Columbus residents

The NDC may advise entrants with navigating the City review process, upon request. Applicants are encouraged to view the program information video online and contact the NDC.

SCHEDULE

Application Release	October 5, 2026
Program Information Session (Virtual)	October 22, 2026, 5:30-6:30 PM or view online after 10/23
Submissions Due	November 2, 2026 at 5 PM
Jury Review	Week of November 16
Award Announcement	Friday, November 20
Permitting, Approval, & Planning Period	Winter 2026
Implementation Period	December 1, 2026 - November 30, 2027
Community Unveiling	Spring / Summer/ Fall 2027
Grant Expenditure/Reporting Completed	November 30, 2027

ELIGIBILITY

- Primary applicant must be 18 years or older.
- Able to obtain liability insurance.
- Have the capacity to receive funds or partner with a legally incorporated entity with the capacity to act as a fiscal agent (i.e. LLC, 501 c(3), etc).
- The program is open to teams of community representatives and/or community organizations – **submissions by an individual will not be accepted**.
- Members of the jury may not submit or advise an applicant.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Program application can be found at here: https://tinyurl.com/614BeautifulApplication, and the application with all required uploads listed below be submitted no later than **5:00 PM ET, on Monday, November 2, 2026**. Submissions must include (at a minimum):

1. **Completed Application Form** (see the Categories PDF for category definitions & examples).

2. **Maximum 15-slide presentation** (PowerPoint, Google Slides, or comparable program, maximum file size of 20 MB) saved as a **PDF**. The text should be at least 11-point font for legibility, and include:
    a. Minimum (1) slide with your project team and/or project partners.
    b. Minimum (1) slide with existing site conditions (photo(s) and/or aerial map of site, ownership information, address of location(s).
    c. Minimum (1) slide of proposed idea/visioning – can include concept sketches, drawings, and/or other representations of proposed improvements, and clear description of proposed improvements.
    d. Minimum (1) slide outlining your volunteer base and how the community is engaged in the process.
    e. Minimum (1) slide detailing your implementation plan, including necessary approvals and community involvement (see the Implementation Considerations PDF for a list of considerations).
    f. Minimum (1) slide with an implementation calendar or list of target dates for your implementation plan.
    g. Minimum (1) slide detailing plans for maintaining the project, including how you intend to fund and make repairs, and the longevity of the project (see the Maintenance Considerations PDF for a list of considerations).
    h. Minimum (1) slide illustrating how the site will be used by the community.

3. **Proposed Budget** in the provided template, including contingency of 10%. A budget narrative can be submitted as PDF file if necessary (no more than 500 words).

4. **Minimum of (1) statement of support from the community** (i.e. community petition of support, letter of support from community organizations, civic associations, or area commissions) with contact information (phone/email) of organization providing the recommendation.

5. **Proof of Ownership or a statement of support from the property owner** to include contact information from the property owner permitting improvements.

Selected grant recipients will be required to submit photos of the implementation of the project and are required to notify the program administrators of implementation times/days and any final celebration information.

Selected grant recipients will also be required to submit a detailed maintenance plan and receive project support from community/regulatory entities prior to grant agreement execution.

While applicants retain ownership and/or copyright of materials submitted, the program sponsors and partners reserve the right to use, free of charge, materials submitted by the entrants for future marketing and communication materials, with appropriate credit, relative to the program as deemed necessary throughout its course and after completion.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND JURY

The selection of winning proposals will be based on the completion of all submission requirements and the following criteria:

1. **Project Feasibility [30 points]**
   - Does the entrant have the resources and support needed to implement the project? [10 PTS]
   - Are the budget and schedule to implement reasonable/align with the program timeline? [10 PTS]
   - Does the entrant have the capacity to maintain the project after completion? [10 PTS]

2. **Community Benefit & Activation [40 points]**
   - Does the proposal identify and respond to needs within the community? [5 PTS]
   - Is the proposal inclusive and beneficial to all community members? [5 PTS]
   - Does the proposal consider how the project will be used/enjoyed by the community? [5 PTS]
   - Does the proposal effectively demonstrate how the community is engaged in the design and/or implementation of the project? [5 PTS]
   - Is the community in support of the submitted proposal? [10 PTS]
   - Is the proposal located in an opportunity neighborhood (see website for listing of all opportunity neighborhoods) as identified by the City of Columbus? [10 PTS]

3. **Creativity (30 points)**
   - Is the proposal innovative in its approach, design, and/or in its response to community needs (i.e. sustainability, technological innovation, etc.)? [10 PTS]
   - Does the proposal layer improvements to create a unifying place? [10 PTS]
   - Does the proposal celebrate the unique attributes of the community and engage and inspire residents over time? [10 PTS]

A Jury will be comprised of program stakeholders and design professionals and consist of the following voting members:

- (1) Representative of the Office of Councilmember Lourdes Barroso de Padilla
- (1) Representative of the City of Columbus Department of Neighborhoods

- (1) Design Professional
- (1) Art Professional – Public Art
- (1) Community Advocacy Representative

An **Advisory Panel** will also review proposals in a non-voting capacity and will consist of representatives from:

- Public Service
- City Building & Zoning

USE OF AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Teams may apply for grants up to $10,000 for improvements. All work must be completed and funds spent by **November 30, 2027**. Grantees must submit a final grant report to NDC that includes all receipts of expenditures, progress and final site photos, and a brief description of triumphs and challenges throughout the implementation process by **November 30, 2027**. Awarded funds may only be used to implement items identified and approved as part of the original grant application.

Eligible Expenses

- Permit fees
- Supplies and equipment rental needed to complete the project
- Payment to external vendors, where applicable
- Food for volunteers (maximum of $500)

Ineligible Expenses

- Expenses incurred prior to or after the grant cycle
- Programs, projects, or events that have already taken place
- Future site programming or events – food, supplies, and/or vendors used to program/activate the site
- Insurance costs

GET IN TOUCH

Should you have any questions throughout the grant process, please direct all questions to Maria Ramirez (programs@columbusndc.org, subject line “614 Beautiful Program”) or call (614) 221-5001. Responses to questions will be posted in a FAQ section of the website to assist all interested applicants. Additional community contacts can be found here (614 Beautiful Resources).