

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
2005 Cool Cities Grants & Planning Programs Pre-Bid Workshop  
Frequently Asked Questions**

*Following is a list of some of the common and key questions that were asked and responded to during the Pre-Bid Workshops held February 15-17, 2005.*

**Definitions**

Q: What is a LCCAG? What composes that type of group?

A: Local Cool City Advisory Group: In September 2003 the Governor sent a letter to 267 mayors asking them to form Local Cool City Advisory Groups, or LCCAGs. The intent was to bring together non-traditional folks with traditional economic developers to raise the dialogue about supporting and investing in your city and to find ways to make people more interested in living, working, and shopping in your city. In order to obtain the broadest perspective, it is important that the LCCAG be a diverse group reflecting a mixture of ages, religions, occupations, and genders. More information can be found at [www.coolcities.com/What You Can Do/Advisory Groups/LCCAG](http://www.coolcities.com/What You Can Do/Advisory Groups/LCCAG).

Q: What is an Urban Pioneer?

A: We were first familiar with the term to describe a person who had vision for a blighted urban area who moved into the area and worked to restore the neighborhood. We now think of the term to describe anyone who lives in an urban neighborhood or moves to an urban neighborhood to either restore or maintain it. Some of those urban pioneers are empty nesters, young knowledge workers, developers, immigrants, creative workforce, or persons with passion for their city who believe in building or rebuilding a vibrant community. No matter what age a person is, one who moves into a transitional area to be part of the rebirth of that neighborhood. An urban pioneer can also be a developer who is investing in the neighborhood.

Q: Define zero-lot-line development?

A: A type of lot in which one portion of the structure is located directly on the property line and is contiguous with the physical improvements of the adjacent real property.

Q: Define Local Arts Agency?

A: The definition is also detailed in the Cool Cities Neighborhoods in Progress Program Request for Proposal found at [www.coolcities.com](http://www.coolcities.com), under Cool Cities Grants & Planning Programs. An engaged and active Local Arts Agency:

- This means that the organization functions in the capacity of an arts/culture producing, presenting, programming, and/or services organization within the community.
- Has an active board of directors that is representative of the community.
- Has knowledgeable leadership (paid or volunteer).
- Receives support (funding, volunteers, in-kind contributions) for arts/cultural efforts from the local community.

- Partners/collaborates with other arts and cultural resources and sectors in the community (i.e., education, government, faith-based, business, social and human services organizations) in developing and implementing its arts/cultural projects and initiatives.

Q: What is the definition of neighborhood, i.e., how big are these neighborhoods?

A: We used to give a rule of thumb for neighborhoods but we found that neighborhoods greatly vary. The rough guide is 16 to 22 blocks. It's best to think of it in terms of how the people that live in the neighborhood define the neighborhood boundaries. Neighborhoods tend to have natural boundaries. You will be asked to draw the neighborhood boundaries on a map within the Notice of Intent.

### **General Scoring Questions**

Q: Are you going to give us evaluation points on the evaluation and weighting?

A: There are not actual points on the Request for Proposals or applications. In the Request for Proposals we included a list of items that will be considered when the applications are reviewed.

Q: Is there criteria for need and priority, i.e., like deterioration of buildings?

A: We will look for need in the Cool Cities Main Street and the two Cool Cities Blueprint programs. There are some critical questions that respond to need and deterioration on the applications.

### **General Notice of Intent Questions**

Q: Can you submit more than one Notice of Intent?

A: You can submit only one Notice of Intent per neighborhood. However, one applicant can submit multiple Notice of Intents for multiple neighborhoods. One municipality can apply on behalf of one or more Cool City programs, but each must be in different areas of the municipality.

Q: What about listing a second choice?

A: There isn't a place on the Notice of Intent to list a second choice. If you have questions, you may want to get in touch with a Michigan Economic Development Corporation Community Assistance Team Member to talk about alternatives and what makes the most sense. Go to [www.michigan.org](http://www.michigan.org) and then select the link for Communities.

Q: Will we get a response back to the Notice of Intent?

A: Notice of Intents are due by March 11<sup>th</sup>. You will receive an electronic response by March 18<sup>th</sup>. You will either receive an invitation to apply for the program you chose, or, you will receive an electronic response suggesting an alternative program with a reason why you would not be eligible to apply for the program you requested.

Q: We submitted a letter of interest for the Main Street program already; do we still have to fill out the Notice of Intent?

A: Yes

### **Cool Cities Main Street Program**

Q: Is Main Street available to neighborhoods within larger cities? Is it strictly for the downtown or can it be applied to other commercial corridors?

A: The Main Street program is available to traditional downtowns or commercial centers in a neighborhood, which is more so for larger cities. In Grand Rapids, for example, there are “main street” areas in traditional commercial districts in neighborhoods.

Q: Is there any city that can not apply for Cool Cities Main Street?

A: Yes, cities located within Oakland County and the City of Detroit because they have their own Main Street programs.

Q: What are the fundamental differences between Main Street and Blueprints?

A: Main Street is a long-term program. It is used to start building or rebuilding an overall management system for downtown. There are certain things you have to do in order to get approved. For example, you have to hire a Main Street Manager and have a solid volunteer commitment over the long haul. We bring in over \$400,000 of national expertise over the three years of the program. It is intended that you will be part of the program for 15-20 years.

Blueprints for Downtowns is meant for communities that have more of their basic “foundation” in place and are ready for development. They want someone to come in and take a snapshot of where the city is in their development/planning and to kick-start the process of rehabilitating buildings and general investment in the downtown. Blueprints is a spark that unites a downtown. Main Street is an ongoing management framework.

Q: Can the Main Street Manager have other responsibilities?

A: Probably not. We want a full time committed manager because it is the national model. If you think about the mall management approach, they are not thinking about development of the commercial strip, their focus is on their mall. We want to have the same commitment and focus for the Main Street program.

### **Michigan Cool Cities Blueprints for Michigan’s Neighborhoods Program**

Q: Are there going to be more in-depth workshops on the Blueprint programs?

A: No, because the programs are straight forward with detailed materials. We did have six hour workshops for Main Streets because it is a more complex program. Talk to your Community Assistance Team contact if you have questions.

## **Cool Cities Blueprints for Michigan's Downtowns**

Q: Is another requirement that the community have strong code enforcement?

A: Yes, it's just not possible to sustain a revitalization effort if they don't have this.

## **Cool Cities Neighborhoods in Progress (NIP) Program**

Q: Can an entity (non-profit or for-profit in collaboration with a non-profit or the city) apply for one downtown neighborhood and the city apply for another?

A: Yes. They just can't apply for the same neighborhood.

Q: What is an example of a WOW project?

A: We are looking for a bricks and mortar tangible project that will create a buzz in that area. We are looking for something that will be an amenity, place to live, place to work in, place where urban pioneers wants to flock to.

Q: When you talk about NIP, one of the eligible criteria was a 2-4 year institution of higher learning in the neighborhood?

A: No, in the city.

Q: Explain the 50/50 match.

A: If you apply for a catalyst grant you must come up with a 50% cash match. The match can be public or private, but it must be cash and must be committed not pending.

Q: Can any portion of the match be in-kind?

A: The dollar for dollar match of the NIP will need to be cash. However, applications that rise to top will be those that have 50% cash match AND other in-kind leverage.

Q: If you have a large project that has federal funds can you use the same dollars as the match for two different NIP apps?

A: Sometimes yes and sometimes no, it really depends on the funding source.

Q: Last year what you are now calling the NIP; you stated that projects must start by the end of December, is that again the case for 2005?

A: Yes, projects must start by December 31, 2005.

Q: What is another big difference to the NIP from the Pilot Program last year?

A: One of the differences is that we will be making site visits on some of those applications that rise to the top. In that site visit we will be asking for evidence, via a letter, from your local unit of government, that they will expedite and pay close attention to anything coming out of that neighborhood, i.e., zoning, funding, etc. We want to see a local unit of government commitment to that neighborhood and to help break down barriers for that neighborhood. We'll also be looking for the local unit of government to identify a single source contact for the project applicant and the state.

Q: Someone said that you can not use the neighborhood you pick for a catalyst grant for a future grant? Is this true?

A: If you received a catalyst grant for a neighborhood, you can not be awarded another catalyst grant for the same neighborhood.

Q: Can you give a description on the priority access?

A: The Governor wants the Cool City neighborhoods to get priority access and to be put on the top of the review lists when applications come in to state agencies. The bottom line is, we are eager to work with you no matter what. We said this publicly, and will live up to giving priority access to these neighborhoods. We have also stated that we will continue to abide by rules and regulations when considering applications for any resources in the Resource Toolbox.

### **Resource Toolbox**

Q: If we have a number of applications but can only submit one, can we direct those other projects to review the Resource Toolbox?

A: Yes! The Resource Toolbox is available to any area or entity as long as they meet the particular resource criteria. If a particular neighborhood receives the Cool City Neighborhood Award Designation for the Neighborhoods in Progress program, partners in that neighborhood will also have priority access to the Resource Toolbox.

Q: If I apply for any of the Cool City grant programs, is that same application considered the application for any resources in the Resource Toolbox?

A: No, you would still have to apply to each respective program in the Resource Toolbox that requires an application.

Q: Will the fact that a community applied for one of the Cool Cities program give higher priority to the RTB, even if they do not receive an award?

A: No. The Resource Toolbox is available to all communities.