



**2017-2019 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM APPLICATION**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Organization Name:	Victory Neighborhood Association
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Who should be the primary contact for this application? Katie Fitzpatrick

Date of Board review and approval: November 17, 2016

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FUNDING ACTIVITIES.

Use the following questions as a guide for your application. For questions 1-8, please limit each response to no more than 3 paragraphs.

**Eligibility. If your organization has not previously been funded through the Community Participation Program, please provide evidence of the organization's eligibility, as identified in Section II of the Guidelines.**

The Victory Neighborhood Association (ViNA) has previously received funds from the Community Participation Program and meets all current Community Participation Program eligibility requirements.

**Community participation efforts. Describe proposed outreach activity in the neighborhood, and methods to involve residents and other stakeholders in one or more of the three key program purposes. How will you engage residents and other stakeholders of their neighborhood in developing a Neighborhood Priority Plan?**

Identifying and acting on neighborhood priorities: The Victory Neighborhood Association utilizes in-person and web-based surveys to engage neighborhood stakeholders in the development of its Neighborhood Priority Plan. Surveys were distributed via Facebook, Twitter, the organization's website, and in-person at community events. Survey results inform the strategy of ViNA and lay the foundation of the organization's priority plans.

Informing City decisions on plans, policies, procedures, programs and services: The primary strategy ViNA utilizes to engage residents on City decisions is by hosting regular community meetings that give a forum to the issue at hand. Over the past year, attendees at ViNA's community meetings have learned from public entities and representatives about the reconstruction of 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Bus Rapid Transit on Penn Avenue, liquor licensing at a neighborhood restaurant, and environmental enhancements at Ryan Lake and 44<sup>th</sup> & Penn Avenues North. These meetings allow residents to gain a better understanding of issues that directly impact them and give them a voice on such issues. When warranted, thoughts shared at the meetings also inform the official response of the neighborhood association to the corresponding public agency.

Increasing involvement: ViNA has begun to integrate a new brand that it believes will better communicate with residents and other neighborhood stakeholders. The organization also recently hired a new staff member whose professional background is in communications and marketing. She is working to enhance ViNA's messaging so residents are more aware of its work and is expanding its social media presence to communicate those messages. She is also in the process of overhauling the organization's welcome bags. Welcome bags are distributed to new residents and include information on ViNA's activities and city ordinances, etc. Information in the welcome bags is being redesigned in the hopes that it will institutionalize new residents' engagement with ViNA.

**Building organizational capacity. How will you work to: (1) provide opportunities for the direct involvement of members, (2) build your membership and volunteer base, (3) encourage and develop new leadership, and (4) expand the organization's capacity through self-assessment and other activities.**

The Victory Neighborhood Association provides a variety of involvement opportunities for its members. Members are invited to attend regular community meetings where they can learn about issues that impact Victory and its residents. Insight gleaned from these meetings is used

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to shape the direction of ViNA and also informs the official response of ViNA when required. Recent examples of this include requesting the City of Minneapolis to acquire a vacant lot for redevelopment, reviewing proposed designs for new housing to be constructed, supporting a measure to change the liquor licensing at a neighborhood restaurant, and advocating for the designation of 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue as a Pedestrian Street Lighting Corridor. Community meetings give ViNA members a voice to influence change in their neighborhood.

Members are also able to volunteer in the neighborhood primarily through participation in a committee. Volunteers with the Business Committee work to bring new businesses to Victory and to strengthen the businesses already established there. Activities of the committee include the exploration of opening a co-working space in Victory and managing commercial façade improvement grants available through the organization’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds. The Environmental Committee works to improve the natural environment in and around Victory. Committee members have overseen the installation of rain gardens in the neighborhood, have worked to build a park space at Ryan Lake, have designed landscape improvements at 44<sup>th</sup> & Penn, and have undertaken a marketing campaign encouraging residents to take measures to improve water quality. The Events Committee works to connect residents with one another and to increase their engagement with ViNA by planning and hosting community gatherings. Members plan the organization’s annual garage sale day, ice cream social, and outdoor movies and concerts. The Livability Committee works ensure that Victory’s housing stock is desirable and its blocks are organized to address nuisance properties and crime. Committee members are working to increase the number of block clubs and are developing guidelines for new home construction.

As previously mentioned, ViNA has worked to grow its membership and volunteer base by improving its branding and outreach tactics. The organization will measure the effectiveness of this strategy by tracking the following indicators: i. membership enrollment, ii. attendance at meetings, and iii. participation in subcommittees. New leaders are being developed through more proactive recruitment and the organization has added two new board members and one new subcommittee chair over the past seven months. ViNA’s new staff member has also worked to build the organization’s capacity by improving its finance systems, pursuing new funds, and integrating its new brand. Data-driven decision-making is a core principle of ViNA’s strategy, and the organization will continue to formally and informally survey residents and examine its programs’ effectiveness.

**Building neighborhood relationships. Describe your outreach, networking and inclusivity efforts to: (1) build a sense of a whole neighborhood among residents, (2) build bridges among neighbors and diverse communities within the neighborhood, (3) work with other neighborhoods and organizations on issues of common interest, (4) build partnerships with private and public entities, and (5) benefit the neighborhood as a whole.**

**1. Whole Neighborhood:** To build a sense of a whole community, ViNA convenes social events like outdoor concerts and festivals where neighbors can come together and get to know one another and learn more about ViNA initiatives. The organization also recently started a new regular blog feature called, “Meet Our Neighbors.” The blog features a different individual each month who lives or works in Victory. The blog’s goal is to get neighbors better acquainted with one another to build a sense of a close knit community. ViNA also makes significant investments in developing its block club infrastructure. Over half of Victory’s blocks have block club leaders who volunteer to welcome new residents, host National Night Out parties, and work with their neighbors to address nuisance properties or other livability issues.

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**2. Diverse Communities:** ViNA recently completed an outreach project to better engage its Hmong residents. Additionally, the organization is pursuing funds that would be used in part to translate some of its outreach materials into other languages. The organization is also diligently working to have its leadership be more reflective of the community it serves in the hopes that it will help individuals from non-majority backgrounds feel comfortable participating in ViNA's efforts.

**3. Other Neighborhoods-** ViNA is a member of the Northside Neighborhoods Council and also participates in Neighborhoods 2020. These groups work together to build the capacity of neighborhood organizations and to discuss shared challenges and solutions. ViNA also partners with other Camden neighborhoods to bring healthier food options to the area via the Camden Farmers' Market and the Tiny Fields Project. It continues to explore partnerships with other neighborhood organizations that will result in mutual benefit.

**4. Partnerships with Public & Private Entities-** ViNA's Business Committee engages neighborhood business owners to advance economic investment in Victory. The committee is consistently connecting with neighborhood's businesses to help them thrive. ViNA also regularly engages with public entities like Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Works, and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to advance projects that affect the Victory Neighborhood.

**5. Neighborhood as a whole-** All of the activities of ViNA are developed to benefit the neighborhood as a whole. The strategic direction of the neighborhood association is determined by its stakeholders and carried out by its board, staff, and volunteers. The organization's bylaws, its board oversight, and its registered membership requirements ensure that ViNA is transparent and does not advance the interests of the few but rather those of the overall community.

**Work with City departments and other jurisdictions. Discuss your efforts to connect with City of Minneapolis departments and other jurisdictions on behalf of your community and in support of your neighborhood priorities. Also discuss how the NCR Department can help with this work.**

ViNA and public entities have a long history of working together so they can achieve better results for the residents of the Victory Neighborhood. As previously mentioned, ViNA encourages public entities to present at its regular community meetings. Meeting attendees have learned about public transportation changes, redevelopment of properties in and near Victory, and crime trends. The organization also distributes information about community-wide engagement opportunities to residents using its communications channels. Recently, this included encouraging residents to attend open houses and share feedback on Minneapolis' 2040 plan and Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment. ViNA will continue to build relationships with jurisdictions and welcomes support from the NCR Department to determine which City departments are best-suited to address and work with ViNA on community issues.

ViNA's current neighborhood priorities are to enhance the commercial node at 44<sup>th</sup> and Penn Avenues with greenery and to complete improvements to park space abutting Ryan Lake. The organization has worked with Minneapolis' Public Works Department, the Park Board, and Hennepin County to complete these projects. ViNA could use assistance from NCR advocating for more efficient project management and mitigated bureaucracy from these entities. One example of this would be the organization's project at 44<sup>th</sup> & Penn. ViNA would like to remove sidewalk panels in order to plant trees in them. Because the City has jurisdiction over the area, removal cannot happen without going through its procurement process. The results of the process will likely result unnecessary costs that will consume the project's budget and extend its

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timeline. NCR's guidance and advocacy would be invaluable in seeing the project through to completion.

**Involvement of under-engaged stakeholders. Discuss which stakeholder groups are typically un-engaged or under-engaged in your work, and how you will work to involve those groups. Please also discuss how the NCR Department can help with this work.**

23% of Victory residents are renters and 37% are people of color (Minnesota Compass, 2015).<sup>1</sup> These are the stakeholder groups that are most under-engaged in ViNA's work. The organization's current membership is comprised of 20% people of color and no renters. The City's NCR staff has already begun helping ViNA better engage with renters. NCR has introduced ViNA staff to staff from the Minneapolis Renters' Coalition and helped to organize listening sessions on renters' needs. ViNA is using information from these groups to determine how to best engage renters. It anticipates that engagement tactics will include door knocking in apartment buildings and establishing better relationships with landlords who can alert and introduce ViNA when a new renter moves into their building(s). As ViNA steps up its engagement with renters, the organization welcomes continued assistance and guidance from NCR.

To address the issue of under-engagement with stakeholders of color, the organization has made concerted efforts to increase representation by this population on its board. The organization believes that if its leadership is more representative of the community it serves, more engagement by persons of color will follow. Over the past seven months, two directors of color have been added to its board, resulting in 28% of its board seats being occupied by persons of color. Although no formal data is yet available, it is ViNA's empirical stance that overall engagement with persons of color during this same time period increased. The organization will continue to work to increase representation by people of color on its board.

**Unused funds. Discuss how you plan to use unused funds from the previous cycle for community engagement or implementation of neighborhood priorities.**

ViNA does not anticipate having unused funds from the previous Community Participation cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> *Victory Neighborhood At-a-Glance*, Minnesota Compass, 2015.

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ESTIMATED BUDGET

<b>CPP Budget</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Staff Expenses	\$24,500	\$25,200	\$26,000
Employee Benefits	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$3,780	\$3,780	\$3,780
Occupancy	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500
General Liability Insurance	\$575	\$575	\$600
Directors and Officers Insurance	\$900	\$900	\$900
Communications/Outreach	\$3,600	\$4,000	\$4,000
Translation, interpretation and ADA support	-	-	-
Supplies and Materials	\$850	\$850	\$850
Meetings/community building events	\$400	\$400	\$400
Development	\$350	\$350	\$350
Fundraising	\$500	-	-
Other Services (please describe):	-	-	-
<b>Total for contract:</b>	\$43,955	\$44,555	\$45,400
Neighborhood Priorities	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	\$43,955	\$44,555	\$45,400