

A. Purpose

La Crosse County has a vested interest in neighborhood revitalization in existing neighborhoods that are experiencing issues with deteriorating housing stock. Deteriorating housing stock impedes reinvestment in traditionally dense neighborhoods, increasing the less dense development outside of the County's traditional municipalities. This increases the demand for transportation infrastructure and makes delivery of governmental services less efficient.

The County also recognizes the gap between what it costs to redevelop within existing neighborhoods and what it costs to build a new house on a vacant lot. This gap is preventing most significant private reinvestment in these neighborhoods, so the **Acquisition and Demolition Grant Program** will help to reduce this cost gap and encourage neighborhood revitalization. Currently, this program will be limited to defined neighborhoods with an average assessed residential home value of <100,000, and an established neighborhood organization.

B. Eligible Applicants

Anyone who is proposing to acquire, clear, and redevelop low-valued properties in qualifying neighborhoods and is committed to constructing higher-valued residential development within the guidelines of this program is welcomed to apply. Applications may be submitted by:

- Individuals/Families;
- Developers/Builders;
- Non-Profit Organizations;
- For-Profit Businesses;

C. Eligible Properties

Properties must be located within a target neighborhood, which are established based upon criteria such as low valued housing stock, concentrations of poverty, proximity to employment opportunities, etc. Current target neighborhoods include:

- Powell-Poage-Hamilton, City of La Crosse
- Washburn, City of La Crosse

Properties must have the proper zoning for the proposed project, and must be controlled by the grant applicant. Site control may be demonstrated by ownership or accepted offer to purchase.

D. Eligible Use of Funds

The maximum grant amount will be based on the size and scope of the project. We anticipate awards to be in the range of \$5,000 to \$75,000, and in no case will this program provide more than \$100,000 to a single project. The maximum award for a single-family project on a vacant lot purchased from the City of La Crosse will be \$10,000. The maximum award for a single-family project in which the applicant is razing an existing deteriorated house is \$50,000.

Funds may be used for activities to prepare property within the target neighborhoods for residential redevelopment. Examples of acceptable uses include, but are not limited to:

- purchase of property;

- pay off of a loan used to purchase property (within 3 months of purchase),
- demolition and clearing of property,
- utility connection work to serve the property,
- survey work to reconfigure lots.

The end product of the redevelopment work must be taxable housing units with a minimum value of \$150,000 per unit for single-family and \$80,000 for multi-family. Further details on project timeline and development requirements are in Section G below.

Funding from this grant program is able to be used in conjunction with other local government funding programs, including a La Crosse County Solid Waste Department Disposal Fee Grant.

E. Application Process

This is a competitive application process with application due dates in February, May, and July. Awards will then be made within a few weeks of the application due dates. Funds available for each application cycle may vary depending on the availability of funds.

An application form is attached in Appendix A. Applications must be delivered by 4:00pm on the due date to:

La Crosse County Community Development
County Administrative Center, Room 2300
212 6th Street N.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Please contact the County Community Development Specialist at 608-785-5792 with questions.

After the application due date, all applications will be reviewed and considered by the County **Neighborhood Revitalization Review Committee**. This committee will score the applications and make grant awards based upon available funding at the time.

Scoring will be based upon the following table of available points:

Scoring Criteria	Description	Points
Tax Base Increase	Proposals with higher expected growth in tax base upon completion will score higher.	35
Neighborhood	Proposals that add to the long-term neighborhood character and help to stabilize the neighborhood will score higher. For single-family projects, those that consider the City’s single-family design standards will score higher.	30
Private Investment	Proposals that leverage more private investment into the project for each grant dollar requested will score higher.	15
Location	Proposals in more visible and/or depressed areas of the neighborhoods will score higher.	10
Applicant Capabilities & Performance	Applicants who have experience working in the target neighborhoods, on similar projects, and/or have demonstrated a solid project plan will score higher.	10

Establishing more single-family, owner-occupied homes in the neighborhood is a priority. To that end, we will reserve at least 30% of the funding each grant cycle for that type of project.

Applicants that do not receive funding are welcomed to apply for future funding cycles.

F. Funding Award

Successful applicants will receive an award letter from the County, along with a grant agreement. Grantees will have two weeks to sign and return the grant agreement to commit the grant funding.

Signed grant agreements must be returned to:

La Crosse County Community Development
County Administrative Center, Room 2300
212 6th Street N.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Prior to disbursement of funds, a grantee must submit a Request for Payment, and provide proof of adequate financing, a copy of an appraisal, plans, and progress to complete the project.

The grant agreement will detail performance standards that if not met, may require the repayment of any previously disbursed grant funds.

The County will issue a 1099 as required by the IRS for grant amounts and it is up to each grantee to determine the taxability as it relates to their project.

G. Project Performance

Grantees will have three months from the date of the award letter to complete the property acquisition and begin demolition on existing structures (if applicable).

Typically grantees will then have 15 months from the date of the award letter to complete construction of a new residential development on the property. The new housing units must have a minimum value (appraised value by a bank-qualified appraiser) of \$150,000 per unit for single-family and \$80,000 per unit for multi-family.

H. Reporting

It is the responsibility of the grantee to notify County Community Development when each step of the redevelopment process is complete – in accordance with Section G above. Grantees must complete the Project Outcome Report within four weeks of completing construction.

I. Appeal Process

In the case of extenuating circumstances that cause a grantee to miss a deadline, they are able to appeal to the Neighborhood Revitalization Review Committee for an extension. However, grantees must make every reasonable attempt to stay on schedule. This grant program is designed to have immediate impact on the target neighborhoods, so all applicants should be prepared to proceed with and complete their projects on the program timeline.

Appendix A – Application Form

ATTACHED